

Table 10.1 White Privilege: The Color-Line Exercise

Respond to each question using one of the following scores:

5 if the statement is mostly true for you

3 if the statement is sometimes true for you

0 if the statement is seldom true for you

Because of my race or color . . .	My response	Friend's response
If I wish, I can arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.		
If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area that I can afford and in which I would want to live.		
I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.		
I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.		
I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the newspaper and see people of my race widely represented.		
When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.		
I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.		

Because of my race or color . . .	My response	Friend's response
I can go into supermarkets and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions; I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented; I can go into any hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.		
Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.		
I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.		
I can swear, or dress in secondhand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.		
I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.		
I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.		
I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.		
I can remain oblivious to the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling, in my culture, any penalty for such oblivion.		
I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.		
I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.		
If a traffic cop pulls me over, or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.		
I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, and children's magazines featuring the people of my race.		

Because of my race or color . . .	My response	Friend's response
I can go home from most meetings of the organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out of place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, feared, or hated.		
I can take a job with an Affirmative Action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.		
I can choose public accommodations without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.		
I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.		
If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.		
I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.		
TOTAL SCORE		