

# It Happens Here Ep. 17 - Internalized

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, racism, negative stereotypes, understand, john, internalizing, systems, ted talk, institutions, internalized, creates, community, native, english language, stereotypes, white folk, call, negative, grand portage, ojibwe language

## SPEAKERS

Staci Drouillard, John Morrin, Prof. Anton Treuer, Tyler Howell, Bob Carter & Jay Andersen


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- S** Staci Drouillard 00:05  
It Happens Here, Episode 17 - Internalized. My name is Staci Drouillard. I'm a Grand Portage Ojibwe descendant, and WTIP producer,
- T** Tyler Howell 00:17  
And I'm Tyler Howell, one of your community hosts on WTIP.
- S** Staci Drouillard 00:21  
This series explores the roots of racial inequity here on the north shore of Lake Superior.
- J** John Morrin 00:28  
So, it's really about understanding how systems and institutions-- how they're established in this country, who they were established for, who they were established by, and how they're being maintained.
- T** Tyler Howell 00:43  
This episode looks at how institutional racism upholds generalizations and negative stereotypes.
- S** Staci Drouillard 00:50  
We just heard from John Morrin, Grand Portage Anishinabe elder, and a trainer for the People's

we just heard from John Morrin, Grand Portage Anishinabeg elder, and a trainer for the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. Here's more from John:

 John Morrin 01:01

The way racism operates is that it gets people to think about the many race prejudice stereotypes that they've learned,

 Staci Drouillard 01:09


As part of a "deconstructing racism" panel recorded for WTIP, John offered to help people connect with how negative words and stereotypical thinking are learned and internalized over time.

 01:25

For an example, what's another aspect. . . it's a part of cultural racism. . . we call it linguistic racism, how words are formed in English language. And so in a workshop process, we'll throw out a phrase, "the only good Indian," . . .

 Bob Carter & Jay Andersen 01:41

"is a dead Indian."

 John Morrin 01:44

And it doesn't mean you know, they believe that. But what we talk about is. . . it's so much in our consciousness, it's been passed on from generation to generation, that it almost becomes normal in the English language to use these without really understanding the historical root behind it. And there are other words that talk about people in a more positive way. And so that's, that's the dynamic of that. And that comes from a culture, what we say a dominant culture here in the United States that just permeates all of the institutions and systems in this country, and then sends out certain messages, some negative, some positive about certain folks based on your racial classification. And we absorb them psychologically in our mind, in our being, and we don't even know we're absorbing these, they're coming at us every day on a daily basis.

 02:39

As John teaches, internalizing negative stereotypes can affect one's sense of identity. And even one's sense of value.

 John Morrin 02:47

JOHN MORRIN 02:17

There's a process we call "internalized racial inferiority," the whole process of systems and institutions, maintaining racism in this country creates in people of color, because of oppressive ways they operate, and they relate to communities of color. We begin to internalize negative stuff about ourselves. And in fact, we create an inferior thinking about who we are, based on the way we experience institutions and systems.

S Staci Drouillard 03:18

And how does internalizing these negative stereotypes affect us? John generously shares from his own experiences to help answer that question,

J John Morrin 03:29

I have to acknowledge them, I have to acknowledge that's inside of me, all those native native things. I cannot do away with them, they are with me the rest of my life. We have to understand that it's so deep. People of color put it inside of them, and we have to have an understanding of that--and then we can deal with [those negative messages]. But what's most important to us, we have to acknowledge that stuff is inside of us because that affects the way we relate to even people in our own communities.

T Tyler Howell 04:01

According to John, there's reverse dynamic also rooted in systemic racism, and upheld by negative stereotypes.

J John Morrin 04:03

Then, on the other hand, it creates another dynamic called "internalized racial superiority." Because when you're a group of folks that you're welcomed into these systems and institutions--they work for you. And how do we know that that systems and institutions are working better for some people and not others? By the statistics that come out every year, and those people who institutions and systems were created for and by have the best outcomes.

S Staci Drouillard 04:35

Ojibwe language and culture Professor Anton Troyer helps us break down the race prejudice stereotypes.

P Prof. Anton Treuer 04:43

Well, for starters, there's a really great TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She's a Nigerian literary figure, and her TED talk is called the danger of a single story. And among the great things she says in that little 15 minute TED talk is Is that the problem with stereotypes is

not so much that they are incorrect, as much as they are incomplete.

S

Staci Drouillard 05:08

As Dr. Treuer says, if we take a little narrow sliver of information about any group of people and apply it to the whole group, we're going to get it wrong.

P

Prof. Anton Treuer 05:18

If we only looked at the little piece of information about poverty and rural white Appalachia, we wouldn't understand white folk, if we only looked at wealth, you know, in the white community on New York's Upper East Side, we also wouldn't understand white folk. It's complicated, and it's diverse. Imagine that competing stereotypes about natives that we're all rich from casinos, or that we're all living in squalor on reservations. And you can't even reconcile those ones. The truth is, there's a rich diversity of experience and reality. There are some really tough chapters in history for Native people. But we are also more than the sum of our tragedy. We do have experiences--enough to make you mad for the next 500 years. And we also have a remarkable story of resilience, perseverance, and possibility. We are mourning and grieving and hurting, and happy and thriving and hopeful, all at the same time.

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Staci Drouillard 06:27

Here's some final advice from Professor Treuer.

P

Prof. Anton Treuer 06:30

I would encourage everybody listening to pay attention, not to one single story, but to the many different stories and the many different people who are sharing them. And if you know enough to know that there's something you don't know, and it's time to learn. It's time to lean in. It's time to tune into the radio podcast. It's time to read a book. It's time to take a class. It's time to show up in places where it's not racially homogenous, and ask questions and lean in and learn. And we'll all benefit from that.

T

Tyler Howell 07:05

For WTIP this is Tyler Howell.

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Staci Drouillard 07:07

With thanks to John Morrin and Anton Treuer for your contributions to this episode. Miigwech for listening. This series is a production of WTIP North Shore Community Radio. Production support comes from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

