

@diversify.vanlife, @lifestraw, @irietaurora & @denishaspeaks present:

Small Steps for Big Impact:

Getting Real About Racism on the Road

- Hosted by Diversify Vanlife in collaboration with Lifestraw
- Facilitated by *Denisha “Neena” Jenkins*, Anti-Racism Educator



Denisha “Neena”
Jenkins
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Noami
Grevemburg
@irietaurora &
founder of
@diversify.vanlife

Words From Our Hosts

Noami
@irietoaurora,

Founder of @diversify.vanlife:

“In my 4 years as a nomad, I’ve seen a clear lack of representation of BIPOC and other marginalized groups in the nomadic community. This made it very difficult for me as a Black woman to navigate these spaces, where my voice and my experiences were not represented in the overall narrative. And I knew that I wasn’t alone. So when I started Diversify Vanlife nine months ago, it was out of a desperate need to find community that I could relate to, and create a space where other BIPOC could feel encouraged to pursue this lifestyle. We demand representation, not tokenism. Things are slowly changing as more BIPOC are pursuing nomadic lifestyles, so how do we create true inclusivity? True inclusion takes work.”



Words From Our Sponsor

Tara Lundy Head of Brand @lifestraw

“We are proud supporters of Diversify Vanlife. It’s a pleasure and a privilege to support such a clearly relevant topic and event.”





Workshop

Small Steps for Big Impact:

Getting Real About Racism on the Road

**the following is a lightly edited summary of the workshop led by Denisha “Neena” Jenkins.*

Workshop

Key Points for Discussion about Anti-Racism

- **Expectations & Agreement**
 - **Stay engaged**
 - **Expect to experience discomfort**
 - *Pay attention to where you feel discomfort, for an opportunity for later reflection*
 - **Speak your truth**
 - *Speak to your own experiences*
 - **Expect & accept a lack of closure**
 - *Anti-racism is an ongoing process without a defined end point. Use new information as a starting place for further learning.*
- **Naming Racism**
- **Looking Inward**
- **Identifying Actionable Steps of Resistance**





WHY DO WE NEED TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION?

- Racism is a *global phenomenon*, not just an American issue. There is a larger picture of global racial oppression that we must be more aware of in order to best participate in an increasingly globalized conversation around anti-racism.

- *Differences have become disparities*. The crises happening in the U.S. and across the world have only made those social disparities - and the structural discrimination they are rooted in - more apparent.



Workshop

What is Race?

- **Race is a sociopolitical construct that categorizes people and allocates power based on the assumption that skin color and physical attributes are related to intellectual, moral or cultural superiority.**
- Race has a history in racist pseudoscience that was used to justify the Transatlantic slave trade
- Race is culturally defined and can mean different things, and take on different significance for different individuals
- **Everyone in society has a racialized identity**
- People may even have their race misrepresented by others
- **Racialized identity has a major impact on a person's life**
- People's awareness of their own racial identity is very connected to how that identity has (or has not) impacted them



Workshop: What is Race?

- Race is a defining factor in the quality of life across the globe
- It isn't race itself that influences people's lives; it's the *societal assumptions* made based on race that create unfair outcomes
- **Our education on the structural racism in our society begins in infancy.**

**A majority of the participants in the workshop who polled stated that they first became aware of race between the ages of 7 and 14.*

The next largest age group indicated was people who became aware by the age of 6.

Racial Bias

is disproportionate weight in favor or against an idea, thing, person or group due to race, usually in a way that is unfair.

- **Associative thoughts and feelings can manifest implicitly and explicitly.**
- **These can lead to consequences such as: prejudice, belief in stereotypes, discrimination, violence and genocide.**



What is Racism?

**RACISM = RACIAL BIAS +
INSTITUTIONAL POWER**

Denial is the heartbeat of racism, beating across ideologies, races, and nations...”

- Ibram X. Kendi

- **This speaks to the urge to deny one's own benefits gained due to the racist system**
- **People can and do benefit from racism without endorsing it**
- **There can often be a sense of guilt associated with coming to terms with the influence of racism in our lives**





WHAT IS STRUCTURAL RACISM?

- **Structural Racism** is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms **reinforce and legitimize the superiority of “whiteness”** by allowing privileges (unearned advantages) and disadvantages based on skin color to endure and adapt over time.
**credit: The Aspen Institute*
- **This goes beyond individual experience.**
- ***“The air you breathe, the food you eat, the visual representations of what your future could look like - all are distorted by structural racism.”*** - Dr. Jessica Isom
- It is not something chosen and practiced by a few people or institutions. **It is a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.**
- To create a new reality, we have to deconstruct the “narrative of racial difference”

Workshop: *What is Racism?*

Other Types of Racism

- **INSTITUTIONAL**

- Occurs within organizations and/or industries. Discriminatory practices, unfair policies rooted in racial bias that favor White people, and result in inequitable outcomes for non-White people.

- **INTERPERSONAL**

- Occurs between individuals. Public expressions of racism.

- **INDIVIDUAL**

- Beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that perpetuate racism in conscious and unconscious ways



What is Anti-Racism?

- **Anti-racism is a conscious effort to make moment-to-moment decisions that disrupt systems of oppression**
- **The goal is to destroy the system that both creates and maintains unfair advantages and disadvantages according to race**

“If you come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you recognize that your liberation and mine are bound up together, we can walk together.”

- Lila Watson

- **We have to be clear on why we are choosing to be anti-racist**
- Performative allyship is unhelpful and unsustainable



Workshop: *What is Anti-Racism?*

START. AND. REPEAT.

- **The work is NOT EQUAL**
 - Due to power/privilege dynamics, white and non-white people have different journeys and responsibilities
 - *Those with power and privilege particularly must do their part to dismantle the current system*
- **Locate yourself**
 - What are your daily choices? Who are you in relationship with? What is the condition of your racial/ethnic identity? What are your biases?
- **Confront your racist learning**
 - Revisit the biased roots of your indoctrination and counter it with new frameworks



Workshop: *What is Anti-Racism?*

Six Steps Everyone Can Take

1. READ

- Educate yourself on racism, its history, how it functions in your life and in the lives of others

2. REFLECT

- On your relationship with racism.

3. REMEMBER

- How you have participated in these systems in the past and what the conditions were that made that possible

4. RISKS

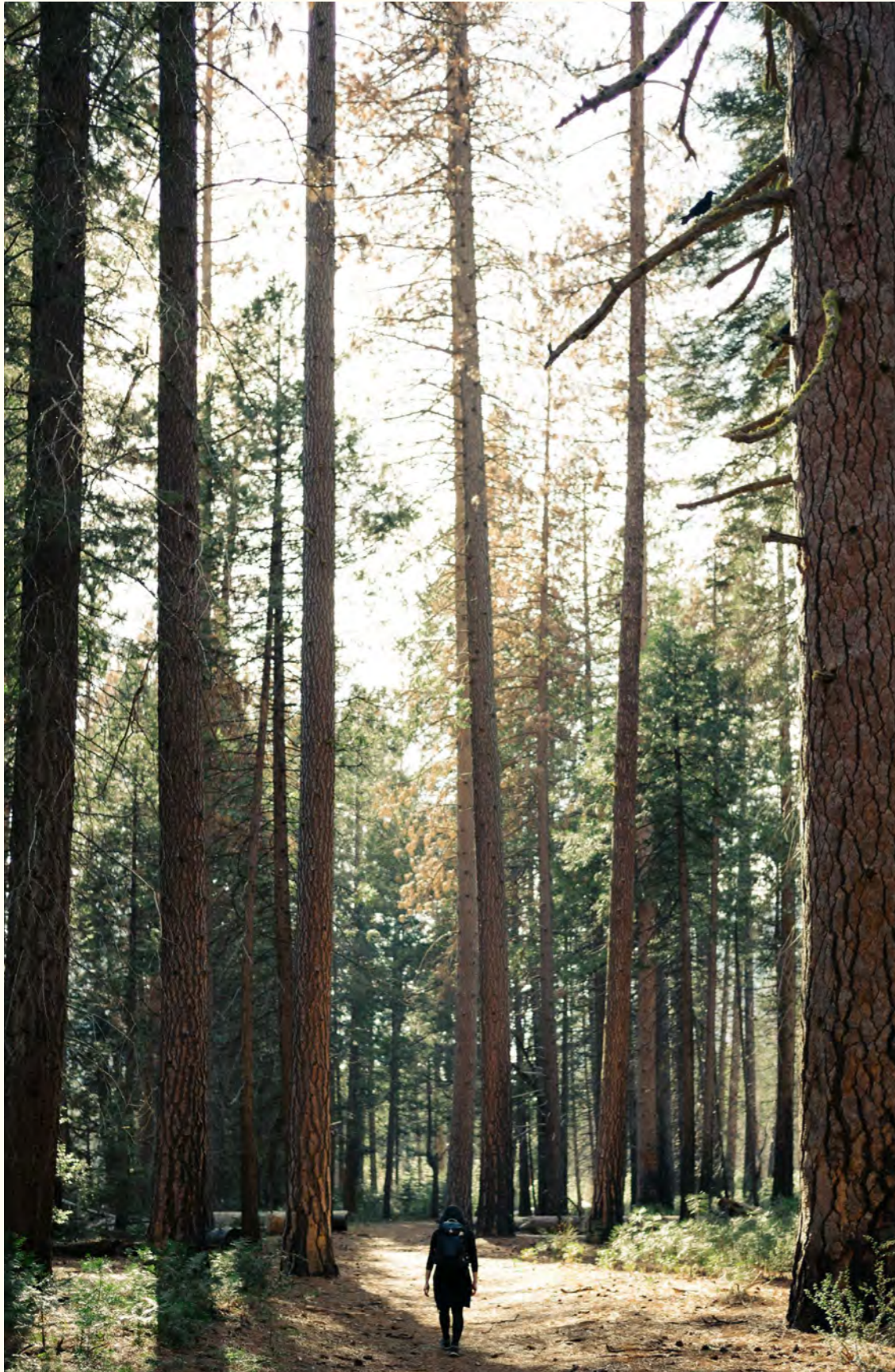
- Take them! Challenge racism where you come across it, not just within your comfort zone

5. REJECTION

- Accept that you're going to get it wrong and that rejection may be a part of that process

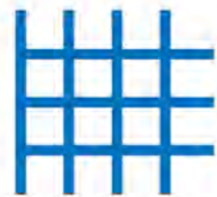
6. RELATIONSHIPS

- Building authentic relationships is essential for continued progress





THANK YOU



LifeStraw

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*A special thank you to
LifeStraw for supporting
the Diversify Vanlife
community and making
this event possible.*