



Unconscious Bias

Getting Real about Your Club's Culture

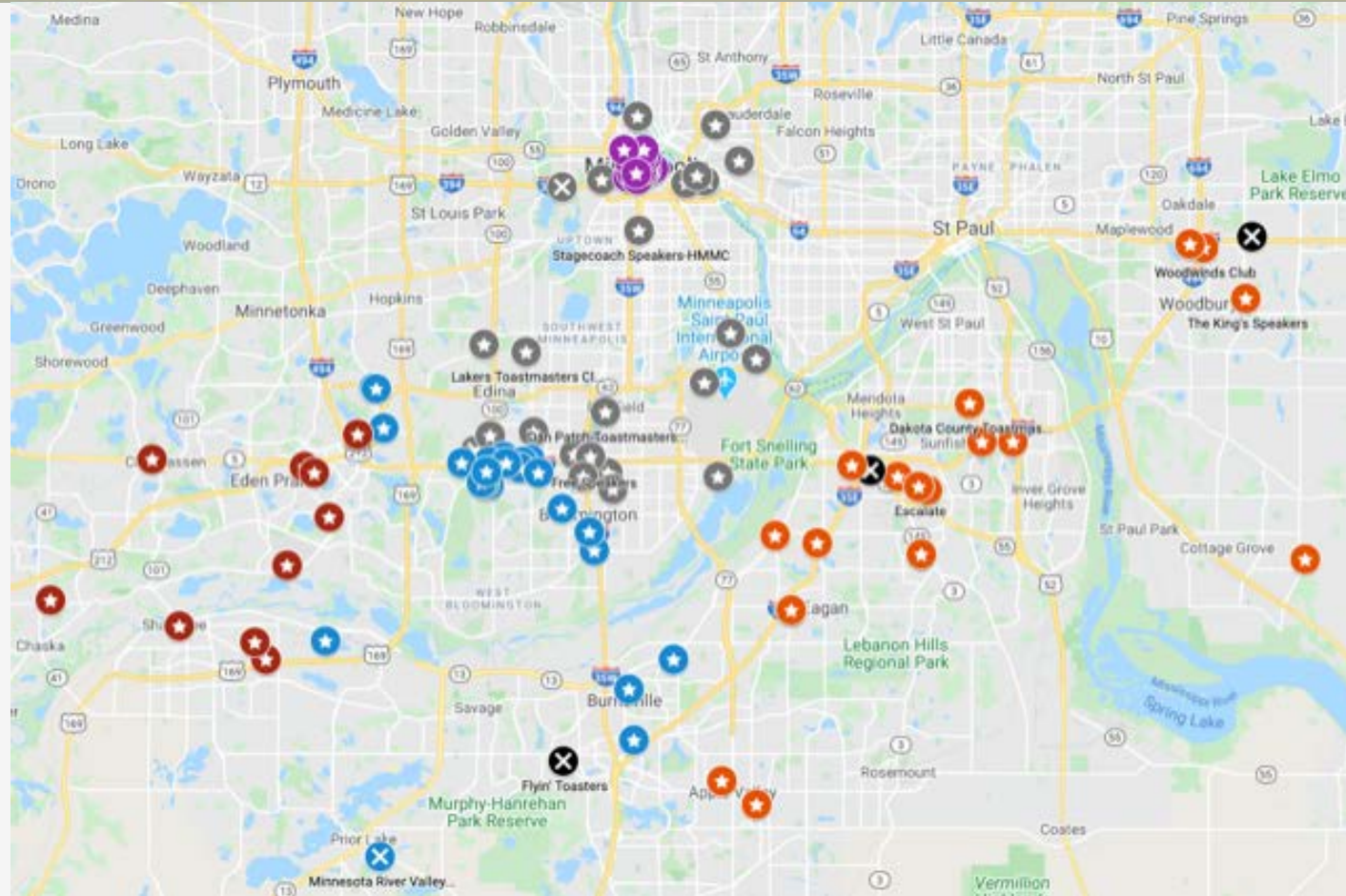
Kari Barlas, DTM





District 6 Toastmasters

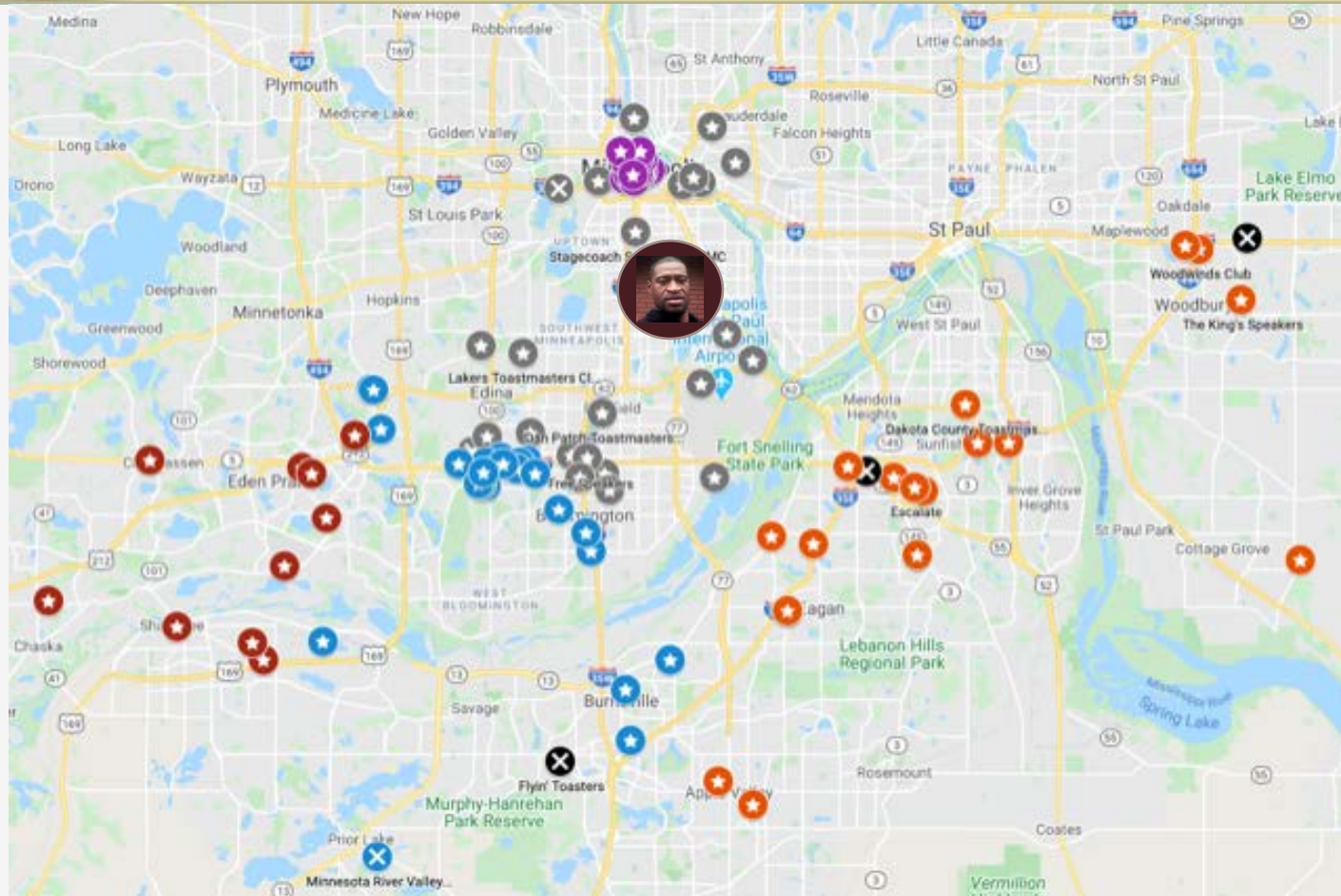
Serving Parts of Minnesota





District 6 Toastmasters

Serving Parts of Minnesota



Today's Discussion

Use Skills

Use our Toastmasters skills to try and understand the world around us.

What can we apply?

to Explore

Explore racism in the context of a Toastmasters club.

What is your club culture really like?

and Discuss

Discuss a real-life case study from a D6 club.

What can we learn from it?

Self-Improvement

Receive feedback.

Evaluations give us ideas for improvement.

Change our behavior

Try doing things differently.

Test new behavior

And receive more feedback.

The responsibility for improvement is ours

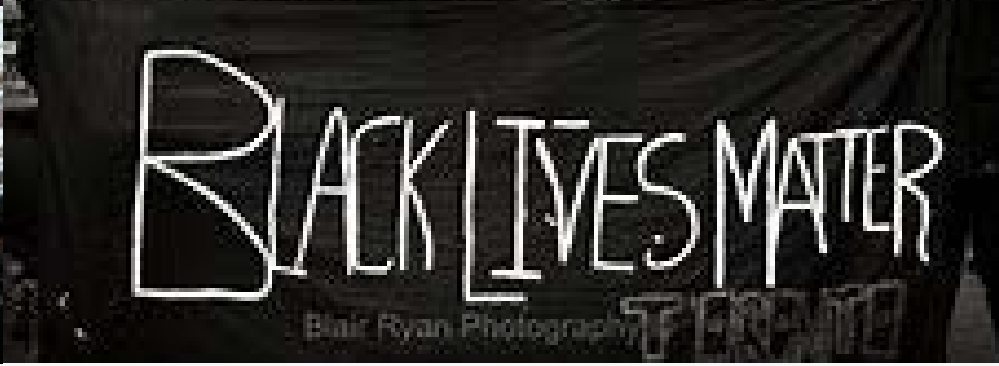


For Example

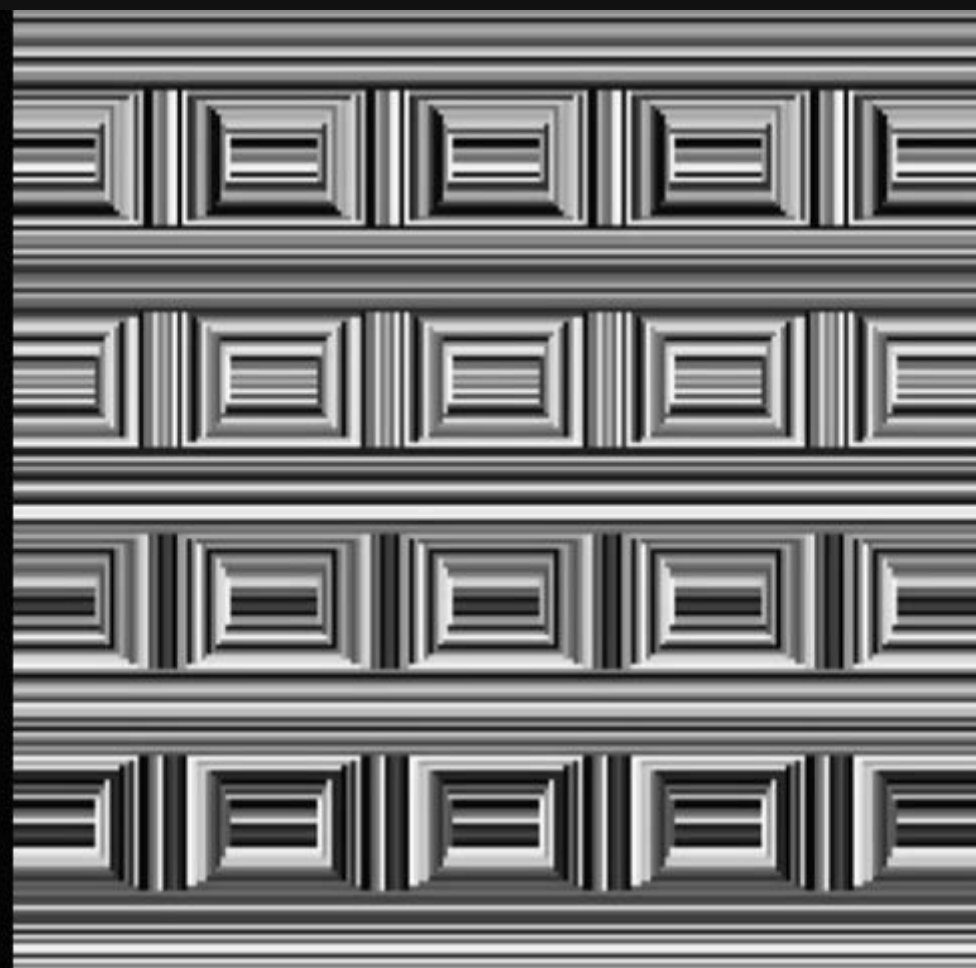
- You didn't realize you pace
- You receive this feedback from multiple evaluators
- After multiple presentations
- You watch a video of yourself
- OMG it's TRUE
- You change the behavior



**Let us use these
skills to understand
what's happening in
the world right now.**



**Just because you
don't experience
something, doesn't
mean it doesn't exist.**





RACISM

Racism is personal prejudice

I am free of racism

I will judge whether or not racism has occurred

My learning is finished

I know all I need to know about race

Racism can only be intentional

If I didn't intend to be racist, my behavior is ok

I have personally struggled so I don't have racial privilege

If I am a good person, I can't be racist

I am entitled to feel comfortable

I want this conversation to go the way I want it to go

It is unkind to point out racism

If you knew me, you would know I can't be racist

I have friends of color

There is no problem. Society is fine as I see it

If I can't see it, it isn't legitimate

Prejudice

- I gain information about different groups from the society around me.
- This helps me make sense of the group through my cultural lens.
- I then project that information onto everyone in that group

Because of the power of socialization, we all have unconscious beliefs, biases, and behavior.

**Our lack of understanding
about our implicit biases
increases our resistance to
acknowledging how we
might be complicit.**

Racism

- Racism is a structure
 - Not an action, that's discrimination
- A group's collective prejudice is transformed into racism when it's backed by:
 - Power
 - Legal authority
 - Institutional control

Racism functions independently from the intentions or self-images of individuals.

If we believe only **BAD PEOPLE** are
RACIST and PREJUDICE...

It will be impossible to engage in the honest exploration necessary for self-reflection and dialogue that can lead to change.

The conversation shifts
from **the ISSUE...**

„,„to **defensive outrage**
in an effort to prove I'm a
GOOD PERSON.

Good intentions do
not cancel out the
impact of your
behavior

We are Minnesotans

- We do not face conflict well, let alone address it.
- But we must acknowledge:

To not speak up is to prioritize protecting white feelings rather than interrupting racism.

INTENT

does not excuse

IMPACT

Case Study



Although **CompanyClub** is a “community” Toastmasters club (membership is open to all), it meets during the lunch hour in a conference room of CORPORATION—a large local employer.

The relationship between **CompanyClub** and CORPORATION is strong. Many employees have benefitted from membership in the club’s 25-year history.

CompanyClub’s meetings are exactly one-hour starting and ending on time to respect work schedules.

The Meeting

Four guests arrived. Three were Toastmasters visiting from another club. The fourth, we'll call him *GUEST*, was a young, brand-new employee at CORPORATION.

He was invited by a member of **CompanyClub** who was also an employee at CORPORATION.

GUEST showed up with an incredible amount of enthusiasm and indicated to all he met his intent to join **CompanyClub**.



The Incident

With time running short at the end of the meeting, the TableTopicsMaster wrapped it up and handed the meeting back to the Toastmaster.

Before the Toastmaster arrived at the lectern, one of the Toastmasters Guests spoke up.

Wait—GUEST hasn't had a chance to speak yet.

She then addressed *GUEST* directly:



***I can tell by looking at you,
you're not from here. My
guess is you're from
Southeast Asia. Tell us
about yourself.***

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No one from **CompanyClub** said anything. With all eyes on him and an awkward silence in the room, *GUEST* shared a little about himself. The meeting ended on time and all went on their way.

Discussion

- What do you think of this member's question to the guest?
- What could/should have happened in the moment?
- What could/should have happened afterward?



Immediate Aftermath

- Right after the meeting, a few **CompanyClub** members whispered their concerns about the comment to each other.
- The **CompanyClub** member who invited *GUEST* reached out to him multiple times, but *GUEST* never responded to his emails or calls.
- Despite *GUEST*'s enthusiasm and stated intent to join **CompanyClub**, he never returned.

One Month Later

- A club officer, also an employee at CORPORATION, raised her concerns at an officers' meeting.
- She felt *GUEST* was singled out and made to feel “other” because of his race.
- She noted that CORPORATION has a very explicit and specific culture based on inclusion.
- She felt the comment violated the values that both Toastmasters and CORPORATION professed and was concerned that **CompanyClub** failed *GUEST* on multiple levels.

The Officers Struggled

Weeks of discussion ensued as the officers tried to understand their role.

*I am sharing the following comments for
EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY
so that we may learn from one another
and help each other grow.*

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It is a stretch to say that our guest was offended and that is why he didn't come back. There are a thousand reasons why someone may choose not to join.

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Our lack of understanding about our implicit biases increases our resistance to acknowledging how we might be complicit.

I happen to have known the asking guest for almost 20 years. She and her family welcome International University students into their home.

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Deflection

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What is a Healthy Club Culture?

- No conflict?
- No expression of strong emotion?
- No challenging of racist patterns?
- A focus on the fact that we're all “good people?”

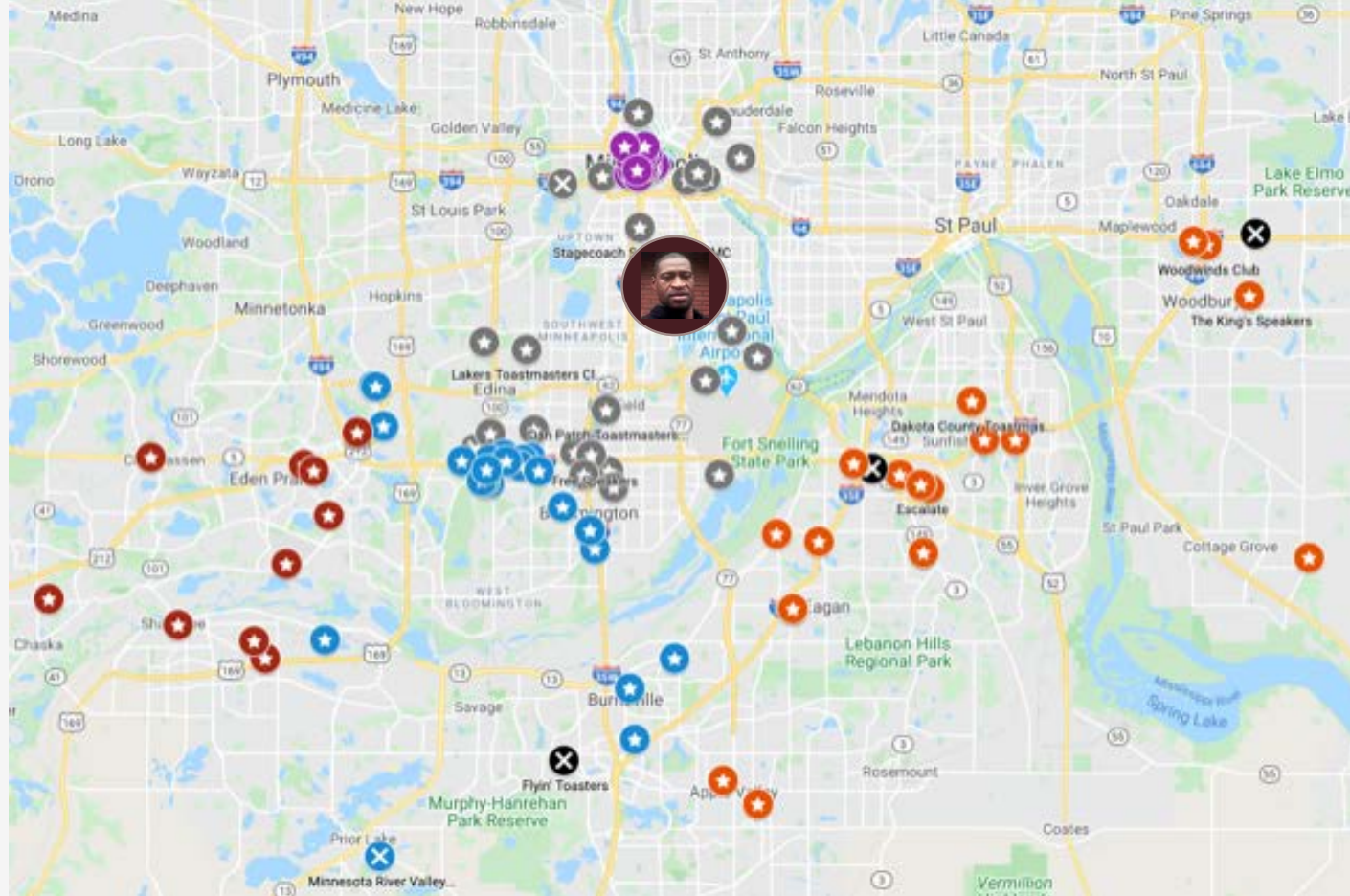
- Stopping racist patterns must be more important than working to convince others that we don't have them.
- To interrupt racist patterns, we need to recognize and challenge the norms, structures, and institutions that keep it in place.
- We must be willing to examine the effects of our racial engagement.
- We can use our Toastmasters skills to better understand the world we live in and actively make it a better place even when it makes us uncomfortable.

ESPECIALLY when it makes us uncomfortable.

Let us acknowledge that Toastmasters is not immune.

Let us continue to learn and grow.

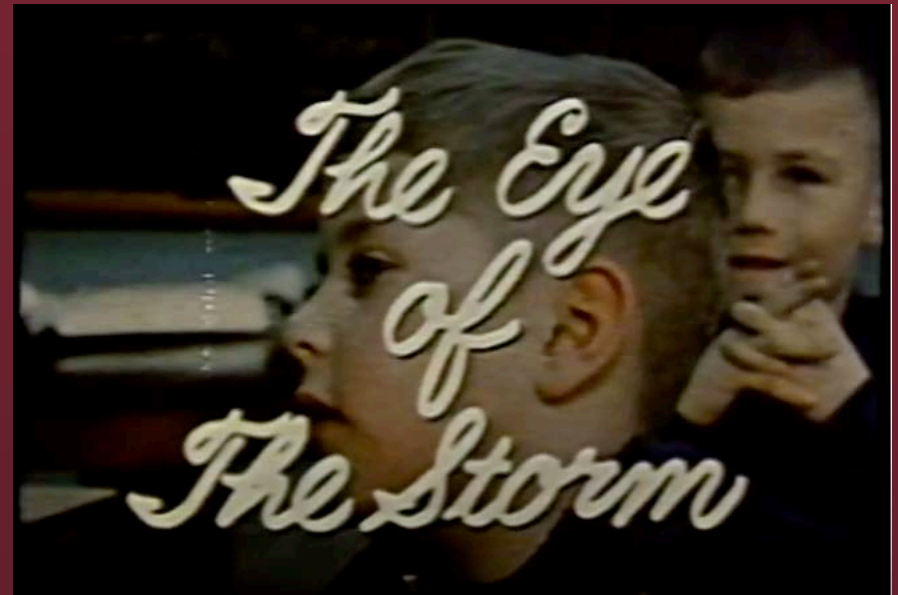
Let us start the conversation.



If you have just 25 minutes...

Jane Elliott's
Blue Eyes-Brown Eyes
Experiment

The Eye of The Storm
documentary



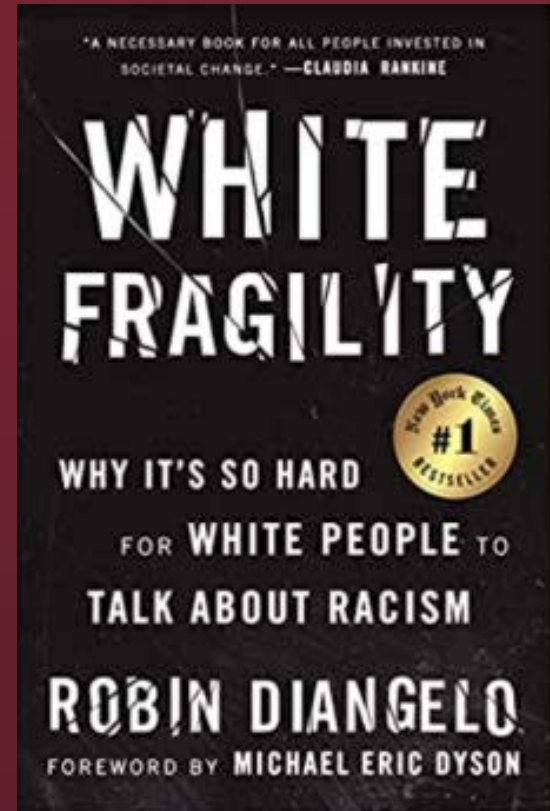
www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSwZQ1AzjOg

If you read just one book...

Robin DiAngelo's **White Fragility**

Explores the counterproductive reactions white people have when their assumptions about race are challenged, and how these reactions maintain racial inequality.

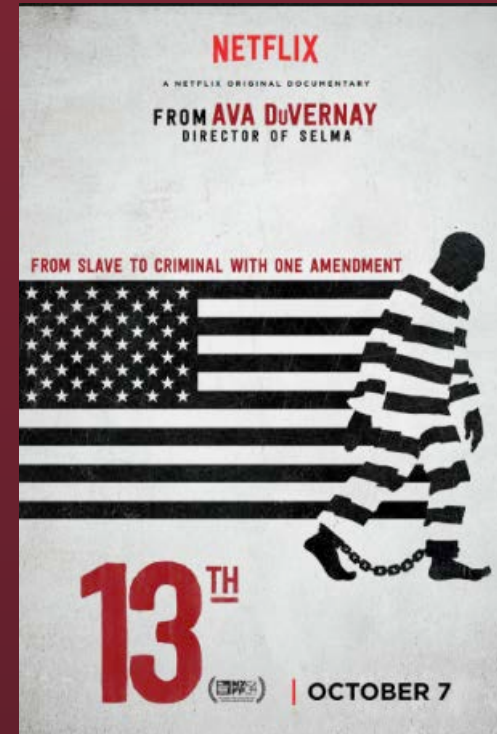
<https://robindiangelo.com>



If you watch just one film...

Ava DuVernay's
13th

Analyzes the criminalization of African Americans and the U.S. prison boom. Although the U.S. has just 5% of the world's population, 25% of the people in the world who are incarcerated are incarcerated in the U.S.



www.avaduvernay.com/#/13th

*When you're
accustomed to
privilege, equality
feels like oppression.*

**Thank you for
attending.**

Kari Barlas
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