Module: Raced in America: *White Culture, Privilege and Bias*
Facilitator’s Guide

Contributor: Debby Irving, *Waking Up White*

Whether conscious or unconscious, most white people have developed ways of existing in the world that demonstrates white culture, its values, and practices as better and superior to those of people of color. The purpose of this module is to support white individuals in identifying interactions that perpetuate and model racist dynamics. Through examining history, watching clips, identifying behaviors, and reflecting on attitudes, participants will identify how the racial status quo exists and learn strategies for understanding and dismantling structuralized paradigms.

**Learning Goals:**

- Deepen and broaden our understanding of history, culture, power, and economics as propagating white identity formation and spreading the reinforcement of white culture as superior.
- Learn to recognize and analyze systemic and structural racism.

**Estimated Time:** 4.5 Hours; for a 1.5-hour module do Section 4.

**Materials:** Laptop with Internet access, projector, screen, copies of handouts, paper, pens, 3 easel-size sheets of paper, markers, tape or easels

**PowerPoint Presentation:** This facilitator’s guide refers to and will support you in using the PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this Racial Equity Learning module.

Handouts referenced in the directions can be found at the end of this Facilitator’s Guide:

**Instructions:** In advance of your workshop, **PowerPoint should be in presentation/slide show mode so that all hyperlinks are available.**
Section One

The Conocimiento Principle, a principle of the Latino movement for transformation and equity, recognizes that common unity begins with the process of shared awareness and understanding. In essence, we must gather the strengths we each bring to build unity and shared group power.

Time: 10 minutes

Breathing, Vision and Share

Facilitator’s Script: Close your eyes; sit up straight in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Inhale deep into your belly. Take 3 long breaths, exhaling slowly, feeling your lungs expand and contract. Imagine your favorite place. Are you in nature? With others? Whatever the place, it is a spot where you can be completely yourself and you don’t need to wear a mask. You are fully yourself. In this place, what colors do you see? What sounds do you hear? What do you smell? Taste? How does your body feel? Are you warm, cold, light, airy…? Allow yourself to feel the sensation that is on your skin. Breathe; step fully into your place of ease. In this place, remember a s/hero from your culture who you admire. Imagine that you are observing them. What do they look like? How do they walk, talk, and gesture? What is it about them that you admire? What qualities or attributes do they have that you admire? Why are they your s/hero? Think of a time that you have experienced within yourself an aspect or a quality they exhibit. Find an example or a time of when it happened. Now … take a moment to thank yourself for your own greatness! Allow yourself a moment of recognition that you have the gifts and attributes that you possess. Give thanks!

Take a few deep breaths and bring your awareness back to this room. Slowly open your eyes. The facilitator can share a personal example first, then give the following instruction:

Turn to your neighbor share your name, and your s/hero and a gift you share in common.

Facilitator can share a personal example or the following: My hero is my grandmother; she raised four boys in Chicago as a single mother in the 60’s. Working at the US Post Office, she made sure that each was ready and able to participate in the world as adults as they grew and learned. Each one of her children, African American males, went to college. There is a radio DJ, a Classical Musician, a Pastor, and an Aeronautical Engineer. As a child I learned organization, commitment to excellence, family first, and tenacity from this example. This story helped shape my identity.

After sharing the example also ask: Is there a story from your family that underlines this quality for you? Share how this quality relates to your culture. How do you identify, racially, ethnically and culturally?
Section Two
Sound Cipher by Aisha Fukushima

A cipher is a space where energies can be shared and exchanged. In hip hop culture, ciphers typically take shape in the form of a group of people facing each other in a circle (i.e. break dancing ciphers, rap ciphers, etc.), with opportunities for people to take turns sharing and dialoguing through their creative gifts. The word cipher stems from the Arabic; it means zero. The circular formation of a hip-hop cipher echoes the circular shape of zero. The concept of ciphers can also be used as a pedagogical tool to represent that the classroom is a space where knowledge and ideas can/are shared, and to explain collective responsibility in maintaining/contributing to the classroom community.

Learning Goals:
- Reflect on identity, specifically their identity in America, what it means, and how it was developed.
- Gain familiarity with basic musical principles which are explained in this lesson, including dynamics and how to maintain rhythm and body percussion techniques.

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials: White board, markers

Directions: Set up the room in a circle (with or without chairs).

Part One: Brainstorm on American Identity (10 minutes)

Discussion question: What does it mean to be an American? Ask participants to think of at least 5 words that they associate with what it means to “be American.”

Give participants time to share in pairs or small groups.

Ask the class to share their responses and write responses in two separate sections on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper so everyone can see them. Once all the ideas are written on the board read all of the responses aloud back to the class.

Debrief (5 minutes)

- Are there any commonalities between these words? If so, what are they?
- Is there anything missing from this list?
- Can you relate to these words? If so, how? If not, why not?

Part Two: Cipher Building (15 minutes)

In this activity the facilitator often plays the role of the conductor, while the participants are the parts of a sound symphony. Participants gather in a cipher circle formation. The facilitator shows hand signals for musical dynamics and asks
participants what each signal represents (i.e., Hands sweeping upward means crescendo or to get louder and hands sweeping downward signify decrescendo or to get softer. Hands moving in a circular motion, open to closed palm, signify the end of a piece.).

One person at a time, participants will construct a beat by layering sounds using body percussion (i.e., clapping, stomping, tapping their chest) or vocals (singing, beat boxing, shouts, hums, etc.) on top of one another. The facilitator will lead with an example, asking for the help of volunteer; and then they will ask for someone in the cipher to get the first round going.

After doing a round of the sound cipher, the facilitator asks participants to recall the lists of words from their earlier discussion, choose one, and to popcorn it when cued by the facilitator. The facilitator, in their role as symphony director, will be in charge of picking the individual voices to say their words and how often they say them.

Before the third round, ask participants the following discussion question: How would you describe your own heritage and/or identity? Each participant should identify one or two words they might use. Begin the sound cipher for a third round, this time popcorning the word representing identity, when cued by the symphony director.

*Keep in mind that participants can also play the role of the symphony director or conductor.

Wrap up (10 min)
Discussion questions: How were the words we came up for what it means to “be American” similar or different from the words we used to describe our own heritage/identity? Why do you think this is the case?
Section Three: Birth of a White Nation

How did we get here? Whiteness is a constructed identity built on decades of history and legislation. In this exercise the participants examine a timeline depicting the construction of whiteness.

Learning Goals:

- To develop a critical lens to see how power and economics shape policy and law.
- To recognize that policy and law are historically cumulative and determine dominant norms or culture.

Estimated Time: 90 minutes

Part 1: Social Identity and Barriers (30 minutes)

Statistics - Please go around the room reading the statistics on disparity. Working in dyads, answer the following questions:

1. What is the current racial landscape of your world – at work, home, social activities, etc.? (With whom do you find yourself associating?)
2. Was there anything that surprised you about these statistics? (See Powerpoint.) If yes, what? If no, why not?
3. What, in your life, has afforded you opportunities/restrictions (i.e., parents, grandparents, race, social class, gender, etc.)?
4. Based upon your current assessment, what may still need to be addressed in terms of creating a more equitable and sustainable society?

Part 2: Raced in Policy (60 minutes)

Materials:

Raced in America Timeline, (handout for each group and the events on card stock or strips of paper).

(The timeline of events is at the end of this guide.)

Tape, scissors, markers or pens

Instructions:

Print the Raced in America Timeline document for each participant and cut one into strips by date. Distribute the dates and descriptions in 100-year increments to groups of participants.

1 Name borrowed from Jacqueline Battalora’s book Birth of a White Nation: Invention of White People and its Relevance Today.
2 Adapted from Cultural Check In.
3 Time line created using Birth of a White Nation and “History: Race in the U.S.A.,” understandingrace.org.
Break into four groups, by each 100 years. In each group, identify 4 historical facts and 3 laws that speak to a pattern that you identify; cut these out. What is the pattern and the purpose of the pattern? (Why are the laws being made?) The facilitator may need to give an example.

Each group places these dates on the wall in chronological order. Proceed in order until all cards have been read and placed on the timeline.

Once all cards have been posted, a member of each group talks about their historical markers, any patterns that emerged, and why they chose them.

The facilitator captures these patterns on a large piece of paper or a white board.

Then break into triads, using the following questions as a guide for reflection:

1. Share one or two patterns that stood out for you.
2. Recall an incident in current events that repeats any patterns you see in this timeline (immigration, voting rights, etc.). What is it and how does it repeat the pattern?
3. How do these patterns support the development and maintenance of culture?

Share out as a whole group. Was there anything that surprised you?

Facilitator’s note:

Concepts that should be highlighted include:

- The development of race policy was directed by economics and power.
- Policy controls how American culture was/is developed.
Section Four: American Whiteness

Through story and narrative, participants examine meritocracy through the lens of race and privilege. Using Debby Irving’s *Waking Up White*, participants are urged to consider what history may be missing from most people’s education.

**Time:** 1.5 hours. For the 1.5-hour module, do only this Section.

**Part 1:** Watch clips from *Cracking the Codes: The System of Inequity and Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* (45 minutes)

Directions: Working in a new pair, watch the clips and answer the following questions:

Clip one: Peggy McIntosh
• What were you taught about the American Meritocracy?
• Give an example of how this has shaped your Identity (who you see yourself to be).

Clip two: Tim Wise
• What thoughts do you have about people who have not succeeded in the traditional frame in America?

Clip three: Elena Featherstone
• What some ways you see PEOPLE benefiting from WHITE privilege (privilege where someone gained access because of the color of their skin)?
• Where are places that YOU benefit from privilege? (Think back to her list if necessary, class, gender, race, sexuality, religion, education, culture, etc.)

**Part 2:** *The Whole Story: The effect of Swallowing One-sided stories*, Debby Irving. (45 minutes)

Directions: In dyads, take a moment to reflect on what you know about American Native Peoples. Make a list of your knowledge points.

Watch the following clip: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioAzggmes8c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioAzggmes8c)

Free write for two minutes: What do you remember? What took your attention?
Read the article *The Whole Story: The Effect of Swallowing One-sided Stories* by Debby Irving in round-robin style. In groups of four, identify a historical event in American history, like the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the arrival of the Statue of Liberty, or any one of the wars Americans have fought. Where have you learned what you know about this event? Whose [cultural] perspective did you learn? If you went in search of a fuller story, whose viewpoint would you seek?
Section Five: Danger of a Single Story

Author Chimamanda Adichie talks about the danger of the single story as a point of reference for making meaning in the world. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in Nigeria in 1977. She is the author of three novels, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and *Americanah* (2013), and a short story collection, *The Thing around Your Neck* (2009). She has received numerous awards and distinctions, including the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction (2007) and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (2008).

**Directions:** Find a person that you have not spoken to during this workshop and sit next to them. As a group watch the Ted Talk. Answer the following questions.

**Time:** 40 minutes

Chimamanda Adichie
The danger of a single story
(17 minutes)
[http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)

Ask the following questions (10 minutes):

1. Share a moment when you realized that you held a single story of a certain type of people.
2. How did you learn that your story was one-sided? What were you taught through history? Through culture? What is lacking?

As a final sharing, the facilitator can ask the group to share answers to the following questions, and make a list of how the participants might create a new paradigm for engagement (10 minutes).

3. As a group, share some ways that you can continue to identify when a story is one-sided.
4. How might you develop a multi-dimensional approach to history and culture?

Thank you!
Resources

Books


Video Clips
Peggy McIntosh
http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=ted+talks+white+privilege&amp;FORM=VIRE2#view=detail&amp;mid=2B5C3C73A82B155C67542B5C3C73A82B155C6754

Tim Wise
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3Xe1kX7Wsc

Whitewashed
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdaF_h06YX4&amp;index=2&amp;list=PL4F-7s2wH85FCI5mYJLDlvBb10sXyWlmH

Movies
*Ishi, the Last Yahi*
http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/ishi_the_last_yahi

*The Untold History of the United States*, directed by Oliver Stone
Time Line

Cut each of these dates into strips

1585  Walter Raleigh and Richard Hakluyt convinced Queen Elizabeth to support the establishment of a colony to serve as a hub for attacks on Spanish settlements, and to advance the riches of the [English] crown and decrease those for the Spanish. The colony was to serve as an employer for England’s growing number of unemployed and create new markets among the native tribes and settlers, as well as bring natives into the fold of Christianity and the British government.

1607  Development of a corporate endeavor to increase investments of the shareholders of The Virginia Company of London, created by charter from King James I to Richard Hakluyt in 1606.

1619  The first recorded arrival of Africans in the Virginia colony, when a Dutch warship brought 20 blacks captured from a Spanish slave ship, including three women, to Jamestown. Though not much is known about them, many of these early African arrivals had already been assimilated into European cultures. Some had Spanish or Portuguese names and spoke those languages. They came as agricultural laborers, but some of them may have been servants and easily fit into the system of indentured labor that was devised for poor Europeans.

1624  Over 4000 British settlers came to the colony; less than 1000 survived. Demand for laborers continued to grow despite the low survival rate, in part, because tobacco was being grown and shipped to England. Tobacco farming required significant human labor and helped fuel demand for farm workers.

1627-1682  92,000 immigrants from Europe were brought to the colonies, 69,000 were chattel bond laborers, most were men, most were English.

1630  Laws regulating relations between whites and blacks appeared on the statute books, including such penalties as a whipping before an assembly of slaves for a white man who had sex with a black woman.

1639  Black slaves were prohibited from carrying firearms by a Virginia law, which prescribed 20 lashes for violations of the statute. There was one exception: with his master’s permission, a slave could bear firearms to defend against Indian raids.

1641  Massachusetts became the first colony to legalize slavery.
1660 Records from one county show ¼ of all children born to European female servants were of joint African and European ancestry.

1661 Slavery was legally recognized in Virginia with the passage of the fugitive slave law. The punishment of adding time to a period of service, which was commonly used for indentured servants, was not useful because the servitude of slaves was permanent. The statute did decree, however, that if a white servant ran off with a slave, he would have to serve his penalty term plus that of the slave.

1662 A law decreed that the children of slaves took on the status of their mother, in contrast to common law, which conferred the father’s status on a child. The law was intended to enslave the increasing number of children fathered by white men.

1663 Maryland legalized slavery and attempted to pass a law that would enslave free blacks and require that all blacks be slaves regardless of their mother’s status; in the following year, Maryland punished marriage between a white woman and a slave by requiring that she serve her husband’s master during her husband’s lifetime and that their children would be slaves.

1664 The Colonial Assembly of Maryland enacted a law that punished a woman who was “English or freeborn” who married a black slave, making them slaves and their children slaves. This became an incentive for slave-holders to not only allow their slaves to marry, but to encourage free woman to marry them, increasing their slave holdings.

1667 Virginia even enacted a law that decreed that baptism would not change the status of the converted, meaning that becoming Christian would not free a slave.

1676 After Bacon’s Rebellion, wealthy planters decided to abolish indentured servitude and establish permanent slavery for Africans, fearing that class conflict would undermine their tobacco plantation holdings. They gradually eliminated the importation of indentured servants from England in favor of enslaved Africans.

1676 A law prohibited free blacks from having white servants.

1682 Virginia passed two acts that combined Native Americans and Africans into one category as “negroes and other slaves.”

1690s Stricter laws against miscegenation appeared, when marriages between whites and blacks became illegal, and whites could be expelled from the colony as punishment.
1696 South Carolina adopted the Barbados slave code, which was set up by the English in order to provide a legal base for slavery in the Caribbean island. Under its provisions, slave owners were required to provide clothing for their slaves; but the slaves were denied even the basic rights guaranteed by English common law. Slave owners were allowed to do anything they wanted to their slaves, which in practice included mutilating them and even burning them alive. It formed the legal basis of slave law in many English colonies in North America.

1699 Slave laws stipulating whippings and other forms of corporeal punishment as the standard practice for dealing with slaves were the rule in Virginia. In some cases, the laws were quite specific, such as the statute that punished pig stealing by nailing the thief’s severed ears to a pillory post. Other laws stated the penalty for burning barns and crops; when slaves could testify in court; what compensation slaveholders could expect from the colonial government when one of their slaves was executed for a crime; and what punishments were to be dealt to slaves who were convicted of insulting whites. There were a number of laws that covered the handling of runaway slaves.

1700 thru 1750 Another 2.3 million Africans arrived in the Americas

1705 Virginia law began to define more clearly the status of slaves as property. Slaves could be used both as collateral for borrowing money and as assets in the payment of debts. Creditors, in fact, had first claim on slaves in settlement of debts; even slaves who had been freed could be re-enslaved, if necessary to settle their former master’s debts. In addition, the widow of a slaveholding husband could claim one third of her deceased husband’s slaves, including those who had been promised their freedom.

1739 The deadliest slave revolt occurred in Stono, South Carolina, when armed slaves fled to Florida, a safe haven; the insurrection ended with 20 whites and more than 40 blacks killed.

1740 Carolina passed the Negro Act, which made it illegal for slaves to gather in groups, earn money, or learn to read or raise food, and gave slave owners the right to kill rebellious slaves.

1750 thru 1800 More than 3.8 million Africans were imported as part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

1776 The Declaration of Independence was signed and established independence from England.

1787 The U.S. Constitution was drafted.
The first U.S. Census: the first racial categories included European, Native Indian and African. The first census was created to count adult, white males who could vote, hold office, own property, pay taxes and become military recruits. The constitutional passage establishing the first census stated that the count in each state "shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other Persons." Slaves, the "all other persons" referred to, were counted as 3/5th of a person in determining the population size of each state.

The Fugitive Slave Law was passed. It provided for the capture and return of runaway slaves who crossed state lines or escaped into federal territory. The law, which enforced Article IV, Section 2, of the U.S. Constitution, authorized any federal district or circuit court judge, or any state magistrate, to decide without a jury trial the status of a runaway slave. Despite strong opposition in the North, where some states enacted personal-liberty laws to thwart the execution of the federal law, the state laws only ameliorated the law by allowing a jury trial for fugitives who appealed the decision.

Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, which made possible large-scale cotton cultivation in the South, thus greatly increasing the need for slaves, whose numbers skyrocketed.

Congress extended Virginia and Maryland slavery laws to the District of Columbia, establishing a federally sanctioned slave code.

Congress banned the importation of slaves into the U.S., although smuggling continued in some parts of the South. Once the transatlantic slave trade was prohibited, domestic slave trading throughout the South increased.

Opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law had become organized resistance to slavery, primarily through the Underground Railroad, which helped African slaves escape to freedom. A year later, Congress prohibited the slave trade between the U.S. and foreign countries.

The census added free colored persons to its racial categories.
1820s and 30s  A Philadelphia physician named Samuel G. Morton collected and measured hundreds of human skulls in order to confirm that there were differences among the races—in particular, a difference in brain size. His systematic large-scale experiments made him a pioneer of American race science and physical anthropology. Morton was a proponent of polygenism, which theorized that the different races were different species, with separate origins. Morton amassed a large collection of human skulls from all around the world. He believed he could identify any skull's racial origin simply by measuring it, and developed tables based on his experiments, which involved pouring lead pellets into skull cavities. Morton assigned the highest brain capacity to Europeans—with the English highest of all. Second was the Chinese, third was Southeast Asians and Polynesians, fourth was American Indians, and the smallest brain capacity was assigned to Africans and Australian aborigines. The collection of skulls is now in the museum of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. He wrote Crania Americana (1839), An Inquiry into the Distinctive Characteristics of the Aboriginal Race of America and Catalogue of Skulls of Man (1840), and Crania Egyptica (1844). Although Morton was a scientist, he used his influence to make the case for black inferiority in order to bolster U.S. Secretary of State John Calhoun's efforts to negotiate the annexation of Texas as a slave state. Calhoun was a pro-slavery advocate from South Carolina.

1830  The Indian Removal Act, passed by Congress under President Andrew Jackson's urging, was designed to appease white settlers who wanted the 25 million acres of land in the southeast owned by Indians. The removal involved all of the five "civilized tribes," as they were called—Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw and some Seminoles—who had previously owned land and were working their farms much like white men.

1850  California territory became a state of the Union. The gold mining frenzy had stripped the land of its natural resources. Robbed of their natural food sources, California's Indians raided mining towns and white settlements for food, setting off a chain reaction of brutal retaliation. The California legislature then passed the Indenture Act, which gave whites the authorization to legally enslave Native peoples and their children, resulting in widespread kidnapping of Indian children, who were then sold into slavery.
1850 The Fugitive Slave Act made the federal government responsible for apprehending fugitive slaves in the North and sending them back to the South. This extended slavery and its enforcement beyond the South. The South, however, felt that even this law was not strong enough, and the demand for more effective legislation resulted in enactment of a second Fugitive Slave Act that same year. However, the law was so severe that its implementation was open to abuses that defeated its purpose. Even during the Civil War, the Fugitive Slave Acts were used to prosecute blacks fleeing their masters in border states that were loyal to the Union.

1851 Louisiana plantation doctor Samuel Cartwright tried to explain the tendency of black slaves to flee captivity by proposing a psychiatric diagnosis that he called "dрапетомания." The term was derived from the Greek драпетес, or runaway, and мания, or madness. Cartwright suggested in the New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal that slave owners could treat and cure this “medical disorder” by whipping slaves and amputating their toes.

1857 The Dred Scott decision was handed down by the Supreme Court, which denied citizenship to free and enslaved blacks.

1863 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves in 10 states, but excluded areas controlled by the Union. That same year, Maryland abolished slavery.

1864 Lincoln, with the support of the Republican Congress, repealed the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri abolished slavery.

1865 The Ku Klux Klan is formed by ex-Confederates in Pulaski, Tennessee.

1865 Lincoln was shot at Ford’s Theater and died. The 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, was ratified by the states.

1866 Congress passed the Civil Rights Bill, which invalidated the black codes.

1867 Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts, which established the right of black males to vote and hold office.

1868 The 14th Amendment, guaranteeing equal protection and defining citizenship for the first time, was ratified.

1869 Tennessee became the first in a succession of Southern states to establish an all-white “redeemer” government sympathetic to the cause of the Confederacy.

1870 The census added mulatto, quadroon and octoroon.
1870 The 15th Amendment was ratified, prohibiting the denial of voting rights on the basis of race, which sought to guarantee black men the right to vote.

1896 In the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that segregated, or "separate but equal," public facilities were legal.

1896 Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, mainly Italians, Jews and Slavs from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were the largest groups arriving in the U.S. The reception they received was markedly different from earlier northern European immigrants. They experienced employment and housing discrimination that resulted in many living in urban "ghettos" in the Northeast and the Midwest. Many Americans saw them as "racially" different and inferior. The ideology of race was applied to Southern and Eastern Europeans because they were physically and culturally different from the Northern Europeans and Scandinavians. That racial worldview dominated thinking about human differences and was extended to European populations in the U.S. as well. European intellectuals had begun to see their own populations as divided into races, with attributes that made them unequal.

1904 The World’s Fair in St. Louis featured, among other attractions, a group of pygmies who had been brought in from the Belgian Congo. One of the pygmies was Ota Benga, who after the exhibit was over, was sent to the Bronx Zoo. The director of the zoo, William T. Hornaday, believed he understood the thoughts of zoo animals. He believed Ota Benga was no different from any other animal in the zoo, and insisted he was only showing an interesting exhibit. Crowds came to the Monkey House exhibit, which opened in 1906, to see man's "evolutionary ancestors," which included monkeys, chimpanzees, a gorilla named Dinah, an orangutan named Dohung, and the pygmy Ota Benga. Controversy swirled around the extremely popular exhibit, as religious figures objected to the theme of evolution and the black community was outraged at the treatment of Benga. As a legal compromise, Ota Benga was allowed to leave his cage and walk around the zoo in a white suit; but he returned to the monkey house at night. The pygmy was angered by his treatment and retaliated in various ways, including brandishing a knife around the park and shooting visitors with a small bow and arrow. This behavior led to his expulsion from the park, and he was sent to the Virginia Theological Seminary and College, which he soon left for work in a tobacco factory. Eventually his depression and anger became too much for the pygmy, and he shot himself in the heart with a borrowed revolver in 1916.
1911 A starving and nearly naked Indian man took shelter in a northern California slaughterhouse. He was turned over to anthropologist Thomas T. Waterman, who brought him to live at the University of California's anthropology museum. He was given the name Ishi, which meant "man" in his native language. Most of the members of Ishi's tribe, the Yahi-Yana, had been massacred during the California Gold Rush. Dubbed "the last wild man in America," he became a popular attraction, and in his first six months at the museum, 24,000 visitors watched him demonstrate arrow-making and fire-building. Ishi lived at the museum until he died of tuberculosis in 1916.

1915 D.W. Griffith released The Birth of a Nation, inspiring the NAACP to publish a 47-page pamphlet titled "Fighting a Vicious Film: Protest Against The Birth of a Nation." The pamphlet called the film "three miles of filth." Reviews in The Crisis written by W.E.B. Du Bois were scathing, which instigated a heated debate among the National Board of Censorship of Motion Pictures about whether the film should be shown in New York. However, when President Woodrow Wilson viewed the film at the White House, he proclaimed it not only historically accurate, but "history writ with lightning." Massive race riots flared throughout the country following the release of the film, peaking in 1919. The blame has been placed, in part, on Griffith's film by some historians.

1917 The president of the American Psychological Association, urged the group to initiate several programs during World War I. The Army's Alpha and Beta intelligence tests were his creation, and they were administered to over a million U.S. soldiers during the war. The results of the tests led to the conclusion that recent immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe had considerably lower scores than earlier immigrants from Northern Europe. Eugenicists relied on these results as ammunition for their campaign for immigration restrictions. The test results, however, were later criticized as having been more a measure of acculturation than of intelligence, since the test scores correlated closely with the number of years spent living in the U.S.

1917 Congress passed the Asiatic Barred Zone Act, also known as the Immigration Act of 1917, overriding President Woodrow Wilson's veto. The legislation essentially prevented immigration from British India to the U.S., although loopholes exempted whites from the region from being denied admission to the U.S.

1924 Congress gave Native Americans the right to vote.

1924 Virginia's Racial Integrity Act codified the "one-drop rule" as the standard racial classification for people of mixed ancestry. A person with even "one drop" of non-white ancestry was classified as "colored" or non-white.
1925  The Klu Klux Klan reached its peak with an estimated 4,000,000 members.

1930  Census racial categories included Chinese, Filipino, Hindu, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Mexican, Negro and White. The 1930 census added Mexican, then dropped the category under pressure from the Mexican government. According to census department documents, the Mexican population was added to the white category in revised reports. Mexicans counted as white until 1970, when they were reclassified in the census as Hispanic origin.

1930s  Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal economic recovery programs, which included employment and public works projects, were not uniformly administered. Many racial and ethnic groups, including blacks, Mexican Americans and Chinese Americans, were unable to take advantage of New Deal programs because of discrimination and citizenship requirements.

1944  Approximately 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans—the majority of whom were citizens—were moved to facilities called "war relocation camps" during World War II. President Franklin Roosevelt authorized the internment with executive order 9066, which let military commanders designate areas from which "any or all persons may be excluded." Twelve days later, the order was used to declare that all people of Japanese ancestry were excluded from the entire Pacific coast, including California and parts of Oregon and Washington. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the order, arguing that it was permissible to curtail the civil rights of a racial group.

1945 on  Returning World War II veterans spurred a population and housing boom, driven in part by benefits from the GI bill. The economic demands of the post-war boom and the burgeoning Civil Rights movement led to conflicts over discrimination in housing, jobs and education. The Federal Housing Administration, which instituted policies that reinforced patterns of segregation, routinely denied low-interest loans to non-whites. The experience of fighting for freedom in Europe, and then returning to a country where discrimination and opportunities were limited, fostered discontent for returning black GIs. The legacy of post-war economic discrimination contributed to the wealth gap between whites and non-whites that we see today. One of the most important factors that contributed to the wealth gap was the federal housing policy. This policy, which endorsed redlining and discrimination in sales, financing and homeowners insurance, is reflected in the unequal rates of home ownership even today.
1950  The census included the following racial categories: American Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Negro, Other and White.

1954  The Supreme Court handed down a 9-0 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which stated, "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The decision reversed the precedent set by the Supreme Court's previous decision in *Cumming v. Richmond County Board of Education* (1899), which had validated the segregation of public schools. *Brown* did not, however, result in the immediate desegregation of America's public schools, nor did it mandate desegregation of public accommodations, such as restaurants or bathrooms that were private property. That would not be accomplished until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The following year, the Court completed its ruling in the second *Brown* decision. The Court ordered states' compliance with the *Brown* decision "with all deliberate speed." Even so, compliance with the provisions of the two decisions was not expedient, and most public schools were not desegregated until the late 1960s and early 70s. Recent studies have found that public schools, especially those in urban areas, are still segregated.

1955  Emmett Till, a fourteen year-old from Chicago, visited relatives in Mississippi. He and several other boys stopped at a local grocery store for some candy after a long day of picking cotton. While at the store, Till allegedly whistled at a white grocery store owner’s wife. A few days later, after Roy Bryant, the store owner, returned to town and learned of the event, Bryant and his half-brother, J.W. Milam, made plans to "teach the boy a lesson." Bryant and Milam kidnapped Till, and then brutally beat, mutilated and shot him before dropping him in the Tallahatchie River. While Bryant and Milam were arrested for the murder, the all-white Mississippi jury took just over an hour to acquit the two. Mamie Till Bradley, Till’s mother, held an open casket funeral in Chicago, so mourners could see how her son had been mutilated. Even so, Bryant and Milam later boasted about the murder in a *Look* magazine interview, since double jeopardy protected them from retrial.

1960  Census racial categories included American Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Japanese, Negro, part Hawaiian, White, Eskimo and Aleut.

1967  In the *Loving v. Virginia* case, the Supreme Court made laws banning interracial marriage illegal.
1969  Arthur Jensen, a protégé of British educational psychologist Cyril Burt, and an educational psychologist at the University of California-Berkeley, was well known for his work in psychometrics and differential psychology. In the “nature versus nurture” debate, Jensen took a hereditarianism position, claiming that genetics played an important role in behavioral traits, such as intelligence. He published a controversial work in 1969 called, “How Much Can We Boost I.Q. and Scholastic Achievement?” The opinion he put forward in the publication was that over 70% of the within-race IQ variability was due to genetics, and the rest due to environmental influences, and, that as a result, programs designed to boost black IQ had failed, simply because the IQ of African Americans could not be increased.

1970  Census racial categories included Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Indian American, Japanese, Negro or Black, Other, White, Hispanic origin of any race, and White, not of Hispanic origin. Mexicans were counted as white from 1930 until 1970, when they re-entered the census as Hispanic origin. It was a deliberate effort to count Hispanics without treating them as a race. They were to be considered a cultural/linguistic group. Using this reasoning, Hispanics can have a racial identification separate from their ethnicity. At the time, the census expected Hispanics to also select from the primary racial categories. Historically, the census counted and classified by race and national origin. Now the taxonomy included ethnicity.

1980  Census racial categories included Aleut, Asian Indian, Black or Negro, Chinese, Filipino, Eskimo, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Indian American, Japanese, Korean, Other, Samoan, Vietnamese, White, Hispanic origin of any race, and White, not of Hispanic origin. In the 1980 census, being of Hispanic origin was treated in the census as an ethnic, not a racial, distinction, because Hispanics can be Asian, Black, Native Indian and White. The census still recognized only four races, not five. But Hispanics seemed to suggest otherwise. The census form has had an open-ended "other race" option, and since 1980, a large number of Hispanics—42 percent in 2000—have used that option to declare their race as Hispanic, thereby creating a "brown" category and, at least implicitly, challenging the government's position that Hispanic was an ethnic not racial descriptor.

1990  Every resident of the U.S., according to the census, was one of four primary racial groups or Other: White, Black/Negro, Native Indian/Native Alaskan, Asian or Other. However, the 1990 census categories included both racial and ethnic groups: Aleut, Asian Indian, Black or Negro, Chinese, Eskimo, Filipino, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Indian American, Japanese, Korean, Other, Other Asian Pacific Islander, Samoan, Vietnamese, White Hispanic origin of any race, and White, not of Hispanic origin.
Census racial categories included White, American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut, Asian and Pacific Islander, Black or African American, Other, Multiracial, Hispanic origin of any race, White, not of Hispanic origin. The four primary categories became five when Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders were separated from the Asian category in preparation for the 2000 census. But the most far-reaching change in the 2000 census was the multiple-race option. A person can be from two or more of the primary racial categories. "Mark one or more" converted six categories into 63, which, when cross-tabulated by the ethnic category of Hispanic, generated 126 categories of race/ethnicity. This was now policy for the entire federal statistical system. What for 200 years had been racial classification based on a small number of discrete groupings was no more. Insofar as race equals color, as it does in the minds of many, the multiple-race option transformed a categorical variable into something that resembled a continuous variable, with many shades of color now officially sanctioned.
ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL TOOLS of racism is stories. I used to think stories were neatly crafted tales—each with a beginning, a middle, and an end—packaged in books or speeches or told for fun around the campfire. But along with expanding my understanding of just about everything over the past few years, I've expanded my understanding of what stories are and how they function in our lives. Stories feed our belief systems. True, false, or somewhere in between, they are narratives we use to entertain and/or instruct ourselves. We all tell stories all the time. They can be written, drawn, filmed, or spoken aloud, or they can even incubate silently in our imaginations.

I had an ongoing story in my head, for instance, about my husband, Bruce, in which he hadn't been raised as well as I had, hadn't learned that complaining was a sign of weakness, hadn't learned that constant work exemplified a life well lived, hadn't learned that not wiping the counter clean after doing the dishes meant he might as well have not done the dishes at all. My story about him came less from who he was than from my interpretation of him, as informed by my childhood values regarding right and wrong. My ideas created my story, and my story created my ideas. This cycle included a tendency to collect evidence in support of the storyline and overlook the multiple facts that didn't fit. Bruce unknowingly had been cast as a character in a role he didn't identify with at all, one that prevented me from seeing him in his truest light. This in turn put him on the defensive and made it hard for him to be his best around me.

It's no coincidence that the word "story" is contained in the word "history." Either way, we're talking about human-constructed narratives used to describe people, values, places, eras, and events. Stories are a primary way we connect to those around us and before us. But if my story about my dear husband was so susceptible to selective seeing and processing, wouldn't
this mean the possibility existed that I’d taken in other stories in an equally distorted way? And if I did this, did others too? If we all do, where could I find reality? Whose “truth” defined the truth?

Each year my three sisters, one cousin, and I gather on the first weekend of April to hole up in a hotel and just visit. We love our family stories. In recent years we’ve spent time shaking our heads at how differently we remember them. If there are five of us, there will be five renditions, each of us absolutely sure her own is the accurate one.

Last year we were nearly kicked out of a restaurant for laughing uncontrollably as we tried to reconstruct the tale of the time my aunt’s dachshund, Maudy, peed through a knothole in the upstairs floor of our family’s Maine cabin, delivering a stream of urine onto the head of my unsuspecting uncle relaxing by the fire on the first floor. The story is legend. Everyone in the family knows it. But between the five of us we had different relatives in the room, different reasons the dog was upstairs; one sister even had Maudy’s gender wrong.

So what does this mean about the family stories I’ve relied on to shape my understanding of who I am and where I come from? If stories in my lifetime run the risk of being misremembered or distorted, how reliable are older family stories? A favorite of mine has always been the tale of my forebear Lydia Trask Putnam, who, in 1805, finagled to get a land grant to establish New Salem Academy in northern Maine. Because land grants were available only to white men, she did all the legwork and had the men sign on the dotted line. At least that’s how the story goes.

She spent months hacking her way though brush and timber and crossing streams and bogs, through inclement weather, family in tow, their possessions on their backs. After months and months of trudging, they settled along Maine’s eastern Canadian border. Lydia was in her sixties. Once established, she traveled the northern Maine woods on horseback as a midwife, bags of herbs and natural medicinal concoctions hanging off the saddle of her trusty horse, who, according to lore, would cross any stream or leap any felled tree. Lydia traversed the uncompromising terrain not only to aid mothers in childbirth but to tend to whatever ailment she encountered along the way. I love Lydia. I love this story.

More important than this story as I originally heard it, however, is the story it generated in my head and the way I used it to connect to the world around me. In the same way my education, elementary through college,
taught me US history in a sugarcoated way, my family told the story of Lydia in a romanticized way. It reminds me of the way funerals rarely point to the deceased’s flaws but instead send the person, surely as complex as the next person, off to rest with a set of immaculate stories.

Despite the fact that my story of Lydia may be incomplete, inaccurate, or flawed, I internalized both its content and all it implied. The story about Lydia told me women are strong, have great ideas, can be leaders, are resourceful, and can work until late in life. It told me my love of horses is in my blood. It told me I owe it to my rugged Yankee ancestors not to complain and to work tirelessly. It told me education was worth hacking your way through a forest to make happen. It told me that if she could persevere and do great things, so could I. It made me feel special to be a part of this narrative. Believing I have the blood of this pioneering woman in my veins has served as a building block in my identity formation. Even if all or part of that story were disproven or somehow called into question, the fact would remain: this story is part of what made me who I am today. Like removing the forms from poured and hardened concrete, the shape remains even when what shaped it is removed.

What if instead of a glorified history of family members connecting me to a glorified history of the United States, I’d learned a more balanced history in which humans and their endeavors are both imperfect and ever-changing? What if, at a young age, because of a more balanced narrative told through history classes, I could have tied the story about Lydia and the land grant to the harsh reality that there was no such thing as “free land” to be given away, that land grants were parcels of land stolen from indigenous people who’d lived on them for tens of thousands of years? What if I could have learned how one person’s windfall can be another person’s downfall? Would I have suddenly rejected my country? Would Lydia have lost all merit in my eyes? I doubt it.

The story of race is at the center of racism’s entanglement. The very idea that the world’s many peoples could be categorized by something called “race” is a story, one that has created a system of dominance for its storytellers. The story of race has become a self-fulfilling, self-perpetuating prophecy as the story creates the ideas, which then reinforce the story. The tragedy is the individual and collective potential that has been crushed by the power of a single story.
What is it that makes facing mistakes, weaknesses, or regrets so terrible that they must be completely and utterly denied? As long as the dominant culture holds fast to a story of white as right, the possibility of hearing other truths gets shut out, and the cycle continues: white folks experience people of color’s versions of events as incongruent and therefore inadmissible. How then does the dominant narrative become one of many, so that American history becomes a collection of short stories, as opposed to an epic told by a single author?

Think of a historical event in American history, perhaps the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the arrival of the Statue of Liberty, or any one of the wars Americans have fought. Where have you learned what you know about this event? Whose perspective did you learn? If you went in search of a fuller story, whose viewpoint would you seek?