

RACIAL EQUITY & LIBERATION

Facilitated by Monica Dennis & Rachael Ibrahim



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week 2

Prework

BEYOND SINGLE STORIES

Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many complex and interconnected stories and yet we are often reduced to single stories. **Single Stories** are incomplete, potentially damaging understandings of other people. In order to move beyond single stories, it is important to explore how systemic power shapes which stories we tell, how we tell them, which stories become normalized and definitive, and which stories reinforce inferiority and superiority.

Implicit biases reinforce single stories.

According to the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, **implicit bias refers to attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.** These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without our awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages.

A Few Key Characteristics of Implicit Biases:

- Implicit biases are **pervasive**. Everyone possesses them, even people with commitments to impartiality such as judges.
- While **implicit and explicit bias** are distinct constructs, they are not mutually exclusive. They **influence one another**.
- The implicit biases that we hold are **often in direct contradiction with our declared beliefs and the stances we explicitly endorse**.
- In a race-constructed society, we tend to hold implicit biases that **span the spectrum from pro-white to anti-black**.
- Implicit biases are **malleable**. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques.



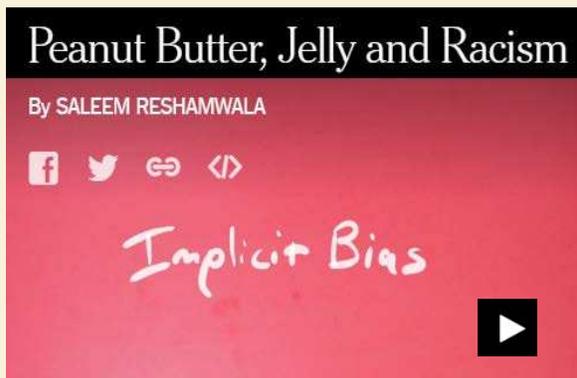
This Week's Practice: Expanding Narratives, Moving Beyond Single Stories

Got a piece of paper, pen, and/or colored pencils?

Spend 30 minutes journaling or creating an art response about the following:

Single Stories and Implicit Bias

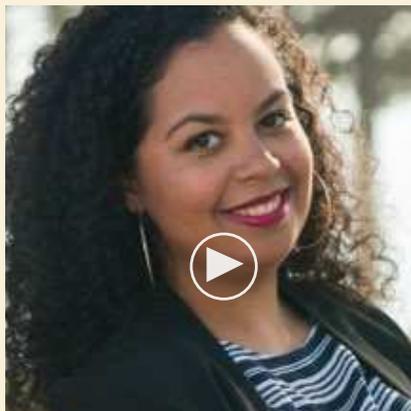
Press play and check out "**Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism**" and "**Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias**" in this NY Times video series on Implicit Bias.



- What role has and does storytelling play in your life?
- How have you experienced being single-storied and how have you single-storied others?
- What implicit biases are embedded within those stories?
- When we move beyond single stories, what's possible? How does this practice support us in reaching racial equity and liberation?

The Power of Storytelling: Expanding Narratives

Community-based leaders **Lorena Estrella** and **Nicole Matthews** will share their experience during our next session. Bear witness to their stories.



Thanks for completing the pre-work!