

## Introduction to Racists Anonymous (RA)

Will we as Americans ever “get over” our racism?

On the night that President Barak Obama was elected, I called Mamie, my mother’s best friend-- still alive at the age of 102. When this granddaughter of freed slaves answered the phone, without saying hello I asked, “Mamie, Can you believe what just happened?” I will never forget Mamie’s words as long as I live, “Is there anything too hard for the Lord?”

Now nearly eight years later we ask that same question as we seem to have made less progress than we had hoped concerning Racism – America’s ailing and illegitimate child with Slavery.

A recent study reported by Anderson Cooper on CNN shows that a significant percentage of African-American children and other children of color see their Black/Brown skin as inferior to White skin. You can click this link to see the news report (after the obligatory commercial.)

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/05/13/doll.study/>

Even more recent studies by racism experts such as Joe Feagin of Texas A & M University, as reported in the New York Times raise troubling questions. This article is a *must read*.

[http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/27/american-racism-in-the-white-frame/?\\_r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/27/american-racism-in-the-white-frame/?_r=0)

After spending three years in London where I encountered almost no racism directed toward me, I at first thought that perhaps the UK had no problems with racism. But after a while, I realized that while I was not the victim, there were others who suffered – Eastern Europeans for example. Recent Brexit talks show that this racial tension remains in the UK today as well.

Is the grip of racism on humanity so strong because of its prehistoric past? Could it be a primitive, lingering holdover from an age when emerging Homo Erectus might have fought off the Homo Habilis on a regular basis? What primitive biological memory or moral injury keeps this primitive and counterproductive trait alive within us?

We have sent a spacecraft to Jupiter. But when I returned home to the US from London the ages old racial assaults resumed. Our primitive past remains in us, in our organizations, often expressed as Racism, Sexism, Homophobia, or some other bias based upon external appearance or practice. We are like children who when asked by mother, "Who did this," no one seems to know.

Could it be that we are all in denial because we are all addicted to Racism? I think so.

There are many great programs such as "Black Lives Matter." Varying approaches are necessary. It is important to note that while the Black Lives Matter *push approach*, for example, focuses on confronting external forces and patterns of racism. The RA 12-Step program focusses on our need for internal change. Push approaches that focus on external forces may create unintended resentment. While this resentment may emerge from a primitive place within us, we must take it seriously if we want to create new outcomes. The following study illustrates this point in surprising ways.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/01/07/462132196/do-these-jeans-make-me-look-unethical>

The 12-Step program is designed to pulls us forward as we first acknowledge that we have a problem; secondly, we accept that the problem is beyond our ability to manage; and third, we turn this problem over to the Higher Power. If we do this, we will reduce the ways we continually infect succeeding generations.

America needs a 12-step Program to end racism. Let's end racism in ourselves first and then let's see what happens!

Fox News

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/08/28/church-offers-alcoholics-anonymous-inspired-recovery-program-for-racists.html>

BBC

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37793354>

Channel 4 London

<https://www.facebook.com/Channel4News/videos/10154189136921939/>

KQED Radio

<http://www.wnyc.org/story/racists-anonymous-offers-12-step-approach-to-racism/>

CBS Evening News

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/racists-anonymous-helping-to-make-people-aware-of-their-own-biases/>

Alabama Living

[http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2017/02/racists\\_anonymous\\_founder\\_says.html](http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2017/02/racists_anonymous_founder_says.html)

## **Racists Anonymous Leader's Script (Should last 1 hour, no more)**

### Supplies Needed:

- Leader's Script
- The groups spiral notebook for sign in and contact information
- A page stating "the problem."
- A page stating "the solution."
- A page stating the Racists Anonymous (RA) version of the 12-steps
- Bold signs up front or placed on the floor in a small circle that read:  
"Racists Anonymous places principles above personality. Do not repeat the stories you hear here."

### **Begin the Meeting:**

We will now observe a moment of silence followed by a prayer. (*Offered by a member or the Serenity Prayer.*)

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a racist. We welcome you to the Thursday Evening Racist Anonymous (RA) Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help, understanding, and friendship we are privileged to enjoy.

We who live in awareness of our own racism are seeking to understand and practice, with the help of God, a better way for ourselves. We have avoided awareness and known fear and resentment. We became aware, and we remembered God forgives, but sometimes we feel lonely and without hope. In RA we discover that no situation is really hopeless; there is a way to find contentment and happiness. Even though the ugliness of racism surrounds us, it need not dominate our lives.

We urge you to join us as we seek solutions to understand what behavior is appropriate and healthy and will lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes. When we learn to place this problem in its true perspective, racism loses the power to control.

We seek spiritual help. Willfully forcing our own solutions can make us irritable and unreasonable, without us knowing. We need the help of God to deal with a problem so large.

The Racist Anonymous program is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives along with daily prayer or meditation. By engaging this program along with the loving interchange of help among members makes us ready to receive serenity.

What is said here, in the group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another.

During the meeting, please do not interrupt others or try to fix their problem. So that all who care to can have an opportunity to share, please limit your sharing to three minutes. Keep the focus on Racists Anonymous; let's leave outside our professions, subjects, and other programs.

**Have members do the following readings:**

- The problem
- The solution
- The twelve steps (Use one reader or circulate and read 1 or 2 per person)

Now we'll introduce ourselves. If you are a newcomer or visitor, let us know so that we can welcome you. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a racist. Each of the present members then introduce themselves. *Participants should feel free not to say "I am a racist" if they do not honestly feel they are. The leader, however, must be willing to acknowledge his or her racism to lead.*

**Are there any organization announcements?**

For our group purpose, there is but one authority – a loving God. Our leaders are but trusted servants – they do not govern. To improve our communication, please write your name, phone number, and email address on the open page in this notebook. There is also a schedule to sign up to speak at a future meeting. Please sign up.

**Now I'd like to introduce the speaker or topic ... We are now open for general sharing. Does our speaker have a word or two to focus on as we share and ask questions?** (pause for answer)

After sharing is complete, the leader continues, **"There is time for one more share.**

**Let's thank the speaker/everyone for a good meeting. (clap)** Remember, the opinions you heard were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you like and leave the rest. The things you heard here were spoken in confidence and should be treated as *confidential*. Let everything spoken here remain within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A special word to those who have not been with us for long. If you keep an open mind, you will find help. We believe there is no situation too difficult to be made better, no unhappiness too great to be lessened. We are not perfect. The welcome we give may not show the warmth in our hearts for you. You may not like all of us. But if you continue with us you will come to love us in a special way, in the way we already love you.

Talk to each other. Reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Let the understanding, love, and peace found in the program grow in you one day at a time. Please stand, take hands as we pray, **The Lord's Prayer.**

**Some continue at the end of the Lord's Prayer to say ... "and keep coming back. It works!" (Individuals may feel free to use the language of their choice)**

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
The power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

## The Problem

The legacy of racism clings to humanity so closely; we ooze racism the way a heavy consumption of garlic can cause us to ooze the smell of garlic by merely sweating. Because of America's slave legacy and its near annihilation of native peoples among others, America can no more escape racism's continued impact than a fish in the ocean can escape getting wet. Racism and cultural oppression not only persist in America but also endures around the world as if they were ancient anthropological holdovers – like cannibalism.

Is it any wonder that despite racism's dogged persistence, almost no one admits to being a "racist?"

Isn't doing something radically new, civilized, and effective long overdue? In strictly scientific terms, we may not be "addicted" to racism, but we may as well be. The impact of each person's or organization's racism varies dramatically based upon the individual's or group's power and influence. But so does the racism that grows in the hearts and minds of those harmed by racism. As a result, humanity remains deadlocked in a never-ending conspiracy of silence as racism's primitive iron grip keeps us all in cyclical bondage to death.

Isn't it time for a generation of courageous people to rise, tell the truth, and break racism's vicious cycle – in ourselves?

Few groups or systems ever relinquish power voluntarily. "Given racism's continuing costs to society, is the payoff for not shaking its iron grip still worth it?"

Do we "get it" ... that rooting racism out of ourselves is the first step toward rooting it out of our society and institutions? That it's not just a "blind spot" in some of us, but it remains the "blind spot" in all of us?

Will we in our generation have the honesty, persistence, patience, and courage to unburden future generations by coming to the realization that, "It's me, O God?" Or will we continue to deny the world this critically necessary ingredient without which Creation according to God's design remains unfinished?

## The Solution

Are we not “the salt of the earth,” “the yeast?” How many loaves of God’s *Wonder Bread* have gone unmade -- bread for the world’s deepest hunger?

Why?

Because of the primitive racism “hook” within us, demagogues more easily exploit our inner jealousy, envy, and fear, pulling us away -- even from our own natural self-interest to fulfill racisms’ destructive and unyielding demands.

Here’s the Good News! God, the Creator, is still baking, speaking, creating, sending humanity the wide variety of ingredients necessary to finish creation toward God’s envisioned perfection. With God’s help, we can continually overcome, *one day at a time* and teach other *race addicts* to do the same.

For the purpose of Racists Anonymous, let us all consider owning our behavior as “racist” whenever we react to another based solely upon race or some other external factor. That means if I see a group of African American or Latin American kids walking down the street, and I automatically lock my doors ... That means if my *blind date* shows up, is White, and I refuse to answer ... That means that if an Arabic person gets on a plane and I automatically think terrorist ... Well, considering my honest answers to these sorts of questions, “Hi, my name is (*insert your name here when reading this,*) and I’m a racist.”

Let’s end racism in ourselves first and then let’s see what happens!

# Racists Anonymous 12 Steps of Recovery

1. I have come to admit that I am powerless over my addiction to racism in ways I am unable to recognize fully, let alone manage.
2. I believe that only a power greater than me can restore me in my humanness to the non-racist creature as God designed me to be.
3. For my own good and the good of future generations, I have decided to turn my will and my life over to the care of God insofar as I understand God.
4. I've made a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself concerning my bias toward others on the basis of race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion or any external physical difference such as size, ability, or adornment and more.
5. I have admitted to God, to myself and to another human being the exact nature of my wrongful thoughts and actions.
6. I am entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. I humbly asked God to remove my shortcomings.
8. I've made a list of all persons I have harmed and am willing to make amends insofar as this is possible.
9. I will make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them, others, or create more harm than good.
10. I will continue taking personal inventory, and when I behave wrongly, I will admit it promptly.
11. I will continually seek through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God insofar as I understand God, praying for knowledge of God's Will and Wisdom for my life along with the power I need to carry that out.
12. As I have spiritual awakenings as the result of these steps, I will share this message with other race addicts as I seek to practice these principles in all my affairs.

## Pushing the Envelope

Man was born into barbarism when killing his fellow man was a normal condition of existence. He became endowed with a conscience. And he has now reached the day when violence toward another human being must become as abhorrent as eating another's flesh.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait*, 1963

Theory –

Why? live in a racist culture, so hard to realize it, living in it. oozes in the air we breathe, systems we are part of – institutionalized. Ahrd to realize it when racism is becoming more overt, .. frog in boiling water. Becoming tolerant.. desensitized.. need to be innocutled..need practice & skill in raising awareness.. justice & witness.. anti racism discussion – brief today.. why – because importn to admit.. I am a racist.. unless we do it runs us.. safe, confidential, emerging idea

2<sup>nd</sup> w/wellness group – we also live in a violent culture - NVC.. stay tuned.. next month..

Ron’s advice: publicize in advance, have a press release..

Open up to the wider community, make it an evening event

Definition of racism – judgements based on externals, rather than character – racism – original sin of the US – so focus on racism 1<sup>st</sup>

Intros ice breaker q’s

1. When did you first observe racism.. child, how old, how did you know (the move to a wealthier whiter, “better” community.. no one said whiter, but it was obvious to me, said it was better)
2. When did you 1<sup>st</sup> observe in your parents... the N word.. in the neighborhood.. gated community, wall..

Leader models it..

- 1.

FAQ’s can black people be racist – shades of color – prefer lighter vs darker , blacks bias against muslims,

Lay leaders – that rotate – empowering – show how easy it is to lead

Group picks topics to focus on.. can be news, books, movies,

Check out FCCB.. when they started.