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How I Met Your Mother & Other Spoiler Alerts

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How I Met Your Mother & Other Spoiler Alerts

Abstract

Ted: *She chews loudly. Why do you think we call her Chewbacca?*

Marshall: *Because she's loyal, wears shiny belts, and I resemble a young Harrison Ford.*

Shortly after this scene in *How I Met Your Mother's* "Spoiler Alert" episode, Marshall experiences a sinking realization that his fiancée Lilly "chews loudly," something Marshall never seemed to notice before. Cue the tacky yet—highly effective—"glass shattering" sound effects and 20 minutes of comedic exploitation of the gang's annoying quirks, and you get five friends with a hilariously devastating new awareness of each other's flaws, and one brilliant episode. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, race, ethnicity, racism, bias, prejudice

Disciplines

African American Studies | Race and Ethnicity | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies | Sociology

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](http://www.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER & OTHER SPOILER ALERTS

February 24, 2013

Ted: *She chews loudly. Why do you think we call her Chewbacca?*

Marshall: *Because she's loyal, wears shiny belts, and I resemble a young Harrison Ford.*



Shortly after this scene in *How I Met Your Mother's* "Spoiler Alert" episode, Marshall experiences a sinking realization that his fiancée Lilly "chews loudly," something Marshall never seemed to notice before. Cue the tacky yet—highly effective—"glass shattering" sound effects and 20 minutes of comedic exploitation of the gang's annoying quirks, and you get five friends with a hilariously devastating new awareness of each other's flaws, and one brilliant episode.

I had my own "glass shattering" moment last week.

It was brought to my attention recently that I might not have been as cognizant of race and racial issues on this campus as I thought I was. As a Sociology major and part-time Diversity Peer Educator, I found this to be more than slightly disturbing a suggestion. "How am I not seeing race??" Pulling out my old Sociology 101 textbook, I stared intently at the definition of race, searching for the answers:

A race is a socially constructed category of people who share biologically transmitted traits that members of a society consider important (Macionis 2008).

Reading and rereading this section, flipping back and forth between "race" and "ethnicity," I was still pretty confident in my understanding of race. However, in flipping through the following pages, I noticed a pattern in the following keywords: Prejudice, stereotypes, social distancing, racism, and—worst of all—

Privilege.

That was when the glass shattered—Sinking realizations and all. Turns out I *can* see race just fine. What I often *can't* see, however, is race privilege, and I can use my short (yet fruitful) experience in an Overheard at Gettysburg argument as a case study: Long story short, I saw a post on Overheard at Gettysburg that sounded

offensive and bigoted and I asked for it to be removed. As support for my argument I casually stated that we didn't have racist comments posted on Overheard at Gettysburg, and I thoroughly believed I was making a true statement. I was so wrong.

It took less than 20 minutes for a post combining three racist comments that had been lingering on the site and had *not* been asked to be taken down as a way to negate my argument. Turns out there *is racism* on Overheard *insert glass shattering effect*, but because it wasn't directed at me or my own way of identifying, I somehow glazed over it. In fact, according to [Collegeprowler's statistics](#), 81% of all Gettysburg students are white—which pretty much assures me that I, as a self-identifying white person, can sift through the posts at Overheard without feeling targeted for my race.

So where do we go from here?

According to Peggy McIntosh, author of [White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#), “White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools , and blank checks...” of which we carry around with us rather unconsciously, never wondering where the materials came from, why we know how to use them, or why we're suddenly wearing knapsacks. I am a card-carrying member of the privilege on this campus, and it was only through having my own comments turned on their head and exposed for what they were—white privilege incarnate—that I was able to realize that there was, in fact, something *skewing* my view of the world.

While I still have white privilege card, I can now at least be cognizant of the fact that I *have* it, and recognize the weight it has in my metaphorical wallet as I go about my day. We all carry certain privilege cards with us that can be credited to a majority, be it the gender majority, class majority, race majority, sexual majority—you name it, and while having the card is not necessarily a bad thing, the realization that some go about their day with fewer cards than others is something that we can all benefit from, even in something as seemingly harmless as the perusing of Facebook posts.

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