

Privilege Exercises

Privilege Self-Assessment

Look over the list below, beginning on the left side. Check all the ways in which you do not have identity privilege. You can include everything from being left-handed to practicing a faith that worships on Saturday.

I **DO NOT** have privilege in these identities: I **DO** have unearned privilege in these identities:

Socio-economic _____

Socio-economic _____

Sexual Orientation _____

Sexual Orientation _____

Religion _____

Religion _____

Gender _____

Gender _____

Gender Identity _____

Gender Identity _____

Employment _____

Employment _____

Physical Ability _____

Physical Ability _____

English speaking _____

English speaking _____

Ethnicity _____

Ethnicity _____

Geographic location _____

Geographic location _____

Nationality _____

Nationality _____

Education _____

Education _____

Modern Utilities _____

Modern Utilities _____

Age _____

Age _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Pair up and take turns as you listen intently to the individual as they talk about both sides of their list. This exercise allows people an opportunity to air their frustrations at being denied privilege while also acknowledging that we all indeed have privilege. Acknowledging privilege is essential to the concept of empathy and the ultimate goal of equality.

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2012/12/how-to-talk-to-someone-about-privilege/>

Social Group Membership Profile

It is important to consider the ways in which we each experience the world through the things that give us our identity. Each of us has a gender, race, ability status, age, etc. These group memberships make up who we are. For each of the following categories, identify your identity: (Identify only those you feel comfortable identifying)

Gender: _____

Race: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Ability status: _____

Sexual Orientation: _____

Education: _____

Religion: _____

Age: _____

Class (socio-economic): _____

Language: _____

Nationality: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Consider the following questions based on the group memberships you have acknowledged above:

- 1) What memberships do you think of most often? Why?
- 2) What memberships do you consider least? Why do you think that is?
- 3) What memberships hurt your options or opportunities the most? How?
- 4) What memberships provide the most access or privileges? How?
- 5) What memberships have the strongest effect on your self-image? How?
- 6) What membership plays a greater role in how *others* see you? How?

Response to the Exercise

How did this exercise make you feel?

What were your thoughts as you were completing it?

What were your thoughts as you listened to others?

What have you learned from this?

(<http://edge.psu.edu/id/power/>)

Small Group Discussion

As facilitator, share how you have experienced/observed privilege individually and in systems around you. After this, ask the group to form small circles or pair off (depending on group size), and instruct them to respond, in turn, uninterrupted, for one minute each, to the following prompts:

Round One – What are one or more ways in which you have had unearned *disadvantage* in your life?

Round Two - What are one or more ways in which you have had unearned *advantage* in your life?

Round Three – What is it like for you to sit here, talk about, and hear about these experiences of unearned disadvantage and advantage?

Notes for Facilitator, 2010 Peggy McIntosh. Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, 1989 Peggy McIntosh.

Navigating Privilege

Bearing witness to our own personal privilege is a key first step to helping students examine their beliefs, prejudices, disadvantages, and advantages. Self-Reflection is essential. Here are steps to assist us in the process:

- 1) Self-reflect and identify areas in which you do not have privilege and areas in which you do have privilege
- 2) Avoid the urge to deny your privilege. EVERYONE has some form(s) of privilege.
- 3) In areas you do have privilege, determine how you will use your privilege to assist others and /or work to change systemic discrimination.
- 4) Listen to the other person's story and experiences. Be a 'witness' to their truth. Do not try to take over and be their spokesperson or alter their story.
- 5) Ask learning questions. What do you want or need from me? How can I help build a world in which everyone begins as I did?

ACTION STEPS

- 1) Lead with Empathy. Get an understanding of individual experiences. We all want to be heard regarding our hardships and challenges.
- 2) Guilt is a useless emotion. Privilege is not about damming or guiltling people into action. Acknowledge whatever privilege you have and consider ways in which to equalize power. Work to change the system of discrimination through direct discussion.
- 3) Ask... “how can we work to make sure that we are understanding and undermining the system of oppression and privilege that hurts all of us?” Systemic injustice is good for no one.
- 4) Reach out to like-minded people within your community and work to transform broken systems or injustices that are evident. Privilege will not go away until the root systems are abolished.
- 5) Speak out against injustice – no matter how big or small. Call people out & embrace being called out about privilege.
- 6) Take advantage of the opportunities you do have. Find a way to make your experiences a benefit to others.
- 7) READ! Knowledge is power. Know the issues that affect your organization or community. Educate others with the same privilege, to check themselves.
- 8) Invest in accountable relationships across difference and listen to their experiences and the effect those experiences have had in their lives.
- 9) Use your privilege to support inclusive organizations, schools, and communities that have a strong commitment to diversity and equality. Consider ways to equalize power.
- 10) Be an ally for those who do not have privilege. Use your power and privilege to speak up for equitable treatment, and to speak out against bigotry and oppression.
- 11) Lobby, organize, campaign, protest, recognize, and act against both external and internal forms of oppression and privilege.
- 12) Brainstorm how to use unearned assets to share power; which may include time, money, energy, literacy, mobility, leisure, connections, spaces, housing, travel opportunities,

