

Chapter 7—Racial Triggers For White People

Summary Points

“When ideologies such as color-blindness, meritocracy, and individualism are challenged, intense emotional reactions are common. 100

“Most white people have limited information about what racism is and how it works” 100.

Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *Habitus*, and its usefulness for understanding white fragility

Habitus: result of socialization, the repetitive practices of actors and their interactions with each other and the rest of their social environment; a person’s familiar ways of perceiving, interpreting, and responding to the social cues around him or her.

Three Key Aspect of Habitus

Field -The specific social context the person is in

Habitus- Includes a person’s internalized awareness of his or her status, as well as responses to the status of others

Capital - The social value people hold in a particular field; how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others in terms of power. Capital can shift with the field.

In every field, people are vying for power, and each field will have rules of the game. If I don't follow these rules, I will be pushed out of that field through various means. Some rules are explicitly taught, others are learned implicitly.

When there is disequilibrium in the habitus, we use strategies to regain our balance; our response is unconscious.

White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress in the habitus becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves.

Moves: anger, fear, and guilt; argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation.

These moves reinstate white racial equilibrium.

Reflection Questions

1. On page 103-104, DiAngelo lists interruptions to white peace. Which of these do you honestly most resonate with? And further, which emotion/behavior usually results?

2. What is the *habitus* that shapes the Church, and how does that *habitus* impact our thoughts on whiteness?

Recurring Questions

1. How has your understanding of whiteness progressed?
2. How do you sense God is calling you to respond?
3. What are your lingering fragile responses and why?
4. Are you sure you understand the Cross?