

White Privilege is Definitely Real

If you don't care to hear about white privilege from a self-employed cis white male who was raised lower/middle class, now married to a Mexican immigrant with three mixed-race unschooled kids, still lower/middle class, than feel free to turn away now. No hard feelings.

If you don't see race, gender, and class, or just don't care either way, then welcome and I hope that what I've written will constitute an original thought from my mind to yours. At least, it was original when I thought about it a few days ago while in conversation with a divorced cis latina immigrant female and single cis white male. Oh yea, we were solving world problems left and right that day. Moving on.

I believe in white privilege in a very significant regard. The privilege that I speak of is so significant that it's had the power to allow millions of my fellow whites to lift themselves out of a countless number of circumstances and to reach the highest levels of social, political, and economic class.

For those who don't have this privilege, it's kept them mired in internal and external conflict, convinced that without this privilege they can never achieve the same levels of whatever class as those who have it. And the thing is, they aren't wrong.

What is this privilege of which I speak?

It is the privilege of not being weighed down by predator/victim narratives, regardless of their accuracy.

What do I mean by a predator/victim narrative? I mean the narratives that are told to people in childhood and beyond to create and maintain the belief that they are victims of circumstance, due to the color of their skin, or their genitalia, or their family's economic status, or their educational prospects, *et cetera*.

In each of these, there are predators (white people, men, the rich, employers) who either actively today or as a result of history do what they can to keep their victims (non-white people, women, the poor, workers) from achieving the same socioeconomic status as themselves. Call it institutional racism, or sexism, or "capitalism," the goal of the predators is to create and maintain institutions and conventions that keep victims in their place.

Some narratives are probably true. I personally subscribe to the predator/victim narrative of politicians as predators and the rest of society as victims. I think that one is factually true. Others are probably not, though their persistence serves somebody very lucratively. (Seriously, ask the question: Who's profiting from the predator/victim narrative I've been led to believe?)

Another way to look at not having this privilege is to say that so-and-so has a “chip on their shoulder.” Some chips are light, others are very heavy. Chips can be very motivating, but they can also be very limiting. When the chip on your shoulder is the belief that you are a victim of circumstances beyond your control, I think that can be quite debilitating.

What purpose does having such a chip really serve, other than to keep you believing in it, and thus limiting your opportunities for advancement? Tell somebody enough times that the shit in their life is beyond their control, and they’ll stop trying to clean it up.

And therein lies the answer to obtaining this privilege for yourself: Dump the unhelpful predator/victim narratives that you are currently subscribed to. Look around at other groups of people, not just us whites, who also have this privilege and observe the wonderful things that they can achieve.

Immigrants have this privilege. Even black African immigrants. Asians have this privilege. Jews have this privilege. This not only a white person privilege, and many whites don’t have it, but white people by and large have it more so than black people (in my limited experience).

It kills me to see this privilege not enjoyed by everybody. It can be. It doesn’t matter who you are where you come from. You can have it by training your mind away from the predator/victim narratives that have been indoctrinated in you since birth. How? Start by telling yourself that they aren’t true, that they are somebody’s profitable lie, another predator perhaps, and you’ll immediately start to feel that chip get a little lighter.

I have plenty about my circumstances to feel like I could never achieve as much as so many others have. And often I do feel weighed down by them. But I try very hard to listen to the helpful parts, and discard the rest. I think that if you believe that you aren’t a victim of circumstance, you can remove yourself from that category of person and become triumphant in whatever it is you truly want out of life.

Think about what I’ve written and what you’re going to do about it. You don’t have to keep unhelpful narratives that others have pushed on you since you were born.

Shirk off that chip on your shoulder and get to work becoming amazing!