

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Kendi shares his own experience with racist thinking. How does his honesty help give us space to acknowledge and name our own racist behaviors and attitudes?
2. Kendi writes, “The only way to undo racism is to constantly identify it and describe it—and then dismantle it.” Why does he believe we need to call out racism when we see it, even if it can be uncomfortable to identify?
3. The book’s central message is that the opposite of “racist” isn’t “not racist.” The true opposite of “racist” is *antiracist*. “The good news,” Kendi writes, “is that racist and antiracist are not fixed identities. We can be racist one minute and an antiracist the next.” What does it mean to have to constantly reaffirm your identity as an antiracist? Is there any benefit to the fact that you can’t just decide you are “not racist” or an antiracist and be done with it?
4. What is the first step you, personally, will take in striving to be an antiracist? How will you check yourself and hold yourself accountable if you notice you, or someone else, is being racist?
5. Kendi thinks that we should assess candidates as being racist or antiracist based on what ideas they are expressing and what policies they are supporting—and not what they say is in their bones or their heart. Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
6. Anyone who values immigrants from European countries and devalues immigrants from Latin America is guilty of racism. Have you ever been guilty of this type of racism? Discuss the unique resilience and resourcefulness people possess if they leave everything in their native country behind and immigrate to another, as Kendi examines in the chapter on Ethnicity.
7. There’s a stronger and clearer correlation between levels of violent crime and unemployment levels than between violent crime and race, but that’s not the story policymakers have chosen to tell. Discuss why you think this is. How might our society and culture change if policymakers characterized dangerous Black neighborhoods as dangerous *unemployed* neighborhoods?
8. Why do you think it is so hard for people to not assess other cultures from their own cultural standards? How does doing this trap people in racist ideas?
9. Inequities between Light and Dark African Americans can be as wide as inequities between Black and White Americans. How have you seen colorism play out in real life and/or in the media?
10. Kendi writes, “White supremacist is code for anti-human, a nuclear ideology that poses an existential threat to human existence.” How are white supremacists and their ideology actually harmful to all of humanity—including white people?
11. Kendi makes the case that to be antiracist, one must stand against all forms of bigotry. Why is standing against other bigotries so essential to standing against racism?
12. Kendi closes the book comparing racism and cancer. What do you think of this comparison?
13. Kendi believes we can defy the odds, heal society of racism, and create an antiracist society. Do you? Why is hope so central to the antiracist movement?