

In my home, we discussed race, but we did not talk about our own racial identity. We talked about the importance of treating people equally, the importance of Black Lives Matter, and even the wrong done to Philando Castille. We talked about other people's race, and racism in the everyday world, but, for some reason, we did not talk about our own races. This was most likely because our small social and family circles had accepted us as part of the "in-group." "Asian" seemed more like a term for the Korean and Chinese exchange students that went to my high school. My "Asian" identity was a "perk" that I could use when I applied for college, and my second language was a bullet-point that I could use on my resume whenever I wanted to get my foot in the door. My father did not have family in the United States, so I was surrounded by my mother's family; my friends from my private school; and my coworkers at the Caribou Coffee in Eagan. In other words, I was surrounded by white people. My siblings and I could spend our whole day listening to our father speak to us in Tagalog, yet I cannot remember a time when anyone used the word "mixed," "biracial," or "multiracial," to describe us. According to recent studies, multiracial children who do not grow up in homes that have discussions about race often experience high anxiety and difficulty when forming their identities. Additionally, multiracial children's identities are often shaped by their home environment, and, more prominently, their social environments. For these reasons, the idea of being a multiracial person began to become a source of anxiety for me, and my identity became a result of the world around me.

When the war on race began in the United States with events such as Michael Brown's death or the Christmas protests at the Mall of America, I vehemently and very publicly held the opinion that the officers and courts in question did no wrong, and that racism in America was nonexistent. Coincidentally, it was at this time that I found out my brother identified as White, too. When I told him what I believed about the recent, racially-charged events, he replied with, "That's actually very smart of you." We had both chosen to take the White man's side. However, no matter how much I adamantly denied that racism was still present in America and considered myself 100% White, my friends would often make passing jokes about my multiracial identity. "Well, you're pretty much White," was a common joke that would leave me wondering if "pretty much White" was the same as just being White. Another common way my friends would remind me that I wasn't really passing as White was by calling me the "token Asian." And the most common reminder of my multiracial identity was produced by anyone who could speak Spanish. At job where most of the employees could speak Spanish, I had almost daily occurrences of people coming up to me and speaking Spanish without first asking if that was a language I knew.

It wasn't until college that these experiences began to shift my identity from White to biracial. I began working around and making more friends with people of color, who always identified me as non-white or biracial. These experiences line up with evidence that minorities are more likely to perceive multiracial people as their

subordinate race. As a result, my new surroundings began to shape my identity as multiracial even further. It was also at this time that my mother had immersed our family in a new, more diverse environment because she had switched jobs. Conversations shifted from the importance of respecting other peoples identities to the importance of accepting our identities. With all these things combined, I began to fully identify as a biracial person, and owned my culture proudly. I also found that biracial status came with a special advantage, one that is backed by research: multiracial people have racial fluidity. Racial fluidity allows multiracial people to bounce freely between dominant and subordinate groups. Racial fluidity works its best when paired with high self esteem and a proud identification with one's multiracial identity: something I had just gained.

With this advantage, I was able to catch a late start in the field of activism. If I was comfortable switching between dominant and subordinate groups, I could begin to start uniting them and educating both groups on ways of either dealing with racism or using privilege to combat racism. However, I found that this was not as easy as channeling my half-White background when speaking to dominate groups. I began to see that whenever I became really passionate about racism in America, dominate groups looked at me differently. I had noticed that, according to research, dominate groups tend to classify biracial persons as their subordinate identity when speaking out against injustice. People of dominate groups would often dismiss what I said or feel that I was being emotional and that I hadn't really experienced any racism. It was with these gestures of dismissal that I found that I no longer took the White man's side.

Racial identity in multiracial children is a very important part of a child's life. Although most parents are not ill-intentioned when it comes to talking about their child's identity, they are mostly ill-equipped. Recent studies show that parents often think they are doing a better job at discussing race than they actually are, which may be detrimental to their child's growth. Multiracial children already receive intrusive, confusing questions as they grow up – such as, "What are you?" – and not discussing racial identity will only further the confusion and anxiety they experience when trying to figure out their identities. It is important to nurture their sense of identity as a biracial person because they will then be even more comfortable passing between subordinate and dominant groups. From there, multiracial persons will be able to take advantage of racial fluidity. This is important because, even though research shows that biracial people are lumped into their minority identity when speaking out against injustice, they will be able to navigate freely in groups of dominant individuals who are open to listening. Biracial children are the symbol of unity between two clashing groups of people. They are able to remind minorities that dominant groups can become strong allies and they are able to educate dominant groups on the ways they have participated in racism – even unconsciously. Overall, being a multiracial person does not have to be an inner struggle between two identities. Rather, being multiracial means that

we are an important key to uniting groups to fight against racism in America.