

Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

Directions: Answer the following after reading the article.

- 1) Why does McIntosh start her essay by saying "I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group."? Why is this important for her to say?
- 2) When the author says, "I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged." How do you make sense of this statement? Is it possible for one person's overprivilege to be unrelated to another's disadvantage?
- 3) What do you think McIntosh means when she says that recognizing privilege "makes one newly accountable"? To whom are we accountable? What are we accountable for?
- 4) Which of the "daily effects of white privilege" in McIntosh's list sticks out to you and why?
- 5) What do you think McIntosh means when she writes about "people whom I was trained to mistrust"? What kind of training is she referring to? Who has she learned to mistrust?
- 6) What do you think McIntosh means when she writes that admitting white privilege means giving up "the myth of meritocracy"?
- 7) Does acknowledging privilege matter? What if we acknowledge privilege without "doing anything to lessen or end it"? Is acknowledgement an action in and of itself? Is it enough?
- 8) Does McIntosh's essay make you feel encouraged or discouraged? Why?
- 9) How do we lessen the impact of our privilege? Is this required or desired?

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1. **Rate** each item as: **Y** for "Yes I can do this (almost) whenever I want and wherever I am, **N** for "No I cannot (or can rarely) do this whenever I want and wherever I am, or **NA** if you feel this does not apply to you.
2. **Rank** each item from 1 (most convenient) to 5 (least convenient). You may use the same ranking for many items.
3. **Write** any additional comments or thoughts you may have related to this statement.

McIntosh's Privileges (revised)		
Cultural Characteristics:	Yes/No/NA	Rank: 1-5
1. I can live where I want to live. Comments:		
2. I can worship where I want to worship & near where I live. Comments:		
3. I can shop where I will not be followed or harassed & my form of payment is accepted. Comments:		
4. I can find my preferred kinds of food, clothing, hair solons, hair products, music, etc. Comments:		
5. I can find people like me portrayed positively on television, in the movies, in songs, etc. Comments:		
6. I can find posters, toys, dolls, greeting cards, etc., that show people like me. Comments:		
7. I can find people like me portrayed positively in books, etc., about our nation & history. Comments:		
8. I can find people like me in most textbooks & teaching materials. Comments:		
9. I can say what I want about people & be accepted by the people around me. Comments:		
10. I can be with people like me. Comments:		