

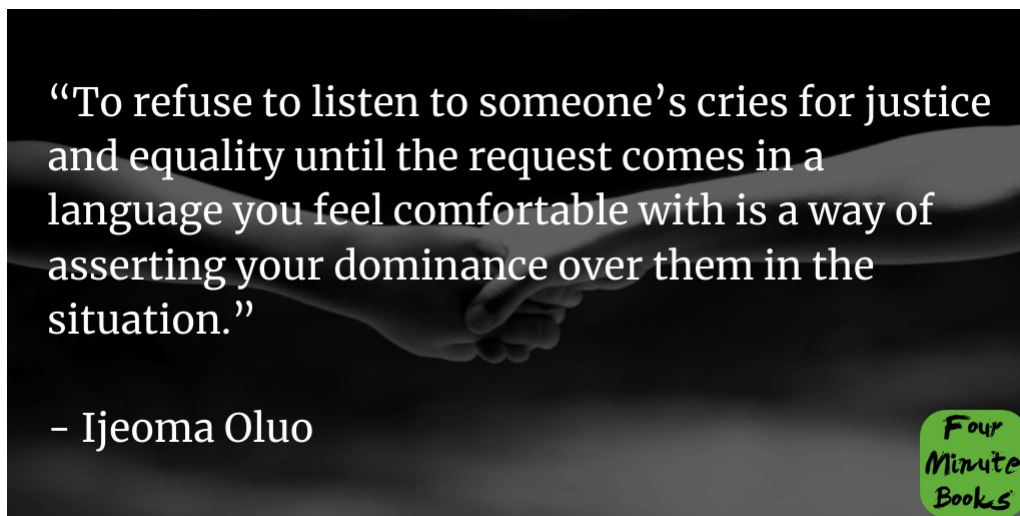
So You Want To Talk About Race Summary



1-Sentence-Summary: *So You Want To Talk About Race* will help you make the world a better, fairer place by explaining how deeply entrenched racism is in our culture today and giving specific tips for having effective conversations about it so you can help end this major issue with society.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



On May 25, 2020, a black man named George Floyd tried to buy cigarettes with a counterfeit \$20 bill. The convenience store employee at the counter called the cops and seventeen minutes later, Floyd was dead. One of the responding officers had knelt on his neck, suffocating the man and murdering him.

The riots and marches that proceeded tried desperately to communicate the pain of the black community. Not just from Floyd's murder, but from that of all other blacks that have died unnecessarily at the hands of police officers who should have been there to "protect and serve."

These crimes are revolting. They must stop. But what does it take? How can we push for change in a way that it actually happens? Will the government ever listen and change? And what can we do on an individual level to end systemic racism?

These questions and more are the topics of Ijeoma Oluo's book *So You Want To Talk About Race*. You'll discover what makes racism so prevalent today, how to recognize it, and get some actionable steps you can take to help fight it.

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

1. To help fight racism, learn to see how it's part of our society and government, and how they reinforce it.
2. The first step to ending discrimination is having conversations about race, even if they are uncomfortable.
3. Racial bias in schools contributes to a school-to-prison pattern that leaves a disproportionately large amount of minorities incarcerated.

Are you ready to find out what you can do to take a stand against systemic racism? Let's go!

Lesson 1: Racism is part of our society and government and we need to begin seeing the truth of this if we want to help fight it.

In 2016 when Donald Trump became president, some people thought that the Democrats lost because societal problems in America were a matter of class, not race. People surmised that the left focused only on Blacks, Latinx, women, and trans people and not white men.

The author grew tired of having to keep fighting these views. The things that keep a disabled white person poor are not the same as what keeps a healthy Black woman poor. Oluo began asking people why they think Black people are poor and if it's for the same reasons whites are.

But most of society overlooks how much race is a factor that determines a person's success.

Consider how we're decades past the civil rights movement but the racial wealth gap remains just as big as it was back then. Racism is part of our economic system, which justifies white supremacy.

We must fix these problems by focusing on race. Oluo gives a few ideas to consider:

1. It's about race if a person of color thinks it is. No questions.
2. If an issue has an excessive effect on certain races, then race is a factor in it.
3. Whenever the above fits into a bigger system affecting people of color disproportionately, it's about race.

Lesson 2: Uncomfortable conversations on the topic of race is the starting point of ending discrimination.

When Oluo was 34 she had her first serious talk about race with her white mother. Her mom had told a joke involving a "Black punchline" at work and one of her Black coworkers asked her if she knew anything about being Black.

Although this first made Oluo's mother angry on account of her having Black children, she resisted the urge to express it. Her intention would have been to tell the man that she knew where he was coming from because of her Black family members.

Oluo had to explain to her mom that there is a difference between loving Black people and actually being one. Her mother went from aiming to just be a "good white person" to trying to help.

You can have the same mindset shift by being willing to have conversations about race yourself. Here are a few guidelines to follow as you do:

- **Declare your reasons for having the discussion to let the person decide if they want to engage.**
- Do your research. It's not people of color's job to inform you of something you can Google.
- Silence your ego when you're tempted to get defensive. Remember, the point isn't to win but to listen.
- Don't stop listening if the person you're talking to gets angry. They have a right to feel however they want.

Lesson 3: More minorities end up incarcerated as a result of racial bias in schools.

Oluo's brother Aham had some struggles to get through school. His teachers misinterpreted the boy's energy as aggression, leading to all sorts of challenges.

In one case a teacher set up a reward system that made the children "pay rent" for their desks. Aham's frequent outbursts made him unable to "afford" his. When he had to sit on the floor the other kids teased him.

For years the boy struggled to make friends, experienced panic attacks daily, and later dropped out of high school. Eventually, he was fortunate enough to find music which helped him focus, pass the GED, and get a scholarship to college.

Unfair treatment like this isn't uncommon. **Science proves that racial bias influences administrators decisions.** They punish children of color more often and harsher than white kids, leading them to prison more frequently.

This is known as the school-to-prison pipeline. It starts with suspension, which tears apart the trust kids have in teachers and schools and harms their self-esteem. Schools with more

Black children have more severe punishments for even menial things like being disrespectful. White kids, in contrast, don't get suspended until they do drugs or something violent.

To help fight this, you can talk to your local schools and see how they handle discipline. Push for more fair treatment and help them close the opportunity gap between whites and people of color.

So You Want To Talk About Race Review

So You Want To Talk About Race is a must-read for everyone. I especially liked how thoroughly it went over the reasons racism exists and gave specific tips for fighting it. It's going to take work to end systemic racism, but books like this one definitely make it easier!

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Who would I recommend the So You Want To Talk About Race summary to?

The 60-year-old white male who doesn't realize how racist they are, the 35-year-old that is oblivious to the fact that racism is still a huge problem, and anyone that knows that black lives really do matter.