

RACE—The Differences Among Us

Key points from Episode 1 of *Race: The Power of an Illusion*

(<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/race>):

- Humans are among the most similar genetically of all species.
- Characteristics used to classify races (skin color, hair texture, etc.) are superficial and are recent genetic variations in our evolution.
- All the complex traits (intelligence, physical prowess, etc.) can be found in Sub Saharan Africa since that is where we were throughout most of our evolution.
- Race classifications are a human invention that has been under construction for 300 years.
- America has a long history of searching for innate differences in groups defined as races to explain higher rates of disease or mortality without regard to other life conditions.
- At the turn of the 20th century, the eugenics movement in America sought to maintain racial purity of the “superior” white race.
- Race has been used to justify the inequalities that exist in a society which is said to be based on equality. If differences between groups are “natural,” then nothing can or should be done to correct for unequal outcomes. Racial beliefs are tied to social policy.
- “Race is a human invention. We created it, we have used it in ways that have been in many, many respects quite negative and quite harmful. And we can think ourselves out of it. We made it; we can unmake it.”

Discussion questions:

- How did your earliest perceptions of the differences between races affect your perception of different people?
- What has been your growth in this area?
- Did the video add to your understanding? If so, how?
- What does all humans being of one biology do to our thoughts and hearts?
- How do most people you know now view the differences between groups?
- What are current societal beliefs around race?
- How do these beliefs influence public policy?
- How have these beliefs affected the outcomes of victims of the coronavirus?