

The Tyber Lustig Foundation chooses to comment on this highly explosive topic because it has a dramatic impact on the well-being of so many people in society. Racism, as with so many aspects of life, comes in many shapes and sizes. It affects many people who feel the sting of prejudice to the seemingly nonracist people who get labeled as racist. While this topic has a wide variety of forms, our foundation will begin the discussion with the elephant in the room topic: Black versus White. Why start with just this? The answer is because being descendants of slavery carries with it one significant difference to most every other American citizen. Before being dismissive of this statement, please consider the following: Descendants of slavery are the only group of people that were brought to this country against their will. Most every other nonwhite ethnicity came to The United States of America VOLUNTARILY.

As is The Tyber Lustig Foundation's trademark approach, let us state what should be common ground for this discussion. Human trafficking in any form should be unacceptable to anyone, with slavery being at the top of this list. Nothing is more inhumane than forcing someone to do something against their will. As the United States of America has evolved from its colonization days to present, there is no bigger stain on our history as large as our participation in the slave trade. The indignities that this group of people had to endure is almost impossible to comprehend. While the civil war may have in theory freed the slaves in 1865, they, and many of their descendants, had to fight hard to reach common ground with people that did not have descendants of slavery in their family history. Even after 100 years, in the 1960s, many parts of society continued to inhumanely treat, and disrespect, descendants of slaves, who were forcibly sent here against their will. Albeit painfully slow, overt racism has shown signs of dwindling in recent history. That said, unfortunately, subtle signs of racism continue to persist. An example of this subtle natured racism would be when a star black athlete is interviewed and a commentator refers afterward with, "What an articulate young man." While the commentator may mean no harm, nor be racist, it is disturbing that being articulate is somehow noteworthy. Not overtly, or intentionally racist, but right up there with greeting an older person with, "You look good – FOR YOUR AGE," begs the question, "What age should I be to be looking bad?" Same for the "articulate" comment. A commentator does not need to be surprised because someone can speak coherently.

The issue of slavery aside, let us fast forward to the present. History for anybody, does not come with a delete button. Most people (and countries for that matter) have done things in their past that they regret. As difficult as it may be, we have no choice but to move forward and hopefully, not make any more regrettable mistakes in the future. The Tyber Lustig Foundation wants to provide content to help everybody lead a happier life regardless of the level of pigmentation in a person's skin. The Tyber Lustig Foundation acknowledges that there are two extremes to the current racism discussion. One extreme view is that racism no longer exists, and the other extreme view is that EVERYTHING is racist. Our response to both is respectfully—NO! That said, where do we go from here?



The Tyber Lustig Foundation never wants to be accused of telling people what to do or think. That said, our message to all young adults is to never let anyone tell you what you CANNOT achieve in life because of your background. Even your well-meaning parents need to understand this. While much of their well-intended parental advice may be tainted with personal emotional scar tissue of their individual circumstances, we all live in the land of equal opportunity with unlimited upside. The list of incredibly successful descendants of slavery is ultra-impressive. That long list includes highly successful entrepreneurs, businesspeople, military leaders, actors, entertainers, doctors, lawyers, politicians, judges, authors, broadcasters, journalists, athletes, etc. Thankfully, none of their parents tried to lower their child's aspirations, or if they did, thankfully those children all had the intestinal fortitude to pursue their individual dreams.

While not nearly as bad as being racist, being unjustly accused of being a racist is not fair either. We all do stupid things in our lives. The Tyber Lustig Foundation does not condone being insensitive to any group of people. That said, everyone needs to chill out a bit. Just because you played cowboys and Indians as a child doesn't mean you were intentionally trying to offend Native Americans. You were just having fun without worrying about offending anyone in particular. If we truly want to make progress in normalizing racial differences, it needs to be a two-way street. For example, in the highly successful movies, *White Chicks* and *White Men Can't Jump*, they both made fun of a typical white stereotype. However, if there was ever a movie that made fun of a black stereotype, lord knows what the backlash would be. Nowadays, comedians are even under assault. If a black comedian makes a Jewish joke, they are labeled anti-Semitic. If a Jewish comedian tells a black joke they are labeled racists. Same goes for Italian, Irish, Polish, Mexican, Asian, gay, transgender, height, weight, etc., jokes. Why is it only old people can laugh at an old person joke without getting offended? Must we all get past our 60s to be able to laugh at ourselves? Give it some thought.

One last thing, when it comes to nonviolent protesting, we should all be grateful we live in a country that allows us to do so freely. If someone decides to kneel for our national anthem to bring attention to a particular cause, The Tyber Lustig Foundation would hope that they would also be respectful of the many brave servicemen and women of all ethnicities who volunteered to serve and protect the very freedoms you choose to utilize. America is not perfect, but it is the only country in the world that people from other countries risk their lives to enter.

