

# How To Respond Effectively To Racist Remarks

## What Works

1. Remember that Jesus asks us not to judge others, but to overcome evil with good.
2. Remember that this person probably learned that prejudice or stereotype in childhood from family, friends, or society. They didn't have a chance to question or challenge it.
3. Remember that everyone is on a journey in life. People can grow and change. How you respond may help this person to see things in a new way.
4. Put aside the anger, fear, or hopelessness that this person's remark made you feel. You can deal with those feelings later.
5. Talk to the person calmly and quietly. Show respect for them as a person. Reject the words, not the person.
6. Ask, "Why do you feel that way?" or "How does that affect you?" Draw out the story.
7. If it's true for you, say, "I used to feel something like that, so I can understand where you are coming from. But here's what made me change."
8. Present correct information as opposed to the misinformation the person gave you.
9. If the person shows any interest, offer sincerely to help them develop a new, unprejudiced perspective.
10. Remember that people don't change instantly. It may seem that what you say is just bouncing off them, with no effect. But your words may stick in their minds. This conversation may be an important step in their journey to a new perspective.

## What Doesn't

1. Ignoring the remark.
2. Attacking or insulting the person.
3. Lecturing ("Do unto others.")
4. Threats, violence.
5. Humiliating the person in public.
6. Rejection of the person because of their behavior.
7. Being condescending in your voice or manner.
8. Arguing doesn't work because prejudice is based in feeling, not fact. You can't argue away someone's feelings.

***Also remember: If you don't speak up you are giving tacit approval to views you disagree with, and there is absolutely no chance for change!***

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