

# Lessons From the Token

Tackling White Supremacy to Create Diverse Communities

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## Main Theme

White supremacy is the culture we all live in.

White supremacy stops people of color from joining and participating in intentional communities.

As a leader or member of an intentional community, you have to be committed to dismantling white supremacy in order to create a more diverse community.

This work has to be done before you even start reaching out to people of color.

Being progressive and/or caring about Black Lives doesn't mean you are fighting white supremacy.

## Take a Breath

1. Because of white supremacy, you have unintentionally hurt people of color.
2. You are a good person.
3. You don't want to hurt people, but you have.
4. That sucks.
5. Do better.
6. It is not my job to forgive you.
7. Acknowledge your mistakes and move on.

# Identity and Privilege

- We all have identities
- Identities in general are not mutable
- Privilege comes from our identity
- Privilege is not earned
- Privilege works even when you are not aware of it
- Privilege doesn't mean your life has been easy, it just means some parts were easier
- You can't renounce your privilege
- Intersectionality does not negate your privilege
- Saying "we're all human" erases the real challenges people of color face

<b>Category</b>	<b>More Privilege</b>	<b>Less Privilege</b>
Race	White	Black, Asian, Indigenous, etc
Ethnicity	European Descent	African Descent, Asian, Latinx, etc
Socioeconomic Status	Wealthy, Middle Class	Low Income
Gender	Male	Female, Non-binary, Trans
Sexual Orientation	Straight	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual
National Origin	North American, European	South American, Middle Eastern, African, Southeast Asian
First Language	English	Spanish, Chinese, etc
Disability Status	Able Bodied	Disabled
Age	Older	Younger
Education	Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate	High School Diploma, Associates, Certificate

## Impact on Community Building

- In majority white communities, people of color are often tokenized
- They are expected to represent their entire race as well as recruit other people of color
- Meanwhile, their concerns are minimized because no one else is experiencing what they experience
- They don't have psychological space to be themselves
- Accommodations for people with less privilege are seen as “extraordinary” and are less likely to be accepted

# Bias

- Bias is an assumption about what someone's identity means
- Bias comes before conscious thought
- Bias affects who you think would be a good fit for your community
- Having good intentions does not counteract negative bias
- Proximity to people of color does not offset bias
- Overcome bias by making the unconscious conscious

# Microaggressions

- Microaggressions are actions that highlight someone's identity
- They are usually meant as ways to connect but they are harmful
- They make people feel like The Other
- Good intentions still cause harm
- Microaggressions make daily life exhausting
- People of color would rather live alone than in communities where they are constantly being picked out

## Examples of Microaggressions

- Where are you from? Really?
- How do you say your name again?
- Does your family live in America?
- Did you grow up in a rough neighborhood?
- I've been to [foreign country] before.
- How do you get your hair to do that?
- I walked into an [ethnic] restaurant once and I felt so out of place.
- Do you have a lot of brothers and sisters?
- You are so articulate.
- You're not like other [people of the same race].
- I don't see you as [race].

## How to Respond

- When someone points out a microaggression, apologize and move on
- Your first instinct will be to defend yourself and/or ask for forgiveness--don't
- Promise to do better instead of asking for absolution
- In the future, avoid questions or comments about someone's identity
- Connect with people based on what they volunteer about themselves
- Never bring up someone's race or ethnicity the first time you meet them

# Stages of White Response to Microaggressions

**Shock**

Are you calling me racist?

**Anger**

I have never treated people differently!

**Sadness**

I try so hard to be a good person.

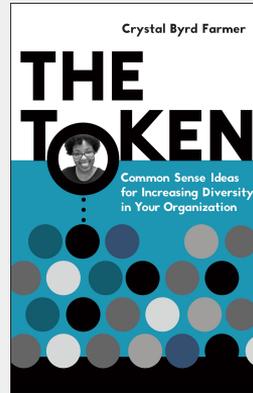
**Repair**

I want to do better.

## Next Steps

- You are responsible for educating others about white supremacy
- Talk to others in your community about what you've learned
- Avoid asking people of color to talk about their experiences in your community
  - Pay for diversity trainers
  - Create a safe space for your POC before asking for their labor
- Unblock your family members but don't argue at them
- Be vulnerable instead of trying to win them over
- Treat every relationship as a chance to grow together

# The Token: Common Sense Ideas for Increasing Diversity in Your Organization



Buy it from your favorite local bookstore  
or from the author at [www.crystalbyrdfarmer.com](http://www.crystalbyrdfarmer.com)

## Book Crystal For Your Organization!



**Virtually or In Person  
Topics:**

**Diversity, polyamory, intentional communities, and self-directed education**

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