



THE LEAST YOU COULD DO

100 Ways White People Can Make Life Less Frustrating For People of Color

Just a few suggestions to start with.

By [Kesiena Boom](#) | Apr 19 2018, 7:23pm



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As someone with very low tolerance for racist bullshit, I've managed to surround myself with white people who are cognizant of their privilege and strive to make the world a less terrifying and frustrating place for people of color. This means that I often deal with said white people asking me what they can actually *do* to affect change. So here, anxious allies of the world, are 100 simple ways to be the change. It's not nearly comprehensive, but it's somewhere to start. Go forth and disrupt our harmful racial paradigm!

1. Just because you can't see racism around you doesn't mean it's not happening. Trust people of color's assessment of a situation.
2. Don't assume that all people of color share the same views. We are not a monolith.
3. Don't assume or guess people's races. This is NOT a fun game for us.
4. If someone tells you they're from Uganda, don't say, "I went to Nigeria once!" Just, please.
5. Related: Don't refer to Africa as a country. It's a continent and it's wildly varied. Yes. Take a moment.



dark as you!” Cease and desist.

7. Don't assume that a person of color knows everything about their country of heritage. Do you know everything there is to know about America? Germany? Sweden? That's what I thought.

8. Don't assume we can run if we're Black, do math if we're Asian, have drinking problems if we're indigenous...

9. Regard us as autonomous, unique individuals, not as representatives of our race.

10. Don't make embarrassing jokes to try and be “down” with people of color. We'll laugh *at* you, not *with* you.

11. Don't rinse our culturally specific memes. They're ours. Go enjoy that weird one about the plums.

12. If you're at my house party, don't turn off the Weeknd to put on Arctic Monkeys. (Okay this one is very specific but it happened to me once and I'm not over it. The audacity!)



14. When you endlessly complain about how terrible white people are, you are being that terrible white person. Jeez.

15. Don't say shit like, "I know what it's like to be a person of color...I'm a ginger!"

16. Don't question someone's Blackness if they're light-skinned. It's not your place. Other Black people can make sure that light-skinned Black people are cognizant of their privilege.

17. Never try and tell a person of color what is or isn't racist.

18. When you find instances of racist bullshit online, please don't send it to us. We know racism exists, thanks.

19. Read something already written about it rather than coming to your friends/acquaintances of color looking for hot takes on anything and everything appropriative a Kardashian/Miley Cyrus does. We don't wanna think about this shit 24/7!

20. Understand that some days are even more mentally exhausting for people of



21. But when we do have something to say about it, listen.

22. Share articles relating to the everyday experiences of race and racism written by people of color.

23. But don't be that person who is weird and sycophantic and loves to demonstrate their wokeness constantly to the people of color around them. Be thoughtful.

24. Read books by people of color. I recommend *Sister Outsider* by Audre Lorde, *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander and literally everything that Junot Diaz writes for great insights into Blackness.

25. Watch shows that are created by people of color i.e. *Atlanta* or *Insecure*. (Seriously, if you haven't seen *Atlanta*, you need to watch it. Now.)

26. Have a critical eye when watching TV and movies. How are they portraying people of color and why? What purpose does it serve?

27. If you go to an art gallery, notice how many works are by people of color. If it's lacking, make some noise, send an email, query the curator. White people



28. If a character you assumed was white in a book is portrayed by an actor of color in the movie, embrace it. Whiteness is not the default.
29. Support plays written by and acted in by people of color. The world of theater is overwhelmingly white.
30. Refuse to go to club nights or drag shows or burlesque nights that use culturally appropriative acts.
31. If you have kids, buy them dolls of color and books with characters of color.
32. Support crowdfunding campaigns for cultural products created by people of color if you can.
33. Donate money to grassroots movements around you that are run by and support people of color.
34. Support small businesses owned by people of color.
35. If you're upper or middle class try to avoid moving into an area that has historically been populated by low-income people of color. Gentrification tears communities apart.



37. But also be patient if our English isn't perfect. Are you bi/tri/multi-lingual?

Probably not. It's hard.

38. In general, just don't assume we want to be white or want to assimilate.

And don't pressure us to do so.

39. Recognize that you can't assume someone's religion based on how they look.

Not all South Asians and Middle Eastern people are Muslims, not all Black people are Christian, not all East Asian people are Buddhist. You get the idea.

40. Remember that not all people of color are straight.

41. Remember that people of color are not inherently more homophobic than white people.

42. People can be Black and gay and disabled and trans and middle class.

Blackness is expansive. It doesn't look one way. Keep this in mind.

43. When we talk about race, we're not just talking about men! Repeat after me: Intersections of race and gender exist.

44. Remember that it is Black women and Native women and mixed race women



45. Don't ask Black women if it's our "real hair." And don't judge Black women for wearing wigs or weaves or having relaxers.

46. Don't touch our fucking hair.

47. If you have a Black girlfriend, please make sure that your shower is always adequately stocked with conditioner. Never that 2-in-1 stuff!!! We beg you.

48. Never try and pull any uninvited "race play" shit in the bedroom. Seriously, what the fuck?

49. Actively try to identify and unsubscribe from orientalist tropes i.e. believing that East Asian women are naturally more submissive or docile. People of color are people, not characters.

50. If you call a woman of color "exotic," you deserve to stub your toe every day for a year. Do. Not. Do. This.

51. Also, saying "I've never fucked a Black/Asian/Native etc. person" to someone you're trying to hook up with is a one way ticket to hell.



53. Remember that having mixed race children is not a cure for racism or a way to live out weird racial fantasies.

54. If you're trying to start a mixed raced family, sit down and deeply interrogate your intentions.

55. If you do have mixed race children, make sure that they have access to people who look like them and who understand their experiences.

56. If you have a partner of color or children of color, trust and believe that you can still be racist. You're not exempt. If anything, you have even more of a duty to examine your behavior for the benefit of your loved ones.

57. Take your racist family members to task for the shit they say over the dinner table or via social media.

58. Confront your colleagues who say racist shit unchecked at work.

59. Look around your workplace—are the only people of color cleaners or assistants? What can you do to change that? (The answer is almost never “nothing.”)

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60. If someone asks you to fill a role that you think a person of color would be better suited for, recommend a talented person of color who you know and forego the position yourself.

61. Don't make us be the de facto diversity guy at work. Or at least pay us extra to do the labor of diversifying the workplace.



63. If there are only a couple of people of color in your seminar, don't weirdly stare at them when the lecturer poses questions about race and expect them to answer everything.

64. If you're in charge of making curricula, make sure there is work by people of color, especially women of color, on the reading list. And not just in the weeks dedicated to race.

65. Commission people of color to make work about race.

66. Commission people of color to make work that has nothing to do with race.

67. Don't say things like "there are two sides to every story!" or play devil's advocate when it comes to conversations about race.

68. In those situations, just listen.

69. It's never useful to say stuff like, "But what about the white working class!!!"
Have you thought about non-white working class people's needs?

70. Don't? Vote? For? Racist? Politicians? Can't believe I need to say this one but it seems like possibly, maybe, some of y'all did not get this memo.



72. Remember that Black women are not here to save you from yourselves. You've gotta put in the work, too.

73. Be cognizant of how your whiteness could be weaponized against Black people. i.e. white women, don't play into stereotypes about Black men being inherently threatening to you. It gets Black men killed. See: Emmett Till.

74. Use your white privilege to be on the frontline between people of color and the police at protests. You're at much less risk than us.

75. Record police encounters you see involving Black people.

76. Share alerts when ICE is planning a raid.

77. Stand up to Islamophobia wherever you see it.

78. If you have ever thought a phrase like "Black lives matter" is too assertive, consider why you're so uncomfortable with Black people standing up for our humanity.

79. Listen when Black people say, "I'm not comfortable in this situation." You've



80. If you haven't seen *Get Out*, watch *Get Out*. Understand that the everyday horror is real.

81. Question whether you have double standards when it comes to drugs. Do you think it's cool when white weed entrepreneurs make tons of money but think that Black people who are found to have traces of marijuana in their systems deserve to be thrown in prison?

82. Don't have dreadlocks if you're not Black, just don't. Beyond being offensive, it's just not suited to your hair type. Do literally anything else with your hair.

83. Don't refer to things as your "spirit animal" if you're not Native. There are other ways to express affinity with something.

84. Do not compare the exploitation of animals to racism. Ever. I'm deadly serious.

85. I can't believe I even need to say this in 2018 but here we go: Don't wear Blackface.

86. Don't even think about saying the N word. Even if you're alone. Even if you're listening to rap. Even if you're alone and listening to rap.



88. That includes the word “colored.” “Person of color” and “colored” are not the same. Trust me.

89. Understand that America has what it has because it stole land from indigenous people and stole people from Africa.

90. Care about race on the 364 days that aren't Martin Luther King Jr. day.

91. Also, don't whitewash his legacy and use it to argue that Black people should just take what they're given lying down.

92. Think about how race is operating even when people of color aren't around. Be cognizant of it wherever you are, whichever situation you're in. People of color have to, so should you.

93. Remember that your queerness/womanhood/transness/class background/disability doesn't exclude you from white privilege.

94. Make your feminism useful to all women rather than calling yourself an 'intersectional feminist'. Show, don't tell.



96. Understand that nothing in your life has been untouched by your whiteness. Everything you have would have been harder to come by if you had not been born white.

97. Be grateful for the lesson when you're called out on racism, getting defensive won't help.

98. Move past your white guilt. Guilt is an unproductive emotion. Don't sit there mired in woe, just be better.

99. Recognize that fighting racism isn't about you, it's not about your feelings; it's about liberating people of color from a world that tries to crush us at every turn.

100. And remember: Being an ally is a verb, not a noun. You can't just magically be an ally to people of color because you say you're one, it's something that you must continually work on.

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By [Dani Beckett](#) | Mar 8 2018, 4:55pm

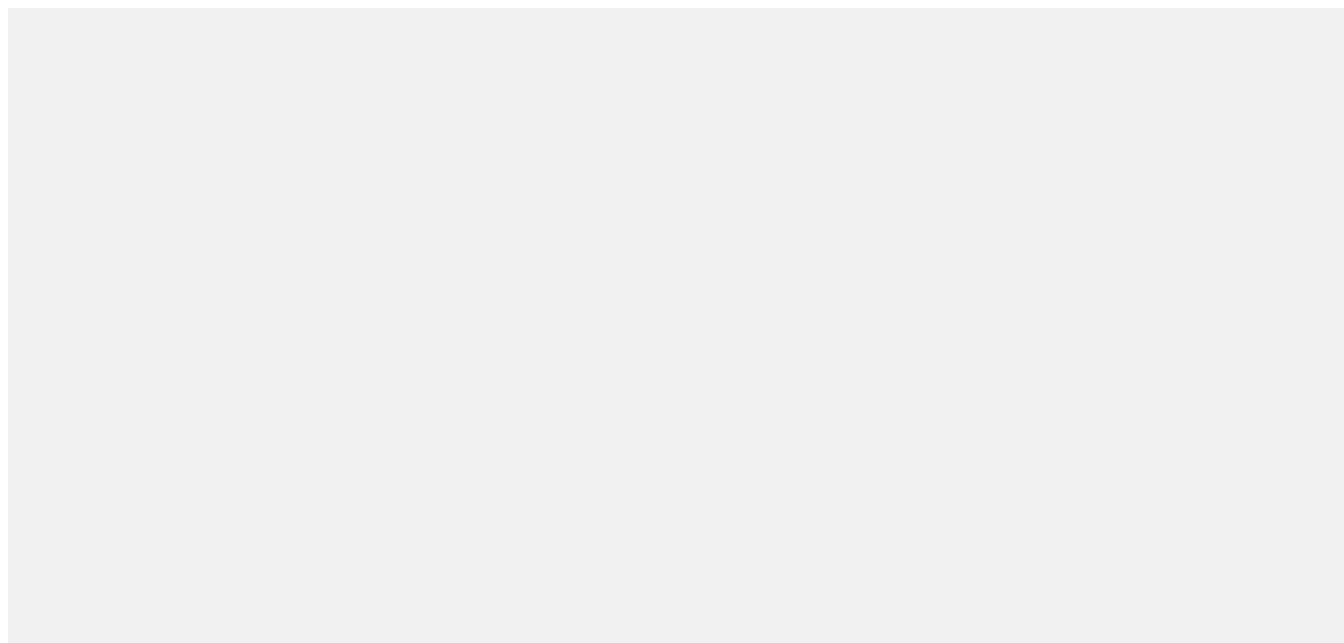


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TWEET

Every year, I wake up on March 8 to a flurry of tweets from men wishing me a “Happy International Women’s Day!”

And every year, I find myself thinking: Well, thanks, but is that it? Is that all the support for gender equality that you can muster? For the entire year? It’s a nice sentiment, but at a time when the gender pay gap means that women in the UK [work for free](#) for 67 days each year, Black women in the US are [three to four](#)



quite do it for me.

So, to ensure that men aren't missing direction, a few years ago I started compiling a list of easy actions that men can take to meaningfully support gender equality. Every year, I would post it on social media. Slowly, other women started contributing suggestions. So the list grew. And grew. It will likely never stop growing.

The suggestions cover many realms of life—from home, to work, to the ways we interact with strangers, to the language we use—but it is in no way comprehensive. Below, I've included a mere 100 entries out of the several hundred I've crowdsourced and personally compiled.

To the men reading: You may already do some of these things, and others you may not be in the position to do. But a good place to start is by, at the very least, reading the list through—in its entirety. And remember: These apply all year, not just during the annual 24 hours dedicated to half of the planet's population.

1. Before explaining something to a woman, ask yourself if she might already understand. She may know more about it than you do.



3. Trans women are women. Repeat that until you perish.
4. RESPECT PEOPLE'S PRONOUNS. It's not hard.
5. Remember that fat women exist and aren't all trying to get thin. Treat them with respect.
6. In fact, just never comment on a woman's body.
7. Be kind to women in customer service positions. Tip them extra. (But not in a creepy way.)
8. Trust women. When they teach you something, don't feel the need to go and check for yourself. And especially do not Google it in front of them.
9. Don't maintain a double standard for... anything, ever.
10. CLOSE YOUR LEGS ON PUBLIC TRANSIT, OH MY GOD.
11. Trying to describe a woman positively? Say she's "talented," "clever," or "funny." Not "gorgeous," "sweet," or "cute."



13. Don't think to yourself, *I describe men like that too*. A) You probably don't. B) If you do, it's to criticize them for acting like a woman.

14. Do you love “fiery” Latina women? “Strong” Black women? “Mysterious” Asian women? Stop. Pick up a book on decolonial feminism. Read.

15. Stop calling women “feisty.” We don't need a special lady word for “has an opinion.”

16. Recognize women's credibility when you introduce them. “Donna is lovely” is much less useful than “Donna knows shitloads about architecture.”

17. Think about how you describe the young women in your family. Celebrate them for being funny and smart, not for being pretty and compliant.

18. Examine the way you talk about women you're attracted to. Fat women, old women, queer, trans, and powerful women are not your “guilty crush.”

19. Learn to praise a woman without demonizing other women. “You're not like other girls” is not a compliment. I *want* to be like other girls. Other girls are *awesome*.



better in the first place.

21. Buy sanitary pads and tampons and donate them to a homeless shelter. Just do it.

22. How much of what you are watching/reading/listening to was made by women? Gender balance your bookcase.

23. Feeling proud of your balanced bookcase? Are there women of color there? Trans, queer, and disabled women? Poor women? Always make sure you're being intersectional.

24. Don't buy media that demeans women's experiences, valorizes violence against women, or excludes them entirely from a cast. It's not enough to oppose those things. You have to actively make them unmarketable.

25. Pay attention to stories with nuanced female characters. It will be interesting, I promise.

26. If you read stories to a child, swap the genders.

27. Watch women's sport. And just call it "sports."



29. Stop raving about Woody Allen. I don't care if he shits gold. Find a non-accused-abuser to fanboy over.

30. It's General Leia, not princess. The Doctor has a companion, not an assistant. It's Doctor Bartlett, not Mrs Madame First Lady.

31. Cast women in parts written for men. We know how to rule kingdoms, go to war, be, not be, and wait for Godot.

32. Pay for porn.

33. Recognize that sex work is work. Be an advocate for and ally to sex workers without speaking for them.

34. Share political hot takes from women as well as men. They might not be as widely accessible, so look for them.

35. Understand that it was never “about ethics in journalism.”

36. Speak less in meetings today to make space for your women colleagues to share their thoughts. If you're leading the meeting, make sure women are being



37. If a woman makes a good point, say, “That was a good point.” Don't repeat her point and take credit for it.

38. Promote women. Their leadership styles may be different than yours. That's probably a good thing.

39. Recruit women on the same salary as men. Even if they don't ask for it.

40. Open doors for women with caring responsibilities by offering flexible employment contracts.

41. If you meet a man and a woman at work, do not assume the man is the superior for literally no reason.

42. If you're wrongly assumed to be more experienced than a woman colleague, correct that person and pass the platform to the woman who knows more.

43. Make a round of tea for the office.

44. Wash it up.

45. If you find you're only interviewing men for a role, rewrite the job listing so



46. Make sure you have women on your interview panel.
47. Tell female colleagues what your salary is.
48. Make sure there's childcare at your events.
49. Don't schedule breakfast meetings during the school run.
50. If you manage a team, make sure that your employees know that you recognize period pain and cystitis as legitimate reasons for a sick day.
51. If you have a strict boss (or mom or teacher) who is a woman, she is not a “bitch.” Grow up.
52. Expect a woman to do the stuff that's in her job description. Not the other miscellaneous shit you don't know how to do yourself.
53. Refuse to speak on an all-male panel.
54. In a Q&A session, only put your hand up if you have A QUESTION. Others didn't attend to listen to you.



goes for cis women, too.)

56. If you have friends or family members who use slurs or discriminate against women of other races, sit them down and explain why they must stop. (This goes for white women, too.)

57. If you see women with their hands up, put yours down. This can be taken as a metaphor for a lot of things. Think about it.

58. Raising a feminist daughter means she's going to disagree with you. And probably be right. Feel proud, not threatened.

59. Teach your sons to listen to girls, give them space, believe them, and elevate them.

60. Dads, buy your daughter tampons, make her hot water bottles, wash her bras. Show her that her body isn't something to be ashamed of.

61. But dads, do not try to iron her bras. This is a mistake you will only make once.

62. Examine how domestic labor is divided in your home. Who does the cleaning,



63. Learn how to do domestic tasks to a high standard. “I'd only do it wrong” is a bullshit excuse.

64. Never again comment on how long it takes a woman to get ready. WE ARE TRYING TO MEET THE RIDICULOUS STANDARDS OF A SYSTEM YOU BENEFIT FROM.

65. Challenge the patriarchs in your religious group when they enable the oppression of women.

66. Challenge the patriarchs in your secular movement when they enable the oppression of women.

67. Trust women's religious choices. Don't pretend to liberate them just so you can criticise their beliefs.

68. Examine who books your trips, arranges outings, organizes Christmas, buys birthday cards. Is it a woman? IS IT?

69. And if it is actually you, a man, don't even dare get in touch with me looking for your medal.

70. Take stock of the emotional labor you expect from women. Do you turn to



71. Remember that loving your mom/sister/girlfriend is not the same as giving up your own privilege to progress equality for women. And that gender inequality extends beyond the women in your direct social group.
72. Don't assume that all women are attracted to men.
73. Don't assume that a woman in public wants to talk to you just because she's in public.
74. If a woman tells you she was raped, assaulted, or abused, don't ask her for proof. Ask how you can support her.
75. If you see a friend or colleague being inappropriate to a woman, call him out. You will survive the awkwardness, I promise.
76. Repeat after me: Always. Hold. Men. Accountable. For. Their. Actions.
77. Do not walk too close to a woman late at night. That shit can be scary.
78. If you see a woman being followed or otherwise bothered by a stranger, stick around to make sure she's safe.



80. If you are a queer man, recognize that your sexuality doesn't exclude you from potential misogyny.

81. If you are a queer man, recognize that your queer women or non-binary friends may not feel comfortable in a male-dominated space, even if it's dominated by queer men.

82. Be happy to have women friends without needing them to want to sleep with you. The "friend zone" is not a thing. We do not owe you sex.

83. Remember that you can lack consent in situations not involving sex—such as when pursuing uninterested women or forcing a hug on a colleague.

84. Champion sex positive women but don't expect them to have sex with *you*.

85. Trust a woman to know her own body. If she says she won't enjoy part of your sexual repertoire, do not try to convince her otherwise.

86. Be sensitive to nonverbal cues from women, especially around sex. We're not just being awkward for no reason. (You read "Cat Person," didn't you?)



88. Same goes for pressuring women to have sex without a condom. Go. Home. And masturbate.

89. Accidentally impregnated a woman who doesn't want a kid? Abortions cost money. Pay for half of it.

90. Accidentally came inside a woman without protection? Plan B is expensive. Pay for all of it.

91. Get STD tested. Regularly. Without having to be asked.

92. Examine your opinion on abortion. Then put it in a box. Because, honestly, it's completely irrelevant.

93. Understand that disabled women are whole, sexual human beings. Listen to and respect them.

94. Understand that not all women have periods or vaginas.

95. Believe women's pain. Periods hurt. Endometriosis is real. Polycystic ovaries, vaginal pain, cystitis. These things are real. Hysteria isn't.



97. Lobby your elected officials to implement high quality sex education in schools.

98. Uplift young Black and Indigenous girls at every possible opportunity. No excuses.

99. Do not ever assume you know what it's like.

100. Mainly, just listen to women. Listen to us and believe us. It's the only place to start if you actually want all women to have a "Happy International Women's Day."

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