



TEACHING FOR RACIAL EQUITY ACTION GUIDE #1

To support equity based on strong relationships with fellow teachers, first understand what you bring to the table

In *Teaching for Racial Equity*, Chapter 2, we stated that “Telling our own story, reflecting on our own history and experiences while acknowledging strengths as well as issues, is an important step to begin or continue our journey toward teaching for racial equity. While our own past provides knowledge and experience that help make us effective teachers, at times we may also need to understand how our past might be getting in the way so we can move beyond it” (46).

Getting a clear look at your formative experiences involves three steps:

1. describing some of your own history growing up, and then
2. looking at it through an equity lens, and finally
3. (as we'll cover in the next action guide) further focusing that lens and building shared understanding by comparing our history to others, thus highlighting each person's particular perspectives. It especially helps to find someone with a background different from yours.

About Step 2, going deeper with a racial lens: Especially if you are White, you may not have thought much about racism in your life, since you may have viewed your experience as “the normal way things are.” Consider how your experiences might have been experienced differently by a young person of Color.

If you are a person of color, you've no doubt already thought about race. A question for you may be “How does race impact my students—their experiences and non-experiences—and how does race impact their schooling, compared to my own growing up?” Perhaps the most valuable realization is how much we *don't* know about our students and each other as teachers. We need to get to know both in depth to make school learning meaningful.

To get started writing a piece of your own biography, you can create a timeline of your life, or a part of it, as described in *Teaching for Racial Equity*, pp. 51-53. After writing, review your story and ask yourself some questions about how race may have played a role in various situations in your life. You can find a list of these questions on p. 64 in *Teaching for Racial Equity*.

Then feel free to share your efforts with us at teaching4racialequity@gmail.com.

—Tonya, Steve, and Katy

Coming next in Action Guide #2: Help for sharing your story with others.