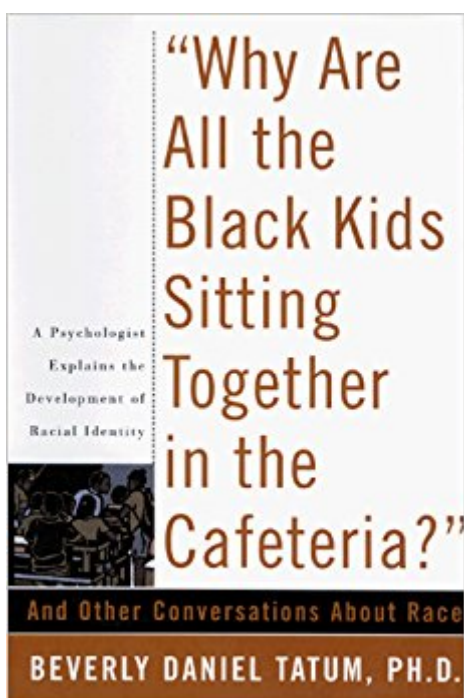


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# Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together In The Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race



## Synopsis

Walk into any racially mixed high school and you will see Black youth seated together in the cafeteria. Of course, it's not just the Black kids sitting together; the White, Latino, Asian Pacific, and in some regions, American Indian youth, are clustered in their own groups, too. The same phenomenon can be observed in college dining halls, faculty lounges, and in corporate cafeterias. What is going on here? Is this self-segregation a problem we should try to fix, or a coping strategy we should support? How can we get past our reluctance to talk about racial issues to even discuss it? And what about the other questions we and our children have about race? Beverly Daniel Tatum is a renowned authority on the psychology of racism. She asserts that we do not know how to talk about our racial differences: Whites are afraid of using the wrong words and being perceived as racist. Parents of color are afraid of exposing their children to painful racial realities too soon. Tatum understands that the vocabulary of race is loaded and that embarrassment and awkwardness often stymie conversations about this subject; yet, she believes that these obstacles can and must be overcome if we are to bring about change. In *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*, Dr. Tatum provides us with a new way of thinking and talking about race through the lens of racial identity. She explains that all of us have a racial identity and must strive to affirm it. For people of color, the development of a constructive racial identity requires being able to recognize and reject the bombardment of negative stereotypes and to embrace a history of resistance and empowerment rather than passive victimization. For Whites, the challenge is to engage in a process of racial identity development which leads to an awareness of White privilege and a determination to actively work against injustice; and this requires the strength to reject a system that awards them, and to reclaim the legacy of White allies. For many, this is uncharted territory. This book provides a road map for those who want to make the journey and better understand the racial dynamics of their daily lives. Tatum extends her ideas about racial identity development beyond the usual Black-White paradigm to embrace the unique circumstances of Latinos, American Indians, Asians, as well as biracial youth. Also included is a list of resources for further reading as well as a list of books for parents and teachers to recommend to children of all ages. Using real-life examples and the latest research, Tatum presents strong evidence that straight talk about our racial identities; whatever they may be; is essential if we are serious about facilitating communication across racial and ethnic divides. We have waited far too long to begin our conversations about race. This remarkable book, infused with great wisdom and humanity, tells us where to start.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anyone who's been to a high school or college has noted how students of the same race seem to stick together. Beverly Daniel Tatum has noticed it too, and she doesn't think it's so bad. As she explains in this provocative, though not-altogether-convincing book, these students are in the process of establishing and affirming their racial identity. As Tatum sees it, blacks must secure a racial identity free of negative stereotypes. The challenge to whites, on which she expounds, is to give up the privilege that their skin color affords and to work actively to combat injustice in society.

This insightful exploration of the varieties of Americans' experience with race and racism in everyday life would be an excellent starting point for the upcoming national conversations on race that President Clinton and his appointed commission will be conducting this fall. Tatum, a developmental psychologist (Mt. Holyoke Coll.) with a special interest in the emerging field of racial-identity development, is a consultant to school systems and community groups on teaching and learning in a multicultural context. Not only has she studied the distinctive social dynamics faced by black youth educated in predominantly white environments, but since 1980, Tatum has developed a course on the psychology of racism and taught it in a variety of university settings. She is also a black woman and a concerned mother of two, and she draws on all these experiences and bases of knowledge to write a remarkably jargon-free book that is as rigorously analytical as it is refreshingly practical and drives its points home with a range of telling anecdotes. Tatum illuminates

“why talking about racism is so hard” and what we can do to make it easier, leaving her readers more confident about facing the difficult terrain on the road to a genuinely color-blind society. --  
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Very well written

An accessible read for folks who may not be familiar with unlearning certain ways of thinking

Excellent book!! I have enjoyed reading it. I recommended it to all the college students in my church. In light of recent event in South Carolina, this book will help us try to understand why people think as they do. We would all be better off if we try to know and understand each other, why we act and do the things we do.

This is a very good account of why young people are comfortable with each other - there is safety - a lot of times they are not trying to exclude others, it is just comfortable to be around others who understand - Well written - lessons for everyone. This book will be relevant for a long time

I am the kind of person who like to normally read young adult fiction. I usually absolutely hate reading books like this. I originally had to read part of this book for school, but it is honestly one of the best non-fiction books I have ever read. This book discusses identity and how it relates to race, in a very honest, easy to understand kind of way. I honestly think that everyone should read this book.

Very well-written and informative. Currently using it in a book club to study racism.

Very thoughtful insight of racial issue in America. Great for college students and conscious reader!

Dr. Tatum does a wonderful job of discussing the structures that perpetuate institutionalized racism and positions of privilege and power. She highlights the implications of race for not only individuals, but for the larger American society.

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