**Assignment #12-B: Adapted Lesson on Social Justice Issues: Privilege Walk**

Adapted from**:** <https://edge.psu.edu/workshops/mc/power/privilegewalk.shtml> and

[www.peacelearner.org](http://www.peacelearner.org) – (privilege walk)

Grade:7thGrade Leadership Class

**Learning Target**: Students will Explore and Discuss the intersections of privileges and marginalized peoples in a more reflective and non-confrontational forum.

**Time:**

15 minutes for the walk

15 – 20 minutes for the debrief

**Materials:**

Blue Painter’s Tape to Mark off Line where each student will start from.

Circle made up of chairs for debriefing activity.

**Directions:**

Introduce topic and purpose of activity

Have students line up side by side alongside the blue tape.

Teacher will read statements out loud and pause after each statement.

After each statement students can move one step forward or backward depending on their answer

**WARM UP:** Have Students watch “Van Jones Clip” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6V8vAXcNgI>

***INTRODUCTION STATEMENT & LIST OF QUESTIONS***

“The typical classroom version of this activity involves between 10-40 participants. Throughout the privilege walk, the following statements are read by the facilitator and the participants are asked to take a step forward or backward based on their responses. This activity forces participants to confront the ways in which society privileges some individuals over others. It is designed to get participants to reflect on the different areas in their lives where they have privilege as well as the areas where they don't.”

The following is the complete set of questions from the classroom version of this activity.

* If your ancestors were forced to come to the USA not by choice, take one step back.
* If your primary ethnic identity is "American," take one step forward.
* If you were ever called names because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* If there were people who worked for your family as servants, gardeners, nannies, etc. take one step forward.
* If you were ever ashamed or embarrassed of your clothes, house, car, etc. take one step back.
* If one or both of your parents were "white collar" professionals:  doctors, lawyers, etc. take one step forward.
* If you were raised in an area where there was prostitution, drug activity, etc., take one step back.
* If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step back.
* If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward.
* If you went to school speaking a language other than English, take one step back.
* If there were more than 50 books in your house when you grew up, take one step forward.
* If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food when you were growing up, take one step back.
* If you were taken to art galleries or plays by your parents, take one step forward.
* If one of your parents was unemployed or laid off, not by choice, take one step back.
* If you have health insurance take one step forward.
* If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step forward.
* If your family ever had to move because they could not afford the rent, take one step back.
* If you were told that you were beautiful, smart and capable by your parents, take one step forward.
* If you were ever discouraged from academics or jobs because of race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* If you were encouraged to attend college by your parents, take one step forward.
* If you have a disability take one step backward.
* If you were raised in a single parent household, take one step back.
* If your family owned the house where you grew up, take one step forward.
* If you saw members of your race, ethnic group, gender or sexual orientation portrayed on television in degrading roles, take one step back.
* If you own a car take one step forward.
* If you were ever offered a good job because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step forward.
* If you were ever denied employment because of your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* If you were paid less, treated less fairly because of race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* If you were ever accused of cheating or lying because of your race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* If you ever inherited money or property, take one step forward.
* If you had to rely primarily on public transportation, take one step back.
* If you attended private school at any point in your life take one step forward.
* If you were ever stopped or questioned by the police because of your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* If you were ever afraid of violence because of your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* If your parents own their own business take one step forward.
* If you were generally able to avoid places that were dangerous, take one step forward.
* If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step back.
* If you use a TDD Phone system take one step backward.
* If you were ever the victim of violence related to your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
* Imagine you are in a relationship, if you can get married in the State of \_\_\_ take one step forward
* If your parents did not grow up in the United States, take one step back.
* If your parents attended college take one step forward.
* If your parents told you that you could be anything you wanted to be, take one step forward.
* If you are able to take a step forward or backward take two steps forward.

**Debrief Questions: Taken From:** [**www.peacelearner.org**](http://www.peacelearner.org)

During and after the Privilege Walk, participants might experience an array of intense feelings no matter their position in the front or the back. While the point of the Privilege Walk is indeed to promote understanding and acknowledgment of privileges and marginalization, it would be detrimental to end the activity with potentially traumatic or destructive emotions. The point of the debrief session is twofold. First, through the reflection provoking questions, help participants realize what exactly they were feeling and muster the courage to articulate it to each participant’s acceptable level. This process will relieve possible negative emotions, preventing possible damage. Second, as negative emotions are relieved, the debrief will help participants realize that either privileges or marginalizations are integral to the person’s being. Instead of casting off either privilege or marginalization, participants can learn how to reconcile with themselves, and through the utilization of newfound knowledge of the self, have a better relationship with themselves and others around them.

1. What did you feel like being in the front of the group? In the back? In the middle?

At the end of the exercise, students were asked to observe where they were in the room. This is a common question to use to lead into the discussion and allows people to reflect on what happened before starting to work with those idea in possibly more abstract ways. It keeps the activity very experience-near and in the moment.

1. What were some factors that you have never thought of before?

This asks students to reflect in a broader sense about the experiences they might not think about in the way they were presented in this activity. It opens up a space to begin to discuss their perceptions of aspects of themselves and others that they might have never discussed before.

1. What do you wish people knew about one of the identities, situations, or disadvantages that caused you to take a step back?

This question invites people who would like to share about the ways they experience marginalization. It is a good question to ensure that this part of the conversation is had. That being said, it is also important to not expect or push certain students to speak, since that would be further marginalizing them and could cause them to feel unsafe. It is not a marginalized person’s job to educate others on their marginality. If they would like to do so, listen. If they would not like to do so, respect their wishes.

1. How can your understanding of your privileges or marginalizations improve your existing relationships with yourself and others?

This question is based on the idea that people can always use knowledge and awareness of the self to improve how one lives with oneself and those existing within one’s life. It also invites students to think about ways that this understanding can create positive change. This is not only for the most privileged students but also for marginalized students to understand those in their group who may experience other marginalizations. This can bring the discussion form the first question, which asks about how they are standing apart to this last question, which can ask how can they work to stand together.