

HALF 6

Inclusivity

Okay, let's dive right in.

You might be wondering: Why on earth is there a white Anglo Saxon heterosexual male sitting on that chair, holding that microphone, talking about inclusion. Why is there someone of the most privileged category again in a position to speak his mind, blurt out politically correct sentences full of ignorance and if we're lucky, some good intent?

I was wondering the same thing, so it feels kind of weird to be here. But I'll do my best to show as much of my privileged ignorance as possible, so that you can correct me where I'm wrong so that I and perhaps others can learn something about ourselves.

Right, I think there is ONE big thing we need to address, before we can solve civilisation. And this thing is: How do we talk about inclusion and exclusion?

This the most important thing, because if we can't figure out how to talk about something, it's going to be a tough challenge to do anything about it. How do we talk about it? How do we make sure that I, as a white, Dutch heterosexual male, understand someone else, who might be a black, Surinam lesbian? How will both our perspectives line up or clash, and how do we make sure they do so in a constructive manner?

Of course, some basic rules of a respectful conversation apply, but most importantly, you have to be willing to understand the other's perspective, and! Be willing to understand your own perspective.

And this is one of the most important things I experienced today on the Black Heritage Tour.

So let me summarize. History is written by the Vanquishers, mostly the ones who kill the rest. That was no different with the Dutch in the 17th century. They had the exact right lack of humanity to plunder dozens of countries and subsequently declare them independent. And then play the good guy by sending out "development aid". We fucking robbed their land, killed thousands, enslaved the others, built our cities and our so-called civilisation on their shoulders and called it the golden age. The only thing golden was our thick, heavy, grimly shimmering

cruelty that allowed us to commit the crimes we have committed.

That's a veeerry short version of the Dutch history. Back to the present.

I live in a city that's smudged with a history of gory horror. Colonial buildings where slaves were traded, dissections of black people were carried out, and the stolen wealth of other countries was imported. Buildings and streets once signs of wealth and status, now silent memorials of guilt, primarily inhabited by the university of Amsterdam and expensive bars.

For white people it is often very hard to understand how important our past is to our present. We didn't commit those crimes did we? We're not our ancestors right? Yes, we are privileged by their crimes, but we can't do anything about that anymore, can we?

Okay, let me get this straight, white people. Everything you are, everything you think, everything you say, is built on a colonial past. You inherited all your assumptions of right and wrong from the people who saw black people as animals. Who saw themselves as the superior race. Even the very language that you express your thoughts in, is biased to prefer white over black, light over dark, and associate them to judgements. White is good, black is bad. The bad guy has a black car, the good guy white or some bright colors.

White people, no matter how good your intentions are, you ARE biased, you HAVE assumptions. So please educate yourselves, and prepare to be very wrong, and embrace being wrong. It is the only way we might get to understand ourselves and each other and get closer together

If we all get to a point where we're aware of our own perspectives, our own prejudice, and we're willing to let go of it, we might get to a point where we can actually achieve togetherness. It's about time.

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