

Watch "[How Studying Privilege Systems Can Strengthen Compassion](#)" by Peggy McIntosh at TEDxTimberlaneSchools.

Reflection Questions

- What did you learn?
- What made you uncomfortable?
- What were some blindspots?
- What actions did you take or might you take?

Additional things to think about...

- MacIntosh suggests the idea that privilege should operate in society as a catalyst to compassionate action. How can you use this to reframe your perception of privilege?
- "Maybe niceness has nothing to do with it." Think about that statement in relation to your intercultural competence.
- MacIntosh asked herself "On a daily basis, what do I get, beside the money system and the knowledge system helping me out, that my colleagues of color can't count on?" Spend some time with that question for yourself.



Video Length: 18:26



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Peggy McIntosh states “Above the hypothetical line (of social justice), one can be pushed up, believed, thought worthy of responsibility, considered to be responsible with money, considered to be capable of doing the school work, or any other kind of work. One can be seen as representative of the best. That's privilege. Above the hypothetical line of justice, one has more than one deserved because of circumstances of birth and other people's positive projections onto one. And below it is disadvantage. That is unearned disadvantage. And I believe everybody in this room has a combination of both experiences. Having more than we actually earned, and having less than we've actually earned.”

Reflect on your life – where have you experienced or been privileged, and where you have experienced or been disadvantaged? Write them in, then reflect on if you have more above or below the line. How has it changed over time, and how has that impacted you?

MacIntosh ends with the metaphor that white privilege is a bank account given to her, one she didn't ask for and can't be blamed for, but that she can decide to use it to weaken the system of white privilege. Think about the privilege you have, the power you have, and how you want to use it.

Privilege

Disadvantage