



Gather @Grand Speaker Series

Racism: Roots, Resolves, Results Summer Movies Discussion

Ruby Bridges
Hidden Figures
13th

Racism is a system of advantage based on race. It is not prejudice alone. Racism is a system involving cultural messages, institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs.

Today we will look back at one scene from each of the movies/documentaries we viewed this summer. Using each movie as a guide we will examine and discuss implicit bias, white privilege, and systemic racism.

Ruby Bridges

Implicit biases are unconscious attitudes and stereotypes that can manifest in the criminal justice system, workplace, school setting, and in the healthcare system. Some people will act on the basis of bias (prejudice and stereotypes) without intending to do so.

Remember Dr. Coles, the psychologist that helped Ruby Bridges manage her feelings while going through the trauma of integrating William Frantz Elementary School in September of 1954. Focus on the scene where Mrs. Coles offers Dr. Coles some red beans and rice and Lucille offers Dr. Coles some dessert and he declines. Later when Dr. Coles was at home, he told his wife that he was hungry?

- Why do you think that Dr. Coles did not eat the food prepared by Ruby's mom, Lucille?
- What point was Mrs. Coles making?
- Share a couple of other biases that were mentioned in this movie?

Hidden Figures

White Privilege is unearned advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice. White privilege, however, does not imply that white people have not or cannot experience challenges in life; it means that any challenges that a white person has faced or may face is not related to the color of their skin.

Remember the scene (after the Russian cosmonaut had put the first man in space) where Katherine went to the restroom and when she returned her supervisor Al Harrison asked her “Where the hell do you go every day for forty minutes?”

- What are some of the privileges that White women and men had in this movie?
- Share a few examples of white privilege that exist at work, at school, in health, etc.
- How does white privilege affect Black people today?

13th

Systemic racism describes how discriminatory actions show up in the educational system, the economic system, the health care system, the criminal justice system and more. It's when individual attitudes of prejudice and bigotry are baked into the operations of cultural institutions.

Remember the scene showing Gingrich, Nixon and Clinton discussing their roles in “The War on Drugs.”

- The war on drugs became a crime issue instead of a health issue.
 - Media portrayed Hippies using marijuana and Blacks using heroin.
 - Cocaine was used by whites in suburbs. Crack was an inner-city issue.
 - Congress enacted mandatory sentencing for crack but not the same sentencing for cocaine.
- What racist practices did the educational system, the economic system, and the health care system use against Blacks during the “War on Drugs” Era?

Now, think about Khalif Browder and how racist practices in the criminal justice system affected him.

- He could not pay the bail bond for his release from jail as he awaited his trial date.
 - He also refused to plead guilty to a crime that he did not commit in order to get a shorter sentence.
 - While incarcerated he gave up hope. His mental health suffered. He was beat by inmates and prison guards. After 3 years he was released from prison.
 - Two years later, Khalif committed suicide at the age of 22.
- What can you do to stop racist practices within our criminal justice system to prevent Blacks from ending up in the prison pipeline thus enslaved in 21st century America?