

15 traits of

RACIALLY JUST LEADERS



THE WRIGHT INSTITUTE
FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

RACIALLY JUST LEADERS ARE...



rooted in their commitments



self-aware



other aware



system aware



practice resilience building and grounding



notice and name inequities



identify and leverage opportunities for change



notice and name hope and joy



willing to go against the grain



interrupt harm in their environment



shift behaviors that cause harm



take responsibility for their role in the journey



build community with other racially just leaders



cultivate restorative solutions that tend to the historic and present harm



align resources and time with their commitments

ABOUT THE TRAITS

The fifteen traits outlined in this guide represent qualities and practices embodied by racially just leaders. They seek to answer the question: ***What does it take to lead with racial justice at the core?***

Together, they provide a framework for an integrated approach to racial justice that connects personal transformation with courageous and intentional action. These traits are thorough, though not all encompassing; they are a foundation upon which others can build as we evolve and get more clear about who we have to become in order to bring about racial justice and collective healing.

HOW TO USE THESE TRAITS

The 15 traits of racially just leaders are an invitation to approach racially justice work holistically from person and role. They can be used as a reflective tool to anchor your leadership development or as a community building tool that invites collective commitments and shared accountability. They are not intended to be used as a checklist that can be completed, nor a performance management or judgement tool.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS ARE ROOTED IN THEIR COMMITMENTS

Racially just leaders are clear and rooted in their commitments to racial justice. They have identified a personal self-interest in the journey to building a beloved community. They are also clear about how their self-interest connects to collective liberation and wholeness. This clarity anchors them in their pursuits of a racially just world.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS ARE SELF-AWARE

Racially just leaders are self-aware. They are aware of their identities, positionality, privilege, and how their mental models may impact how they show up. They are connected to their bodies and aware of their stress response and reactivity. They are also aware of what helps them refuel and they seek restoration regularly.



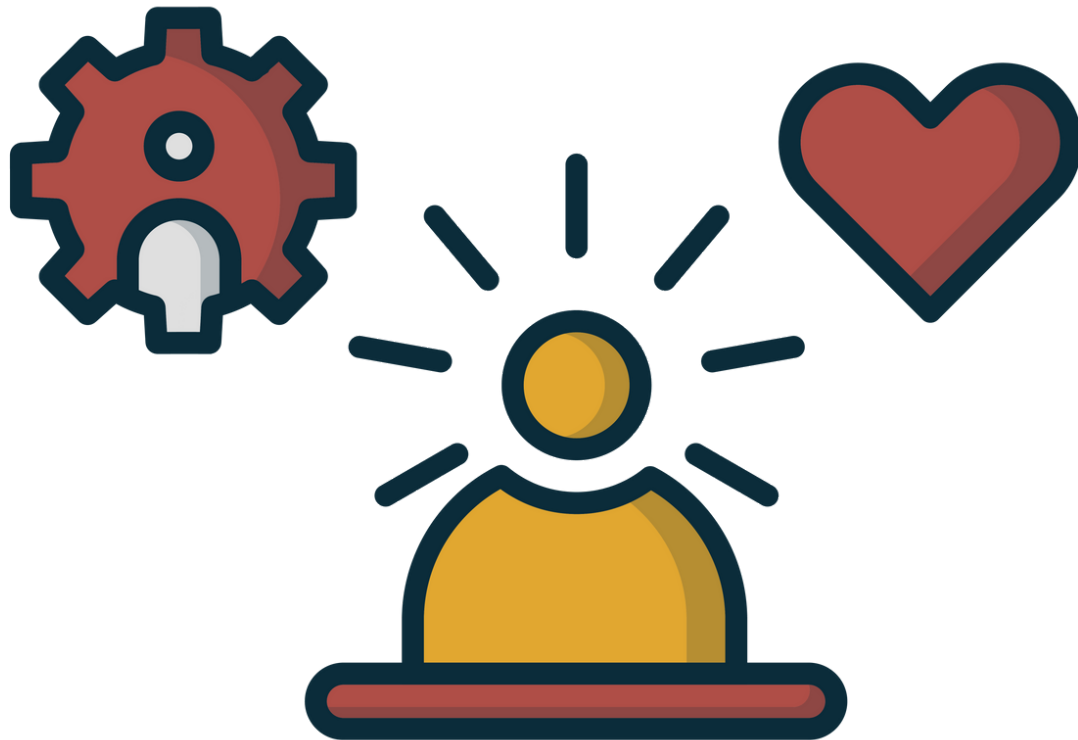
RACIALLY JUST LEADERS ARE OTHER-AWARE

Racially just leaders are other aware. They listen to and notice the experiences of those around them and are able to empathize with those experiences, even and especially when they differ from their own. They are aware of how their actions impact others and they know that systems of oppression affect all groups differently.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS ARE SYSTEM-AWARE

Racially just leaders are system aware. They have a complex understanding of how their institution and our social and political system functions. They are also aware of how racism and white supremacy operates within those systems. Equipped with this insight, they can identify windows of opportunity for change.



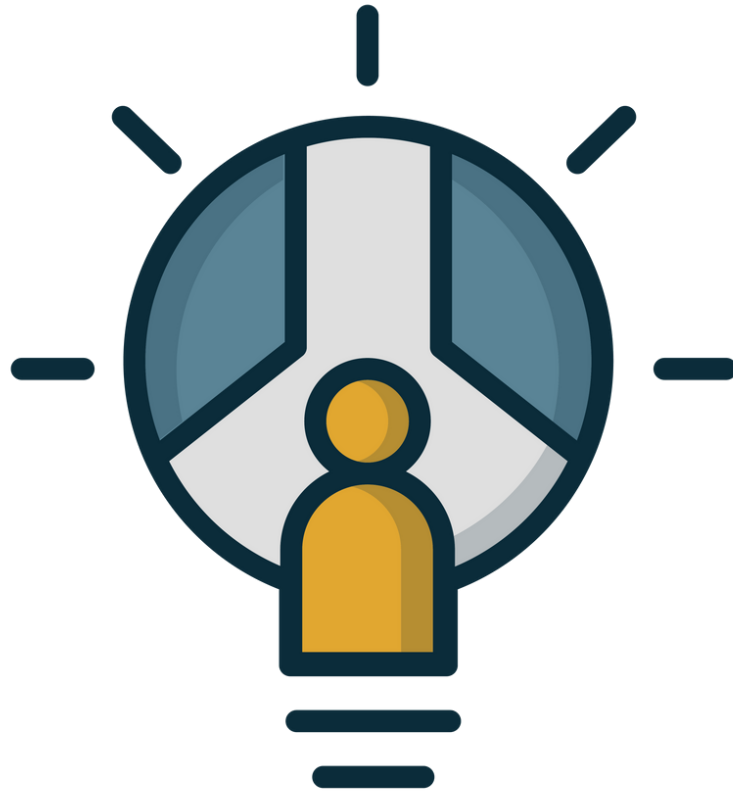
RACIALLY JUST LEADERS PRACTICE RESILIENCE BUILDING AND GROUNDING

Racially just leaders practice resilience building and grounding. They believe that to stay in the fight for equity and justice they must be able to persevere through challenges and return continuously to a state of wellbeing. They engage practices and rituals that help them connect to their bodies and root in their values even in volatile or hostile moments.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS NOTICE AND NAME INEQUITIES

Racially just leaders practice noticing and naming inequity. They are comfortable with the discomfort that follows truth telling. They have the courage to name observations and hold space for productive conflict honoring that we are all on different stretches of our journeys. They recognize and speak on harm that happens on multiple levels.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS IDENTIFY AND LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

Racially just leaders identify and leverage opportunities for change. They believe that it is not only important to call out inequities, but that it is also critical to illuminate windows of opportunities for change. They have trained themselves to find and leverage possibilities in the chaos and challenge of the journey.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS NOTICE AND NAME HOPE AND JOY

Racially just leaders practice noticing and naming hope and joy. They believe that movements are built and sustained on hope. They know that while rage and hurt often catapults people toward movements, hope of a new tomorrow sustains them during the trials and setbacks that inevitably occur along the way. They train themselves to find joy in the journey.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ROLE IN THE JOURNEY TOWARD EQUITY

Racially just leaders practice taking responsibility for their role in the journey toward equity. They are committed to compassionately holding up the mirror, receiving feedback from others, and holding themselves accountable to being a part of the solution. ng a part of the solution.



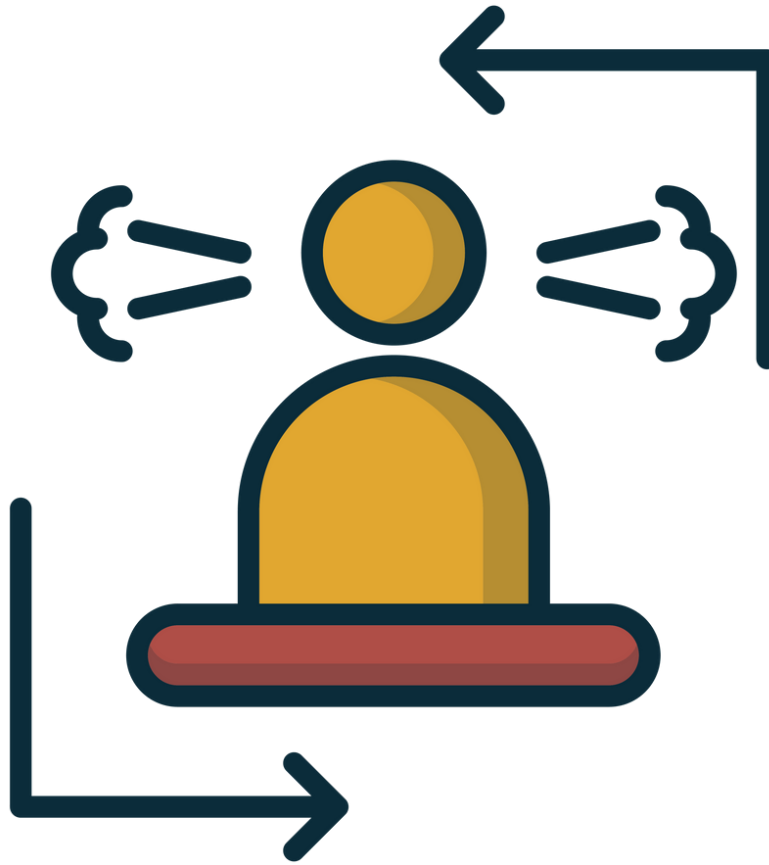
RACIALLY JUST LEADERS ARE WILLING TO GO AGAINST THE GRAIN

Racially just leaders practice going against the grain. They are committed to acting in alignment with their commitment to racial justice even when it requires them to challenge others. They know that there is a cost to going against the grain, but do so nonetheless. They practice courage each day.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS INTERRUPT HARM IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Racially just leaders practice interrupting harm in their environment. They move to action when harm is happening with the goal of repairing harm, fostering a learning opportunity, and cultivating greater equity and inclusion. They are not impeded by pressure to know exactly what to do, but rather are propelled by their sense of responsibility to create a just and equitable society.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS SHIFT HARMFUL BEHAVIORS

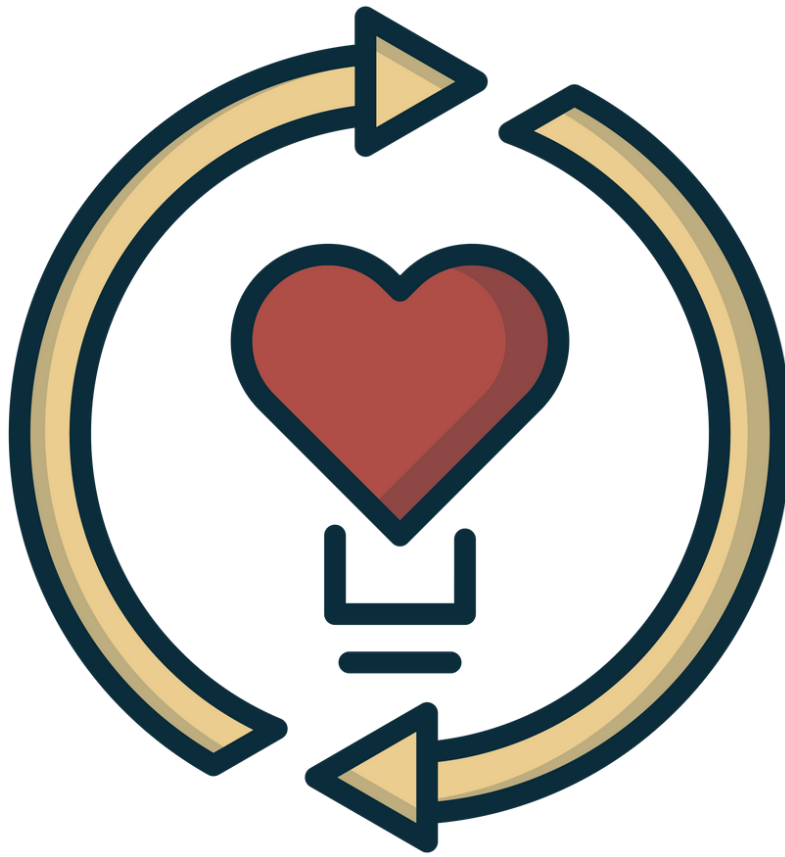
Racially just leaders practice shifting harmful behaviors. They view self-change as an opportunity to move toward greater alignment with their racial justice commitments. They know that change takes time and that their journey is life-long; as such they anchor their behavioral change in compassion, grace, and determination.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS BUILD COMMUNITY WITH OTHER RACIALLY JUST LEADERS

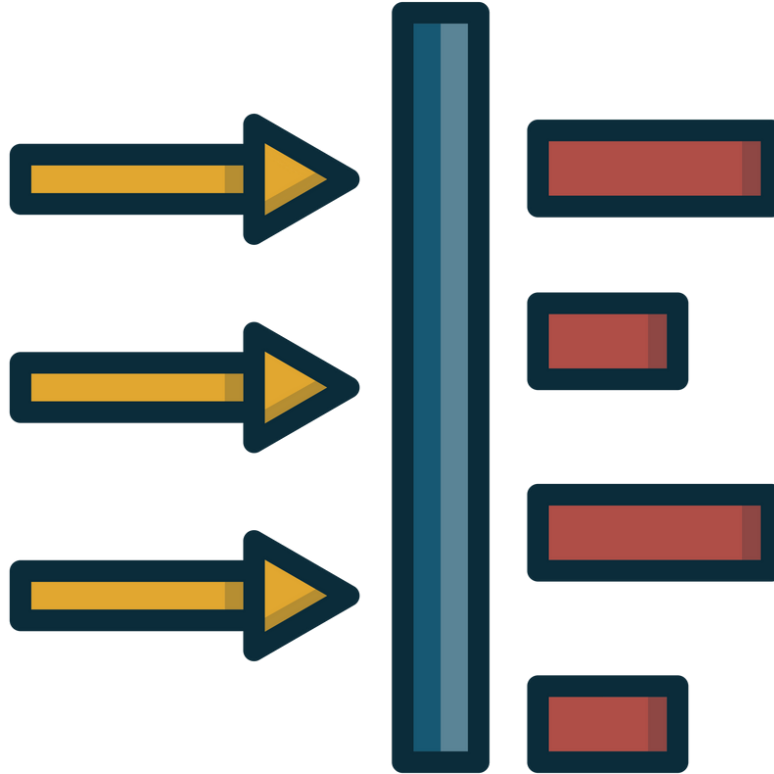
Racially just leaders practice community building with other racially just leaders. They believe that we can go deeper and further when we go together.

They trust in those around them to help them remember the truth of who they are and the commitments they have made to justice and equity.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS CULTIVATE RESTORATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT TEND TO PAST AND PRESENT HARM

Racially just leaders practice cultivating restorative solution. They believe that in order to move forward, we must acknowledge and address the wounds of the past that continue to plague us in the present moment. We cannot build a just and equitable society on an unacknowledged and unaddressed foundation of brutality and injustice.



RACIALLY JUST LEADERS ALIGN RESOURCES WITH THEIR EQUITY COMMITMENTS

Racially just leaders practice aligning their time and resources with their commitments to racial justice.

They understand that we must do more than just articulate our commitments and have good intentions. Instead, we must demonstrate our values and commitments through the allocation of those things we hold most precious -- time and money.



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