The 4 Pillars Schema – The America Roots of Racism

There are many different thoughts and theories about why human beings have chosen to dehumanize other human beings, from evolutionary survival theories, to genetic, cultural and even religious theories. But what they all have in common is the existence of what’s known in psychology as “schemas”. A schema is a mental mind-set or constructed and conditioned way of thinking that helps humans determine how to act or respond in a variety of different environmental settings and situations. Schemas are conditioned behavioral mechanisms that are learned and therefore can be unlearned, and the schema that is at the roots of what we are calling American Racism is no different.

According to the Ambient Noise Theory of American Racism, there are four basic mental constructs, or 4-Pillars of thought that had to be developed, assimilated, and then taught and perpetuated in order for the African Slave Trade to be the successful business venture it was conceived of by its white European and American designers, investors and contributors. The 4-

Pillars of this mindset simply stated are:

1. Blacks are here to be used. Everything they produce, have, own, create, or procreate belongs to whites.

2. Blacks are here to serve

They are never to rise above the station of serving whites or they are to be stepping stones that assist in helping whites rise higher.

3. Blacks are less than human

They do not deserve to be treated as equals and can thereby be mistreated, abused, disrespected, used and misused in every way imaginable, and by extension they have no rights that a white person is bound to respect.

4. Blacks are dangerous and a threat must be controlled. They need to be separated, segregated, dealt with and punished more harshly, weeded out, isolated, castrated, weakened, poisoned, lynched etc. or they will hurt whites or take away what belongs to white people.

Succinctly put these are the 4 psychological constructs that are the underpinnings of American Racism. Said another way, these are the 4 conditioned thoughts the American government, entrepreneurs and financial powers had to espouse to get slavery up and running as a business, but they also had to get the American public to “buy-in” to this mindset or else the business of slavery wouldn’t fly. It was absolutely crucial to the design of the “American way of life” that white Americans had to embrace these basic 4 thoughts or memes in order for the government and greater populace of America to enslave, rape, lynch, murder, humiliate, defraud, discriminate, incarcerate, and more - all within the blessing and protection of the law, in order to build prosperity for and insure absolute power for white Americans.

The 4-Pillar schema was not just a product of its times. It didn’t die with the end of slavery. As a mental construct it was passed on for 20 generations and has not been extinguished or discharged from the American psyche. It has been perpetuated to this very day. The pillars have undergone transformation and are expressed with new terms, phrases, and race neutral platitudes and behaviors that keep the construct alive. This is due to the unbearable anxiety (cognitive dissonance) of facing the truth of what has and is being done presently to harm, control, and disempower one group of humans (people of color) while supporting and protecting another group of humans (white people). As unpleasant a truth this is to anyone reading this, it is in fact very true. And there is an endless supply of evidence to prove the existence and perpetuation of the 4-pillar schema philosophy from the time of slavery till this day. Research shows the 4-Pillar effect actually extends to all people of color and is a stable psychological social feature of American life. Michelle Alexander’s book “The New Jim Crow” expertly lays this out and is the optimal academic resource for the philosophy of the 4-Pillar schema theory. The Ambient Noise Mindfulness–based Racism Reduction method, along with Contact & Conversation works via the analogy, “the only way out is through”. When we dehumanize each other we break the Fundamental Relationship we humans have with each other to support one another to survive and to thrive. Dehumanization creates schemas that are so powerfully painful that they are almost always unconscious. The discomfort of having them exposed, (cognitive dissonance) motivates the host of the schema to go to any extreme not to face the pain and have to admit that they have committed racist acts that, by omission or co-mission, may be incongruent to their self-image. Self-Image labels like “I’m a good Christian”, a “good person”, a “fair liberal”, an “open-minded person”, a “spiritual person”, or a “good American” fly directly in the face of having this schema running in one’s mind like an open software app on a computer hard drive.

Yet, as powerful as they are, schema can be undone if we choose to undo them.

REFERENCES

Michelle Alexander’s “The New Jim Crow” – www.newjimcrow.com

Tim Wise White Like Me https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6SL-iCp-Y4