

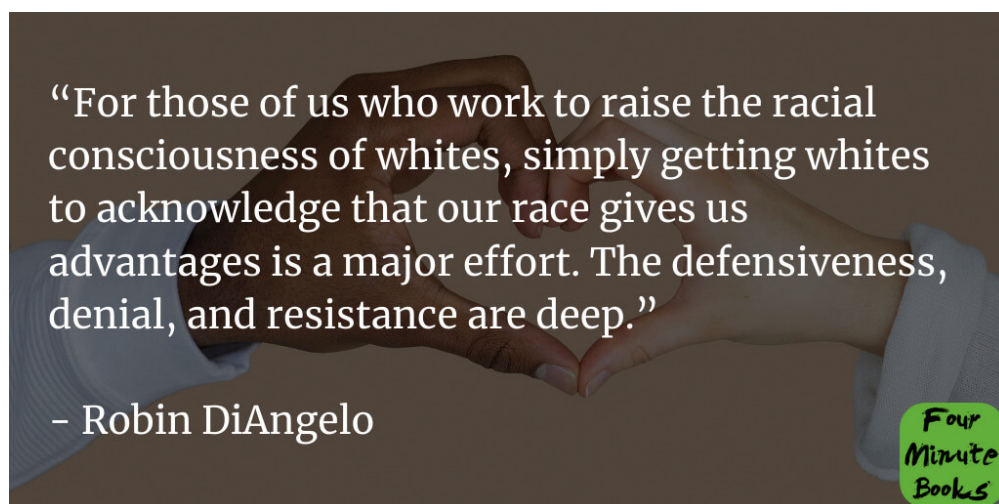
# White Fragility Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *White Fragility* will help you take steps toward becoming a kinder and more fair person by helping you understand why it's so difficult for white people, especially in America, to talk about racism.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Unless you're hiding under a rock, you're well aware of the racial tensions that are going on in the United States right now. With cops murdering black people, riots, looting, and more, it's clear that there are deep wounds that we must heal.

But that isn't easy to do considering all the barriers we need to tear down to get there. The sad truth is that racism is woven into our society more deeply than we can imagine. And some of the worst of it is ingrained into white people's heads.

Just try calling any white person a racist and you'll see what I mean. It's not easy to accept the truth that we all have some unfair biases against certain groups of people. But we must overcome this white fragility to fix these terrible problems in society.

If you want to help, get started with Robin DiAngelo's book *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. It will show you why you must hold back your defensiveness when it comes to your own racism, and how to do that.

Here are just 3 of the many useful and eye-opening lessons I got from this book:

1. Race doesn't really exist, it's just a social construct.

2. While many white people go through challenges, they have privileges that others who aren't white don't get.
3. White fragility protects racism and prevents it from being destroyed by making sure it stays unchallenged and unexamined.

Let's get right into these lessons and see how much we can learn!

## **Lesson 1: Society made up the idea of race because of some gross misunderstandings about certain groups of people.**

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At its core, white fragility denies and misunderstands the nature of racism and race. This reinforces inequality and makes it difficult to resolve. To start breaking it down, we need to understand racism, which means we've got to understand race.

You might believe that race is a genetic fact, but it's not. It's not the most intuitive truth because of the physical differences we see between races. But when you get down to the science of genetics, this assumption falls apart.

The reality is, people made up race. It's a social construct, which means it guides the way people think and act. It makes us treat some groups of people in specific ways. But where did this all start?

The founders of the United States attempted to build the country on equality, or their idea of what that meant. But their view of the world included the social construct of race, which they built into the US constitution for their benefit.

**They justified this with “race science,” which isn't actually science at all but rather the idea that some groups of people are inferior to others.** In this case, it was African Americans that were inferior to those of European descent.

This let white people prevent blacks from rising up and taking their status and let them keep blacks enslaved. For centuries this gross misunderstanding has perpetuated into the fabric of society without ever being addressed. Until now.

## **Lesson 2: Even though they experience hardships, all white people still have more privilege than those who aren't white don't receive.**

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Although I didn't know it growing up, I have a lot of what I now know is white privilege. I could get defensive about this and think about how I didn't always have it so easy, but that's not what this is about.

It's about the advantages that other white people and I have just because we're white that people of color do not.

If you need evidence just pay attention to the sense of belonging that our culture gives to white people. Everywhere you look, whether in movies, leadership, authors, or elsewhere, the people are predominantly white.

This paints the picture of America as a predominantly white society and sends the implied message that white people belong here. And that people of color don't.

Consider also the idea of crime. In the media, we see black and Latino people depicted as having an association with crime. **This perpetuates into people's minds, and research confirms that white people consider a neighborhood's crime levels to be connected with how many people of color live there.**

What's worse is that police and judges are also likely to think this way. This can have disastrous consequences as we've seen in situations like what happened to George Floyd.

### **Lesson 3: We can't fully examine, challenge, and end racism until we deal with white fragility.**

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The author co-leads anti-racism workshops all across the US. Even at these events, she encounters white fragility. But the lessons she learns might help us all find ways to resolve this issue.

In one experience, DiAngelo met a woman from Germany who'd lived in the US for 23 years. In her youth, the woman never learned about race or racism, and no black people lived in her town.

The author asked her if she may have unknowingly adopted any racist ideas after living in the US or from watching American movies. But this was enough to make the woman explode in anger and promise never to come to another workshop.

This isn't the only experience DiAngelo has had with white fragility while on her travels. She's familiar with simple questions with only a hint at a white person having unaccounted for racist ideas leading to angry outbursts like this one.

Unfortunately, this is a hallmark of white fragility that keeps us from bringing racism out in the light so we can stamp it out. Not only does it shut off all conversation after an incident like this occurs, it likely prevents some from even happening in the first place.

**If we want to solve this awful problem, we must set aside our pride and admit where we might be wrong, even if it hurts.** Because for all the pain white people may feel at it, people of color are suffering far greater torments than any white person can imagine.

### **White Fragility Review**

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This book really opened my eyes. I had no idea that racism was this bad and I only hope I can help tear it down. Although it felt a little intense at times, *White Fragility* may be the kind of book that people need to read to finally understand and annihilate inequality.

### **Who would I recommend the White Fragility summary to?**

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The 61-year-old who doesn't think he's racist but won't talk about it, the 35-year-old black woman who's curious to learn why it's so hard for white people to talk about race, and every white person who cares to try to help end systemic racism.