

The Seven A's to becoming an Authentic Ally

The question that I most frequently come across when working with people on the impact of race inequality on the lives of people of colour is what can I do to help? People frequently say, I'd like to do more to help improve race equality but don't know where to start. This quick and easy guide tells you how to get started and what to do to become a genuine and authentic ally.

Appetite	This A is the first and probably the most important, you must ask yourself, do I really have the appetite to immerse myself in the world of race equality, a world that I know little about, have no experience of and appears to be complex, convoluted and fraught with difficulty and high emotion. Spend some time thinking about and reflecting on whether you are prepared to be in for the long haul. Be honest with yourself, is this just a fad based on the George Floyd and Covid19 issues. Ally ship is forever not just during crises.
Ask	This is where you must be brave and actually ask questions about race, your own race included, be curious, find out what race equality and inequality means by looking things up, reading, questioning all your received wisdom about your race and others. Be prepared to be surprised and even shocked at what you hear.
Accept	Having done your homework on the issue and spent time reflecting on what you have learned, it's now time to accept, really accept that there is an issue for people of colour in our society. The acceptance is an internal process and one that brings you to a place of understanding.
Acknowledge	Acknowledgement is external, here people will now know where you stand on race inequality because you will openly acknowledge that there is an issue that needs to be dealt with, you will speak up and speak out about the unfairness of a system that ensures that people with more melanin in their skins have poorer experiences of life.
Apologise	The apology is not about saying you are sorry for any individual wrong doings but saying you are sorry this is happening globally to people of certain races and that apology needs to come from the heart and be authentic. It is not about empathising because you genuinely cannot walk in another mans shoes but you can show sympathy and caring about the situation in which they find themselves
Assumptions	Don't make assumptions, too many plans and ambitions - personal or corporate- are driven by assumptions that are wrong and they fail. Full and informed views are critical prior to making any plans and the right moves. Never assume, it is dangerous but always seek the views of others and understand

	the implications of your actions across all interested parties, by doing so you will be better informed and you will have gathered the intelligence and ownership of individuals or groups for whom you endeavours have implications and you will significantly enhance your chances of success
Action	The final A is taking demonstrable action on the race equality agenda. It can be sponsoring someone, it can be making a difference via policy changes, it can be any action that shows that you are indeed a true committed and authentic Ally.

Yvonne Coghill

July 2020