Whites Receiving Feedback on Racism and Responding from the Mainstream Framework: Above & Below

### Feelings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singled out</th>
<th>Guilty</th>
<th>Attacked</th>
<th>Shamed</th>
<th>Scared</th>
<th>Silenced</th>
<th>Insulted</th>
<th>Judged</th>
<th>Outraged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crying</td>
<td>Leaving</td>
<td>Withdrawing</td>
<td>Arguing</td>
<td>Denying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Claims:

- I know POC
- I marched in the ’60s
- I took this in college
- The real oppression is class
- You are judging me
- You don’t know me
- You are generalizing
- That is just your opinion
- I disagree
- How dare you assume I would be racist?
- You don’t do this the right way
- You’re playing the race card

- This is not welcoming to me
- If I say the wrong thing I’ll get fired
- You are making me feel guilty
- You are elitist
- I just said one little innocent thing
- Some people just find offense where there is none
- You hurt my feelings
- You misunderstood me
- Where is your empathy?
- I don’t feel safe
- The problem is your tone
- I was taught to treat everyone equally

### Underlying beliefs (**do not need to be conscious or intentional**):

- Racism is simply personal prejudice
- Racism is only enacted occasionally, and rarely if ever by me
- As a white person, I will be the judge of whether racism has occurred
- My learning is finished / I know all I need to know
- Racism can only be intentional; not having intended racism cancels it out
- Having suffered relieves me of racism or racial privilege
- White people who experience another form of oppression cannot experience racial privilege
- If I am a good person I can’t be racist
- My unexamined perspective is equal to people of color’s
- I am entitled to remain comfortable
- How I am perceived by others is the most important issue
- As a white person I know the best way to challenge racism
- This process needs to feel good / be comfortable. If not, it’s being done wrong
- It’s not kind to point out racism
- Race privilege is something one is aware of and can feel
- Racism is conscious bias. I have none: I am not racist
- Racists are bad individuals, so you are saying that I am a bad person
- If you knew me or understood me you’d know I can’t be racist
- If I have friends of color I can’t be racist
- There is no problem / society is fine the way it is
- Racism is a simple problem (“People just need to …”)
- My world view is objective and the only one operating
- If I can’t see it, it isn’t legitimate
- If you have more knowledge on the subject than I do, you think you’re better than me
- Judging is wrong; it is possible not to judge
- I am superior

### How it functions

- Maintains white solidarity
- Silences the discussion
- Protects one’s worldview
- Focuses on messenger, not message
- Protects racism

- Closes off self-reflection
- Makes white people the victims
- Takes race off the table
- Rallies more resources to white people
- Minimizes
- Hijacks the discussion
- Protects white privilege

Robin DiAngelo, 2015
Whites Receiving Feedback on Racism and Responding from an Anti-Racist Framework: Above & Below

Feelings:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gratitude</th>
<th>Excitement</th>
<th>Discomfort</th>
<th>Guilt</th>
<th>Embarrassment</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Humility</th>
<th>Compassion</th>
<th>Curiosity</th>
<th>Reflecting</th>
<th>Apology</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Processing</th>
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Behaviors:

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Claims:

Thank you
YES! I am opening and shifting
It’s my responsibility to resist defensiveness and complacency
Man, this is hard
Wow, hard but so stimulating and important
I better get on this
Oops!
It can’t be avoided
It’s personal but not strictly personal
There is no right way to do it; I will focus on the message not the messenger
I need to build my capacity to endure discomfort / bear witness to the pain of racism
I have some work to do

Underlying beliefs

BEING GOOD OR BAD IS NOT RELEVANT
Racism is a multi-layered system
All of us are socialized into it
Racism cannot be avoided
Whites have blind spots on racism / I have blind spots on racism / it’s hard to see or recognize
Racism is complex / I don’t have to understand it for it to be valid
Whites are unconsciously invested in racism / I am unconsciously invested in racism
Bias is implicit / unconscious; I don’t expect to be aware of mine without a lot of on-going effort
Receiving feedback is a gift
Feedback from POC indicates trust
Feedback on white racism is difficult to give; how I receive feedback is not as relevant as the feedback itself
Authentic anti-racism is rarely comfortable. Discomfort is key to my growth and thus desirable
White comfort maintains the racial status quo, so discomfort is necessary and important
I must not confuse comfort with safety / As a white person I am safe in discussions of racism
The antidote to guilt is action
It takes courage to break with white solidarity
It takes courage to lead other whites in this work; how can I support those that do?
The only way out is through
I bring my group’s history with me; History matters
Given my socialization, it is much more likely that I am the one who doesn’t understand the issue
Racism hurts (even kills) people of color 24/7. Interrupting it is more important than my feelings, ego, or self-image

How it functions

Minimizes defensiveness
Demonstrates curiosity and humility
Stretches one’s worldview
Puts what one professes into practice
Interrupts privilege-protecting comfort
Interrupts racism

Demonstrates vulnerability
Allows for growth
Ensures action
Builds authentic relationships / trust
Interrupts internalized superiority

Robin DiAngelo, 2015