

White Boy/Black Girl Discussion Questions

Prologue

Adaeze and Chad talk about “the five words that changed everything” in their relationship.

1. As you think about relationships in your life with people who are different from you, what conversations or experiences stand out as defining moments?
2. What made those specific conversations or experiences so significant?
3. What comments or events set your relationship on a different course, and why did they have that effect?

Chapter 1: As Different as Black and White

Adaeze and Chad talk about their upbringing, their families of origin, the communities they grew up in, and how those factors influenced their understanding of race.

1. What were some of the influences that informed your view of race and what was “normal”?
2. How have those influences affected the way you see those around you? Which of those influences are worth challenging or unlearning?
3. In what ways might you be privileged, and how does that influence the way you interact with those around you?
4. Think back to situations where you felt uncomfortable about someone’s ignorant comment or question. How would you react differently now than you did then?

Chapter 2: Let The Awkward Conversations Begin!

At the end of the chapter, the authors say, “Overcoming past hurts and prejudices takes time. It takes patience. It takes understanding. And it takes a willingness to stay in the fight even if you get a little bruised and bloodied in the process.”

1. How have you found this to be true in your life?

2. How willing are you to enter into awkward conversations?
3. What holds you back from engaging, and what are the rewards of doing so?
4. Think back to times when you entered into conflict with another person. What is an example of a conflict that ended in unity and a conflict that ended in division?
5. What was the difference between these two conflicts?

Chapter 3: Does Everything Have to be about Race?

In this chapter, Chad and Adaeze give some examples of the ways they experience situations in different ways and how the world around them reacts to them differently as an interracial couple.

1. As you walk through your daily routines and interact with others, how aware are you of the role race plays?
2. How do you think that level of awareness might differ for someone of another race?
3. Are there any interactions you've had in the past that you wish you could change after reading the stories in this chapter?
4. How would you change them?

Chapter 4: Under the Influence

In this chapter, Chad gives us a peak into his own ignorance about how surrounded he was by whiteness, and Adaeze shows how she struggled with the weight of being the only representative of Blackness in Chad's life. These stories end in a call to diversify influences in your life, both socially and through the media we consume.

1. As you evaluate your entertainment sources, what trends do you notice?
2. How might you be intentional about diversifying your music, shows, and social media?
3. Who in your life could you get to know more but haven't yet?
4. Could the reason you haven't taken that leap be because of their differences?
5. How would you approach diversifying your spheres of influence?

Chapter 5: Excuse Me, but I Think You Just Stepped in Something

The authors talk in this chapter about blind spots—hurtful things we think, say, and do out of ignorance. At the end of the chapter, they talk about how it’s not the worst thing in the world to be ignorant, but it’s what we do out of our ignorance that can be positive or negative.

1. Think about the times when your ignorance has been pointed out or revealed to you. Did you respond poorly, with your walls immediately rising, or were you open to learning and growth? Why was that?
2. Describe a time you “stepped in it” and said something that was inadvertently offensive or insulting to a person of another race?
3. Reflect on a time someone said something offensive to you.
4. How did the scenario play out?
5. How did you feel afterward?

Chapter 6: Trying to Be the Perfect Black Person

Adaeze “goes there” in sharing how she navigated a painful exit from her church. She discusses living with the constant “perfect Black person” expectation and comes to the understanding that she gets to choose when she will or will not engage in tough racial conversations.

1. In your experience, how has the church handled racial differences?
2. Why do you think so many churches struggle in this area?
3. What’s one thing you can do to help make your church a place that better reflects the beauty and diversity of God’s Kingdom?
4. Where might you need to reassess your boundaries and release yourself from the expectation to always be teaching, explaining, and correcting when it comes to racial conversations and find your “I just won’t”?

Chapter 7: Trying to Be the Perfect White Person

In the last chapter, Chad shares the pressure he feels to be a perfect white person. This pressure

threatens to divide them, and they discuss how he and Adaeze learned to move past this together.

1. How do you think our culture would define the “perfect Black person”?
2. How would it define the “perfect white person”?
3. In what ways have you experienced or watched someone else experience the pressure of those expectations?
4. How have you dealt with that pressure, both positively and negatively?
5. In what situations can you show more grace for people around you?

Chapter 8: Getting on the Same Team

Chad and Adaeze lay out the process of learning how to become a family despite difficult beginnings. Sometimes time heals all wounds, but sometimes it takes time *and* showing up.

1. In what ways does your origin story affect you?
2. What beliefs and postures have influenced your assumptions?
3. Have you ever confronted a family member about a racially charged topic? If so, what happened? If not, why not?
4. Are there any relationships you have given up on because they got tiring? Do you think it's possible you gave up prematurely?

Chapter 9: Please Stop Saying, “I Don’t See Color”

The authors say, “Being ‘colorblind’ and ignoring our differences rather than celebrating them isn’t the answer. The answer is treating people who look different from you with respect.”

1. Why do you think people say they don’t see color?
2. What is the problem with that sentiment?
3. In what ways does your “family filter” affect the way you see the world around you?
4. How have you not acknowledged someone else’s family filter? How might that affect your interactions with that person?

Chapter 10: Celebrating What We Don't Understand

Adaeze and Chad share about their *Black Is King* and Dave Matthews Band experiences.

1. When was a time you went outside your preferences or tastes to celebrate what you didn't understand?
2. When was a time someone did this for you? How did it make you feel?
3. When was a time you failed to do this for someone else? How did it make you feel?
4. When was a time someone failed to do this for you? How did it make you feel?

Chapter 11: Down the Rabbit Hole

In this chapter, the authors talk about three keys to cultivate interracial relationships: building trust, listening, and showing empathy.

1. Which one of these comes most naturally to you? Which one is the most challenging?
2. When was a time one of these factors helped build a bridge in a relationship? When was a time the lack of one of these factors burned a bridge?

Epilogue: The Five Words That Changed Everything

Interracial relationships come with challenges, but they are, as the Brinkmans say, “totally freaking worth it.”

1. What are the benefits of entering these difficult conversations and being in relationship with people who are different from us?
2. What are some takeaways you've gleaned from this book?
3. What's one thing that will change in the way you relate to people of different races after reading this book?