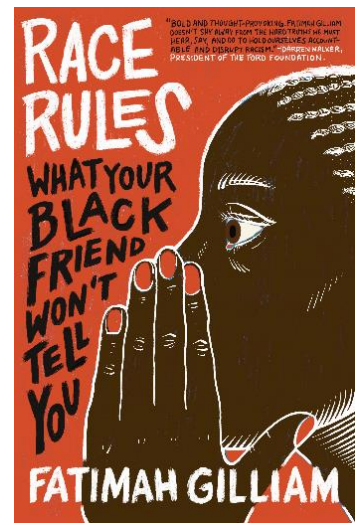


Race Rules: What Your Black Friend Won't Tell You
By [Fatimah Gilliam](#)

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Colorblindness Microaggression Translator Chart
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This information accompanies the book ***Race Rules: What Your Black Friend Won't Tell You***. Inside the book, it redirects readers to the author's [website](#) to obtain supplemental information.

The chart below translates microaggressive statements, showing what someone may say and comparing it to what a person of color may hear. It breaks down how statements can be heard and received by people of color. However, since people of color aren't monolithic, the chart doesn't speak for all people of color. This information supplements **Race Rule #18: Stop Saying You're Colorblind Because It's Racist.**

We hope you find this information helpful. Thank you for reading this book. In addition to yourself, we encourage you to buy ***Race Rules*** for your friends, family members, colleagues, and neighbors. Please form discussion groups and book clubs to explore this information. Be brave in disrupting racism!

About the Author



Fatimah Gilliam is an author, lawyer, consultant, public speaker, and entrepreneur. Her career combines expertise in the law, diversity, human capital, leadership, stakeholder engagement, and negotiations.

Fatimah is a Black woman whose family has been in the United States for nearly 400 years and fought in every American war, including the American Revolution and Civil War.

She began her career as a corporate attorney on Wall Street at Cleary Gottlieb, worked for Citigroup overseeing campus diversity recruiting for all its U.S. businesses, and oversaw corporate partnerships as the Head of Finance and Fundraising for North America for the Nobel Peace Prize-winning United Nations World Food Programme. Since founding The Azara Group, which provides diversity and inclusion, leadership development, negotiation, and strategy consulting services, she has advised Fortune 500 corporations, senior executives leading billion-dollar businesses, and industry thought leaders.

Fatimah holds a law degree from Columbia Law School, a Master in Public Policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and an undergraduate degree from Wellesley College. As a thought leader, she has been interviewed on television (e.g., CNN; CNBC), by news outlets (e.g., Forbes; CNN.com; Toronto Star; Insider; Yahoo! Finance), and by industry publications (e.g., Society for Human Resource Management or SHRM).

Her groundbreaking book ***Race Rules: What Your Black Friend Won't Tell You*** is her patriotic contribution to America's ongoing dialogue on race.

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Colorblindness Microaggression Translator

This chart translates the statements listed under the section “How Colorblindness Harms”
in **Race Rule #18: Stop Saying You’re Colorblind Because It’s Racist.**

Note that these potential internal thoughts of people of color are the quiet part out loud and brutally candid. They aren’t diplomatic but can illuminate what people of color may secretly think about your words, behaviors, and choices as they make judgements about whether you engage in racism or leverage racist mindsets when interacting with them. The way you decide to speak and think impacts your ability to build trust and form positive cross-racial personal and professional relationships.

What You Said	What They Hear or Think
<p>“I don’t see color. Green, Black, white – it’s all the same to me.”</p>	<p>“That statement is racist. <i>Colorblindness</i> is racist. It’s very convenient for you to pretend like race doesn’t matter when I’m forced to endure racism each day. It’s draining and I’m exhausted. You’re in denial and just don’t want to admit realities about racism. You just want to ignore the problem by rendering me invisible.”</p>
<p>“I’m colorblind. I don’t care if people are green, purple, rainbow, or polka dot.”</p>	<p>“You’re irritating me with your fake wokeness. Here we go again with these nonsensical color jamborees. Basically, what you’re saying is that race doesn’t affect <i>you</i> so we should act like <i>you</i> don’t see it. I guess you don’t see me – an actual human being – standing right in front of you. Thanks for negating my existence and experiences. Thanks for equating me to mutants and trivializing the reality of what my family and I face. It must be nice in La La Land. I don’t have that luxury thanks to racism. I live in the real world.”</p>
<p>“I wasn’t raised to see color. I just see people. I raised my son to not see color, and I’ve never heard him refer to the skin color of his minority friends. He’s grown up colorblind.”</p>	<p>“I get it. You don’t want me to think you’re racist so we’re playing this colorblindness game. It’s a shame you’re instilling this ability to deny race and racism and that discrimination exists in the next generation. How will we ever move forward? By the way, just last week you pointed out that there’s a new Black girl in your son’s class. Clearly, you see skin color! And if your son is the one who told you, then he sees it too.”</p>
<p>“Color shouldn’t matter. We’re all one race – the human race.”</p>	<p>“That would be nice, but society isn’t there yet thanks to racism. I’m tired of you ignoring our nation’s past and pretending we’re in a different present. Before we arrive at this dreamlike utopia, we’ve got a lot of work to do as individuals and as a country. Let’s start by acknowledging I’ve got obstacles in my path while your lane to success and opportunity is wide open – thanks to my ancestors and all the other screwed-over people of color still paying the price for all that alleged ‘bootstrapping’ your family did on our backs in a rigged system. You only have what you have because of us.”</p>

<p>“Why do you keep using the term <i>people of color</i>? Doesn’t that term just divide us?”</p>	<p>“Are you trying to distract me by implying that acknowledging race is inherently divisive? I’m not going for the head-fake when society is far less evolved. You sound ignorant. I don’t feel divided by the term. I feel seen, although not necessarily heard until we solve racism. ‘People of color’ better acknowledges our journeys are different. We can’t start rectifying racism if we fail to see the impact race plays in people’s lives – including my life. It’s time to open your eyes.”</p>
<p>“Character, not color, is what matters to me. Just like Dr. King.”</p>	<p>“Funny you should say that, because you told me just last week how your firm hired a Native American person. And then went into a rant about his ‘qualifications’ when he sounded more qualified than you. Let’s not forget, you only got your job because your uncle called in a favor. You barely had any job experience! Frankly, I’m amazed they haven’t fired you by now with the liberties you keep taking. You’re entitled and mediocre. I wonder which ‘character’ trait has been working so well for you and allowed you to last this long.</p> <p>“And stop twisting Dr. King’s words. He didn’t believe in colorblindness. He supported affirmative action and reparations. His speech was about an aspirational society. We’re nowhere close to it. Stop hijacking his words so you can support a racist status quo.”</p>
<p>“I don’t even see you as [insert race/ethnicity here]. I just see you as [insert person’s name].”</p>	<p>“If you don’t see my color, then why did you say that I’m not like other [insert race/ethnicity here], and then segued into a backhanded compliment about how I’m ‘articulate’ and ‘smart’? Your vision worked just fine when you nominated me to be your token without my consent. And FYI, I’m not good at [insert racially stereotypical skill here]. So please stop asking me to help you with [insert racially stereotypical skill here].”</p>
<p>“Why does it matter if we hire people with diverse backgrounds? I’ll admit that we don’t have much racial diversity in our company – okay, maybe virtually no diversity – but shouldn’t we focus on skills and qualifications?”</p>	<p>“Why? Because if we don’t focus on diversity and inclusion, we’ll continue hiring the same type of people repeatedly while shutting the door on great talent. We aren’t providing equitable access to opportunities, as proven by how homogeneous this company is. And don’t tell me we have a ‘talent pipeline problem.’ You’ve barely looked for diverse candidates. You just hired your college classmate and never advertised the job! And FYI – Everyone knows you’re underqualified for your job. So why are you still here?</p> <p>“The assumptions with your statement are: (1) it’s difficult to find qualified people of color to hire or that they’re inherently inexperienced and unskilled, and (2) that the white employees are inherently qualified, not merely average or mediocre, and were hired purely on their own merits. We’re already selecting for race – the white race. The narrative often disproportionately centers around ‘qualifications’ when discussing people of color and false notions of a meritocracy. This same prejudiced mindset applies to college admissions. The undercurrent is you feel entitled to seats you didn’t earn and want to access barriers, so you don’t have to fairly compete. You want more White Welfare*.”</p>

<p>“Why are we talking about ‘Black lives matter’ instead of ‘All lives matter’?”</p>	<p>“Oh my god, you’re one of those. Where’s the exit? I don’t have time for you and this racist nonsense. But thanks for outing yourself. Now I know who and what you are.</p> <p>“But you’re missing the point. Yes, every human life matters. But whites don’t have to live in daily fear of being killed by the police like people of color do. Like I do. Being white in America means not needing to state that your life matters. And when your life matters, you have power. Focusing on Black lives is important because society treats us like we don’t matter – as evidenced by murders like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. It’s a given that white lives matter – that white people matter. Why do you feel so threatened? Why isn’t your priority to focus on those who are <i>actually dying</i>? This is a distraction rooted in bigotry, so you don’t have to talk about racism and the systematic devaluation of minority lives.”</p>
<p>Bonus Materials – Dinner Party Conversation</p> <p>Friend – “Who brought the great wine tonight?”</p> <p>You – “The guy with the blue pants on...you see the one with the baseball cap? He’s right there.”</p> <p>Friend – “They all have on jeans and baseball caps. They’re dressed like twins. Do you mean the East Asian-looking guy or the shorter white guy next to him?”</p> <p>You – “Oh, I didn’t even notice he was Asian. I don’t notice those things. But yes, him.”</p>	<p>“Are you for real? It’s hard watching you do everything you can to not admit you saw and noticed the guy is of East Asian descent. You’re so afraid of appearing racist. News flash! You just appeared racist with all that foolishness. And I know for a fact you notice Asians. Just last week you mentioned some BS about a slow Asian driver on the highway as if that weren’t a racist statement. But suddenly today you’ve gone blind? Puh-leeze!</p> <p>“You do realize you can acknowledge race if it’s relevant or helpful? There’s no need to go through verbal Hula-Hoops to describe everything else about someone except their race – especially when it’s useful information. Just don’t overly emphasize it or mention it if it’s irrelevant.”</p>
<p>For tips and advice on what to say instead of these statements, how to respond when witnessing others leaning into colorblindness, and for reflective questions that can help you transition away from amplifying colorblindness ideologies, see the “Tips and Advice” section towards the end of Race Rule #18: Stop Saying You’re Colorblind Because It’s Racist.</p> <p>This guidance is available inside the book Race Rules: What Your Black Friend Won’t Tell You.</p> <p>* See Race Rules for a definition of the term White Welfare.</p>	