



Derailing
FOR
DUMMIES

A simple, step-by-step guide to derailing awkward conversations by dismissing and trivialising your opposition's perspective and experience. Just some of the many issues you can apply it to:
sexism *whorephobia* *racism* *transphobia*
classism *homophobia* *ableism* *kinkphobia* *fatphobia*
guaranteed, you can use it to marginalise anyone!

Making Discrimination Easier!

<http://www.derailingfordummies.com/>

If You Won't Educate Me How Can I Learn

Whilst seemingly simple on the surface, there is some intertwining subtext embedded within this one. First of all, you're placing responsibility for your education back onto the Marginalised Person™. As they are obviously engaged with these issues, and care about them, they are hopeful that Privileged People® may one day start listening and taking onboard what they have to say. By placing responsibility to educate in their hands, you tug at this yearning. You may even successfully make many question themselves and their selfish expectations that you utilise the hundreds upon hundreds of resources on the subject available to you as a Privileged Person®! After all, anyone who expects you to be able to research a topic by yourself also clearly expects you to be far more of a functioning adult than you're acting!

By insisting you can only learn if they *right then and there* sacrifice further hours of time going over the same ground they have so often in the past, you may also make them give up and go away altogether, enabling you to win by default.

But further, you give the impression that you *really want* to learn, but they're holding you back! That's right, using this tactic you can suggest that full understanding is what you *want* to be a better, more connected and compassionate person - but it's not your fault! Nobody ever gave you the education! And now that someone is here who is so obviously qualified, they're denying you your Privilege® given right to have everything you want handed to you on a platter!

Which brings us to another key component of this argument - it is very important, in conversations with Marginalised People™, to constantly remind them that you are, indeed, Privileged®. By demonstrating your belief that Marginalised People™ should immediately gratify your every whim, you remind them of their place in society. After all, they're not there to live lives free of discrimination and in happy, independent and fulfilling ways! Please! Marginalised People™ exist for your curiosity and to make you generally feel better about your place in society and don't let them forget it!

Point one to you!

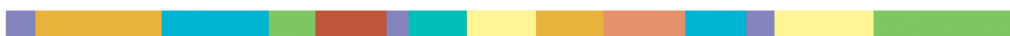
If You Cared About These Matters You'd Be Willing To Educate Me

This is the natural follow-up to the above argument, although it can also be used independently. You see, often in these discussions a Marginalised Person™ will tell you it's not their responsibility to educate you. This is because Marginalised People™ believe that they have other priorities in life, like working and studying and being with their families for example.

Clearly, they are labouring under a misperception - as a Privileged Person® you have far more right to their time than they do, and besides, don't they want to make the world a better place? Isn't that why they alerted you to the fact you were being offensive in the first place? Well, now clearly your education is their responsibility!

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By placing this burden of responsibility onto them you remind them of just how daunting a task that is and how their lives are constantly being monopolised by the Privileged®, even in something that should be empowering to them, like deconstructing discrimination.

You trivialise their lives, needs, interests and obligations by suggesting they should be spending all of their time and energy in engaging with clueless Privileged People®, putting in hours and hours of effort in repeating the exact same thing they've already said three thousand times to three thousand other Privileged People® in their past.

And furthermore, you remind them that, if they really cared about their own issues, they'd willingly take that task on! Surely it's a small price to pay to change people's minds?

Well, you want them to think that, but of course it isn't. After all, most of the conversations they have with Privileged People® often feel to them like beating their heads repeatedly against a brick wall embedded with rusty spikes.

Which is entirely the point. Keep them worn out and exhausted and maybe they'll just go away.

You're Being Hostile

This is a great one to pop out if it seems like they're going to push the matter. After all, nobody wants to be "hostile", do they? In a culture rigidly defined by social protocol, invariably designed to favour the privileged, people are very concerned about "getting along with others".

Especially Marginalised People™! Know why? Well, since they're marginalised, they experience a variety of discriminations, usually in many aspects of their daily lives. It is not at all unusual, therefore, for Marginalised People™ to have to be accustomed to being very, very cautious about the way they engage with the Privileged®. This is because discrimination may mean they routinely encounter violence, silencing, oppression or just good old-fashioned outright ridicule and diminishment. That can make life stressful and exhausting, so many Marginalised People™ develop complex strategies to avoid hostile engagements with Privileged People®.

Further to this, Marginalised People™ are forced into a certain sort of social behaviour by Privileged People® - "appropriate" behaviour. After all, there are different rules for them than there are for the Privileged®. This training in "appropriate" behaviour usually begins when they are very young, so it is well-ingrained.

By accusing them of hostility, you will successfully enliven their sense of caution and anxiety around this matter. You may also provoke a feeling of guilt that they are not "behaving" the way they have been trained to.

But even better - by accusing them of hostility, you pass the blame back to them, rather than consider what you might have said that was so offensive and hurtful it caused the "hostility"!

This will definitely work in your favour, because it will further insult and enrage them. You are making progress...

But That Happens To Me Too!

In attempting to communicate with you, the Marginalised Person™ may bring up examples of the sorts of daily manifestations of discrimination they face. Many of these examples seem trivial to Privileged People® but clearly reflect the way the Marginalised Person™ has been "othered" by society. "Othering" is a system of social markers that defines "Us" and "them", neatly and conveniently categorising people into their appropriate places within society. It's a way of defining a secured and positive position in the world by stigmatising "others". In other words, it's the process of dehumanising anyone different to the Chosen Privileged.

The Marginalised Person™ you're dealing with has been subjected to this "othering".

This means that their body is viewed as public property and the personal, intricate details of their lives and

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being are perceived as free information.

You must nod patiently as the Marginalised Person™ tries to gain your understanding of the many complicated and subtle ways this othering impacts their lives until they come across a point that seems particularly grating for them. Then you must say “oh, but I experience that too!”

For example, people of African descent often express outrage and irritation at the fact many white people believe they can freely touch their hair. This invasion of their personal space is dressed up as flattery - “oh, what beautiful hair you have!” and permission is not sought or granted before the action is taken. “That happens to everyone!” you must exclaim. “My child has beautiful white-blonde hair and people are always touching it!”

Sex workers, as another example, often endure highly intimate questions regarding all aspects of their lives, sexual habits and client interactions. When they gripe about how invasive this is, you must equate it to your own work: “Oh, I know, I’m a lawyer and people always want to know what goes on in court!” “Totally, I’m a doctor and people are always asking about gross conditions I see!”

With a trans person, many people expect all the details of the transition process should be made available to them, including details of how they “transform”. When they talk about how frustrating this is, you must commiserate: “Yeah, don’t you hate the way men always want you to explain the mysteries of make-up and skin care!” you should blithely exclaim.

If you are speaking to a fat person who is complaining about the lack of fashion-forward and beautiful clothing made in their size, try something like: “The fashion industry sucks! They just do not make clothes for real bodies - I mean, just because I am a size four doesn’t mean I’m short! Jeans are always too short on me!”

Without a doubt, one of the most powerful tactics to use here is comparing male circumcision to female genital mutilation. In any discussion around FGM, make sure you quickly leap in and say: “But why is it ok for little boys to be mutilated? Why isn’t anyone talking about *that*?” Because the removal of a tiny flap of skin is entirely comparable to the crippling mutilation many young girls are subjected to.

What this demonstrates is your total lack of understanding of what “othering” means in a practical sense. You’re ignoring the way your life is otherwise entirely immersed in a state of absolute privilege and revealing the fact you fail to comprehend the process of objectification and marginalising they go through all the time. When you are Privileged®, “similar” experiences simply do not happen on an equal footing because they do not otherwise reflect marginalisation. This obliviousness is highly insensitive and trivialising and will definitely cause them to grind their teeth!

But it’s also an important step in affirming your privilege: Privileged People® are accustomed, after all, to it being “all about them”. Not used to simply sitting back and listening to othered people’s issues, Privileged People® like to be the centre of attention at all times. It reminds them that they are important. By doing this, you will feel good about yourself and send a crucial message to the Marginalised Person™ (yes you really can diminish their experience by making it all about you, all the time!).

You're Being Overemotional

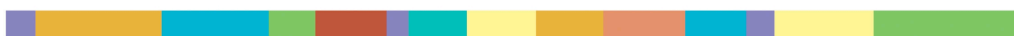
It is very likely that the whole reason the Marginalised Person™ in question is debating with you is because they’ve made a conscious decision to speak out about these issues, despite the pain and heartache it can often cause them.

Therefore, the “you’re being hostile” bomb can often lead to an increase of anger and/or hurt. Sometimes it just leads to greater emphasis and exasperation in the argument.

It really doesn’t matter, because you can still use it against them by accusing them of being overemotional. You may wish to use the word “hysterical” instead. “Hysterical” is also a word laden with negative connotations, so it’s particularly effective. Using this one in discussions with women is highly advisable, as the opinions and feelings of women have historically been denied as mere “hysteria”, but it works against almost anyone. A great one to use with women as well is to ask them if they’re “PMSing”. Yes, it’s an oldie but a classic.

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If you need more variety, some more handy argument winners involving speculating as to people's neurotypical status: ask them if they're "neurotic" or "schizo" for example. Implying people have mental health issues is a great way to dismiss their concerns; it's also insensitive to people with actual mental health issues!

After all, proper "intellectual" discussions always involve detachment and rationality. What is "rationality"? It's a way of approaching emotional matters devoid of sentiment, particularly prized by Privileged People® as it enables a continuing inequity of power that favours them: after all, if they aren't emotionally attached to the topic by way of Lived Experience®, it is easier for them to be "rational".

You're Just Oversensitive

Once again, though very similar to You're Being Overemotional, this one has a slightly different nuance. What you're implying is that the Marginalised Person™ is looking for offence where none exists.

Once again, you're disowning your own responsibility, and this is absolutely the crux of any derailment – you just can't repeat or reinforce it often enough. No matter what, none of this is your fault – nothing you said that was hurtful, offensive, bigoted or discriminatory is really to blame here, because you said it in all innocence! After all, what reason have you ever had to examine your ingrained prejudices? Why should you start now?

So you want the Marginalised Person™ to know this is how you feel and that you really believe the responsibility is all theirs – if they weren't looking so hard for offence, everything would be a lot more pleasant!

(For you)

You Just Enjoy Being Offended

Closely related to the above point, it's another critical element of a successful derailing. You really need to make sure the Marginalised Person knows you consider their issues to be completely trivial. It's insensitive in the extreme – it also exemplifies your lack of awareness and empathy.

By demonstrating you have absolutely no concept of what a particular issue or point may mean to them both within their conversation with you and beyond it, you get to show off just how cocooned and protected in Privilege® you really are. Remember how maddening this is for a Marginalised Person™ – it's a Privilege® they do not share and will probably never know so to witness it being so blithely owned and used to diminish their experience is bound to get their blood pumping.

But absolutely best of all, you are being obnoxious and hurtful enough to tell them outright that they *enjoy* facing discrimination and prejudice. Enjoy it so much, in fact, that they "look" for reasons to be hurt and offended! Wow. This one is almost breathtakingly perfect as a derailment tactic, it lacks any sort of conceivable class and humility and goes straight to smug viciousness. The very idea that anyone enjoys being hurt and discriminated against as a daily practice is so preposterous it could only be believed by a Privileged Person® who's never really experienced or known what it's like.

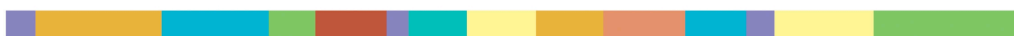
The fact is, many Marginalised People™ go out of their way to avoid these sorts of debates and confrontations because it's such a painful and unenjoyable experience. Those you are encountering in this circumstance have likely made a conscious choice to do so, even knowing it will probably go bad. For you to spit in the face of their choice in putting themselves on the line by suggesting it's all fun and games for them just adds a particularly piquant insult to injury.

Don't You Have More Important Issues To Think About

When you're beginning to feel backed into a corner, you could do worse than to trot this one out.

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As with the best of all these techniques, this step operates on several levels. First of all, it communicates to the Marginalised Person™ that you think the entire debate is trivial and below consideration, indicating you entirely disregard their feelings and emotions. Secondly, you disown responsibility for your part in the debate and anything that you've said that may have been discriminatory or offensive. Finally, you reinforce your Privilege® by suggesting that it is Privileged People's® job to set the agenda for the Marginalised Group™. After all, how could they possibly know what issues they should prioritise for themselves, they're far too inferior and stupid! You, with your objective, ractional Privileged® perspective, on the other hand, know exactly what is most important and it is definitely *not* confronting you with your own bigotry and ignorance!

You're Taking Things Too Personally

Similar to *You're Being Overemotional* and yet with particular uses of its own.

You see, when you say "you're taking things too personally" you demonstrate your ignorance that these issues ARE personal for them!

That's highly insulting and is sure to rub anyone up the wrong way. That you're already refusing to consider their reality is giving them a pretty good indication of how the conversation is going to degress, yet the natural human need for understanding will probably compel them to try and reason with you, or at least to point you in the direction of some educational resources that will help you gain insight into their experiences. This can enable you to once again make a demand for them to personally educate you instead.

By denying the conversation is personal for them, you also reveal your own detachment: there's really nothing at stake for you in getting into this argument, you're just doing it for kicks. They will be all too aware of this, and it will begin to work on their emotions, preparing them nicely for the next steps you will take them through.

You're Not Being Intellectual Enough/You're Being Overly Intellectual

These two steps are always best exercised when married together. They can definitely be used individually, but you will further dismay and infuriate the Marginalised Person™ in question if you use them together.

The key here is maintaining a careful blend of disdain and dismissal no matter what the Marginalised Person™ throws at you.

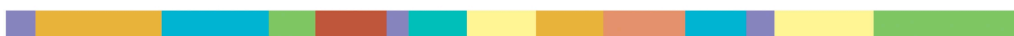
It is important, as a Privileged Person®, to constantly hedge Marginalised People™ according to both your class and your expectations of them.

Even though the conversation taking place is reflective of or about real life circumstances and situations for human beings, you must be careful to first insist on placing it within an academic framework. If the Marginalised Person™ involved is speaking in vernacular and placing too much emphasis on Lived Experience®, you must swiftly impress that you cannot consider it a proper "debate" unless theory and philosophy play a key component, complete with big words normally not found outside of academic papers. This is another way of pressing home your own privilege by demanding the conversation take place on terms the Marginalised Person™ may not be intimate with. After all, academia has little to do with reality, but pretending that it does is sure to undermine your opponent.

It's a good opportunity also to subtly insult the Marginalised Person™'s intelligence, by suggesting they simply aren't educated, or well educated enough, to really be participating in these conversations.

However should the Marginalised Person™ suddenly reveal that they are well-versed in academia, or other Marginalised People™ who are join in, or if the whole thing began on an academic footing, you can swiftly take the other tack and dress them down for being "too intellectual". Remember, Marginalised People™ who conform to the standard perception of "intellectual" are getting above themselves and so deserve nothing but your derision.

You can talk about how they are alienating people, speaking above them and behaving in a very





condescending manner. You really want to think about your language here, to truly communicate just how much disdain you have for their education/manner. "Uppity" is a particularly bristling word to People of Colour, particularly African-Americans, as they have routinely been called "uppity" when they have been "getting out of place". "Hoity-toity", "highhanded" and "snobbish" are also excellent words. It suggests that the Marginalised Person™ is entertaining lofty notions of himself that are undeserved when all they are doing is communicating in the manner you would insist on had they not. We all have places in life and the preferred place for Marginalised People™ is under your shoe.

The important thing is to really drive home that you consider their intelligence and education - whether formal or self-gained - to be subpar and that they are demeaning/ostracising others by utilising it. You want them to feel ashamed of it, or at the least reminded that Privileged People® think they have no rights to it. It's a really good idea to get a friend involved in this one - one of you can take the path of "intellectualism", whilst the other can be derisive of the same. This is especially useful if more than one Marginalised Person™ is involved in the conversation. Keep battering at them from all sides and things will swiftly deteriorate.

It's also really awesome to utilise the tactic of correcting grammar and/or spelling mistakes and criticising comments on form rather than content to further distract from the issues. You want people for whom the language being used is second, third or fourth, or people with less formal education to really be aware of their shortcomings and you want others for whom it is a first language and who have formal education to feel chastised by their mistakes (even though in heated conversations and general internet discourse such mistakes are common and not reflective at all of someone's capacity). This tactic covers ALL angles in this regard and is sure to incur feelings of shame and diminishment.

You're Interrogating From The Wrong Perspective

This is a very special tactic but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be freely or liberally used. If anything, it means you should use it as often and as widely as you can.

You see, in this one you get to insult their intelligence and perceptiveness but in a very subtle and underhanded way! This one is very useful in discussions about literature and other media or academia.

The gist of it is this: *there's nothing offensive in there, you just don't get it (because you are too stupid)!*

For example – you might want to impress your belief that context is irrelevant (there's no racist parallels in a mythological planet where beautiful white elves keep horrible, animalistic orcs as slaves – it's completely detached from earth's history!), or that they're just reading it wrong (well sure, you could take that attitude if you approach it from that perspective, but that's not the perspective it was meant to be read with so your argument is just flawed!).

Once again (and truly a fundamental aspect of derailing) you demonstrate your lack of awareness of their issues but you also get to tell them that they're wrong because you (and all the other Privileged People®) simply know better. Try it out and just wait and see what you get back.

Burn, baby, burn!

You're Arguing With Opinions Not Fact

If you really want to excel as a Privileged Person® you need to learn to value data, statistics, research studies and empirical evidence above all things, *but especially* above Lived Experience©.

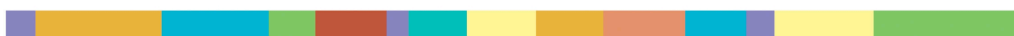
You can pretend you are oblivious to the fact most studies have been carried out by Privileged People® and therefore carry inherent biases, and insist that the Marginalised Person™ produce "Evidence" of what they're claiming.

Their Lived Experience© does not count as evidence, for it is subjective and therefore worthless.

This is very important because it works in two ways: 1) it communicates to the Marginalised Person™ that their personal testament is disbelieved and of no value, causing them great hurt; and 2) it once again

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reinforces your privilege.

You see, the very capacity to conduct studies, collect data and write detached “fact-based” reports on it, is an inherently privileged activity. The ability to widely access this material and research it exhaustively is also inherently privileged. Privileged People® find it easier to pursue these avenues than Marginalised People™ and so once again you are reminding them you possess this privilege and reinforcing that the world at large values a system of analysis that excludes them, and values it over what their actual personal experience has been.

The process of valuing “fact” over “opinion” is one very much rooted in preserving privilege. Through this methodology, the continued pain and othering of millions of people can be ignored because it’s supported by “opinion” (emotion) and not “fact” (rationality).

It is also important because it calls on the Marginalised Person™ to do something that is simply impossible, and that is summate the entirety of their group’s experiences into a definitive example. It is important that you establish this precedent for the next couple of steps.

Your Experience Is Not Representative Of Everyone

Of course, straw man arguments are critical to any successful derailing of conversation. It’s very important to discount the Marginalised Person’s™ experience at every available opportunity. Apart from being simply outright hurtful and demeaning, it also forces them into a constant position of defence.

If a Marginalised Person™ gives you a personal testament, then you must immediately assume they are speaking on behalf of their entire group of people and be very quick to point out that it’s wrong for them to do so.

It’s a diversionary tactic, designed to get them denying your accusation and so forgetting to continue to argue their point.

You will find that something very important to Marginalised People™ is stressing the fact that they are not all the same. This is because Privileged People® have routinely lumped them all together as one great big monolithic group who all look the same, act the same, think the same, speak the same, dress the same, eat the same, feel the same - you get the idea. And, of course, all of those monolithic behaviours are “other” than those of the Privileged®. Othering is a process that permits Privileged People® to consider the Marginalised™ as less than human, thereby justifying discriminative and stigmatising behaviours against them. So naturally, it is imperative to a Marginalised Person™ to make it understood their group of people are as diverse in expression and experience as Privileged People®.

You can play on this concern by alarming and insulting them with the implication you think they are homogenising their own group.

It also works to suggest to them that their experience is worthless because it doesn’t align with everyone’s - particularly those that you’ve decided to favour. That is, the experiences that, to your mind, back up your prejudices. This is belittling and offensive in the extreme as you are essentially denying their reality.

People’s personal experiences are important to them, so it’s likely they will, whilst getting increasingly hurt and upset, continue to try and defend and “prove” them to your exacting measures while you can bask in the satisfaction of knowing you have caused them distress.

You are well on your way to winning!

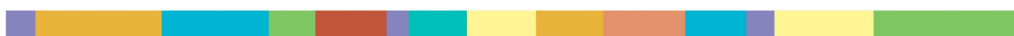
Unless You Can Prove Your Experience Is Widespread I Won’t Believe It

You’ve successfully got them in a catch-22: we’ve already established experience is not a monolith and just because people come from the same Marginalised Group™ does not mean they will all have the same thoughts and feelings and experiences.

Yet with this one you can make it an essential proviso of your agreement that they have to PROVE what they’re claiming is definitively representative of a majority of their group of people.

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What is really awesome is that if, by this point, you have them so upset and frustrated that they are not carefully disclaiming their language and so say something that you can in any way distort to mean that they're speaking "on behalf" of all people from their group, you can go right back up to the prior point, *Your Experience Is Not Representative of Everyone*, and start all over again. You can repeat these two as many times as you like! In fact, this is highly recommended as it will increase feelings of anger and frustration on their part, and then you can throw *You're Taking Things Too Personally* or *You're Getting Hostile* at them!

I Don't Think You're As Marginalised As You Claim

This tactic is related to *Your Experience Is Not Representative Of Everyone* but is a far more hurtful and therefore effective weapon.

If the Marginalised Person™ is gaining steam in the conversation, beginning to persuade others to their point of view, even getting a few Privileged People® around you to apologise and concede their "mistakes", then is when you drop this bomb: call into question their Marginalised™ status.

It allows you to once more diminish their experience by disbelieving it, as well as reinforces that "othering" we've already discussed.

If you're in a situation with a person from a non-English speaking country who speaks, reads and writes in fluid English (particularly if so much so you assumed at first they were native English speakers) you must insist this means they received a special sort of education (probably in an English-speaking country) that is denied to their country folk and this means they're simply not qualified to talk about life in their home country - they're too Privileged® to really understand.

Or if you're talking to a Person with Disabilities, you must derisively claim they can't be all "that" disabled because, if they were, they simply wouldn't be able to communicate so well with you. Or, you know, think at all.

It's great to whip this one out on sex workers too - if a sex worker is making the claim that sex work can be a positive and empowering choice or the issue isn't the work but the stigma levelled at it, you absolutely must say they are obviously a very Privileged® sex worker because "real" sex workers are always degraded, hate their jobs and are forced into it.

The really important thing is to establish some sort of false Marginalisation Hierarchy™ where the person you're speaking to couldn't *possibly* experience *anywhere near* the sort of stigma and discrimination *everyone else* from their group does. This way you can force them to provide "evidence" of what they've dealt with which you can just disregard and further dismiss as more "proof" they are actually really Privileged® examples and therefore have no right at all to be speaking.

Do be sure you strike a careful balance though - whilst you must make it clear you consider this Marginalised Person™ to be Privileged® you must be sure you nonetheless indicate they still are Less Than You, so be as disdainful and contemptuous as possible.

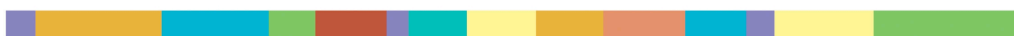
This step is just outright sleazy, which is what makes it so fantastic to use: it will have an effect rather like a punch to the gut on the Marginalised Person™, causing them to sharply inhale as they reel from your sheer arrogance and cruelty. Denying their Lived Experience® must never be underestimated as a strategy - remember: being dehumanised is exhausting and this will increase your capacity to win!

Aren't You Treating Each Other Worse Anyway

This one is great – it's the Derailing for Dummies below the belt sucker-punch! By using this one you at once distract from the topic at hand at the same time as confirming just the sort of bigotry you really, truly believe (like they didn't already know!). Additionally, it demonstrates the height of your Privilege® – that you are so distant from reality you are incapable of perceiving how marginalisation, objectification and social ostracisation may have contributed to internal issues as the Marginalised Group™ struggle to get by in a world that treats them like property or aberrations.

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When the Marginalised Person™ is talking about the sort of discrimination they face from Privileged People® and it's beginning to make you feel a little uncomfortable, it's a great opportunity to trot out, say, stats about "black-on-black" violence to dismiss police brutality, or perhaps talk about how women are all really mean and bitchy and criticise each other's body to indicate that societal pressure on weight and body image is irrelevant.

You could even talk about gay men and their wild, unprotected sex orgies being entirely responsible for the spread of AIDS to diminish gay bashing and homophobia (after all, if a good, straight male has to fear catching the AIDS from a gay man strolling past, beating him to a pulp with a fire hydrant is totally reasonable!).

But best of all, it suggests that they are entirely responsible for all the trial and tribulation that they face – it's not discriminative society, no way, no how! It's their incapacity to treat each other respectfully. Because they're, you know, less than human. Only the most degraded and depraved would be so rotten to their own kind! Right?

As the Marginalised Person™ steadily realises this is your attitude, they will be overwhelmed with horror and, with any luck, they will lose track of their argument – or maybe just grind to a halt, enabling you to sit back smugly and rack up another point to your score.

But You're Different To The Others

Backhanded insults are a fantastic way to trip up and flummox a Marginalised Person™. This step is often used when you've said something discriminatory either forgetting or being oblivious to the fact a person from the Marginalised Group™ you're targeting is right there and has seen/heard it.

They will be offended of course, and that's when you try to mollify them by reassuring them that they're "different" to the others.

"Oh, you're not like all those *other* bitchy women" perhaps, or maybe: "Yes, but you're an *attractive* fat man!" Other suggestions include: "I wasn't talking about you when I was saying *most* trans women are ugly. You pass pretty well!"; "Yes, but you're not like *those other* black people who won't better themselves, you're very educated!". Maybe even: "It's so good that you stay away from drugs, unlike *those other* sex workers". Perhaps even: "Sure, but *most* mentally ill people are very selfish and self-obsessed. You're a really *nice* person!"

Not only do you get to reinforce commonly held stereotypes about various Marginalised Groups™ revealing that you truly believe them, you get to deliver a double-edged compliment to the Marginalised Person™ involved. By using this tactic you're hoping to play on their emotions, connect with their usual experience of being Marginalised™ for being "other" and turn it around by now "flattering" them for it and how they are differentiated from the "others" because they're "special" and (almost) worthy of a place in the ranks of the Privileged® (almost) because they are better at conforming to standards set by the Privileged®.

So deeply ingrained can many insulting preconceptions of their Marginalised Group™ be that they may be tortuously flattered – we all like to feel the sun on our faces after all! And so, in this way, you also get to reinforce the internalised stigma they may carry.

Finally, you will invoke rage on behalf of their fellows whom you have sweepingly and summarily dismissed and degraded. A conflicting swirl of emotions is very useful to work with!

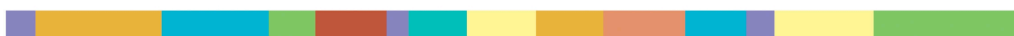
And finally, of course, you once again imply it is your right as a Privileged Person® to pass judgement or cast approval of them.

However be warned if you're using this tactic to try and halt the conversation before it goes any further: the Marginalised Person™ may very well be further provoked into confronting you with your ignorance. Use it with caution.

Well I Know Another Person From Your Group Who Disagrees!

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This one is fantastic to bring out if you feel at all backed into a corner. If, for example, the Marginalised Person™ is making sense and you're beginning to get the unpleasant feeling that you were wrong about something, just whip up your friend - your black friend, or your trans friend, your friend with a mental illness, or your friend who is a sex worker, and vehemently express how they completely and stridently support your opinions on these issues.

Of course, you must make out as though you are entirely oblivious to internalised stigma and how your friends may have been adversely affected by discrimination wielded by the Privileged®. And, as established by the steps above, it is imperative that you discount the diversity of experience whilst seeming to support it. After all, your friend is proof that there are different opinions amongst this Marginalised Group™ but the fact they agree with you means you don't have to in the least give credence to ideas alternative to your own, and certainly not from the Marginalised Person™ in question.

Plus it gives you that handy progressive veneer - see, all their accusations of racism/sexism/ableism/what have you are totally groundless because you have friends who are representatives from that group which shows how open-minded and awesomely cool you really are!

You know what the best part about this step is?

The friend doesn't even have to exist!

That's right, the friend can be nothing more than a figment of your imagination, conjured up to provide you with vicarious backup in your hour of need! How is the Marginalised Person™ going to prove it, after all!

They can have their suspicions but that's hardly hard evidence.

You're definitely ahead in the game now!

A In B Situation Is Not Equivalent To X In Y Situation

Your Marginalised Person™ may put in a last-ditch effort to be patient and reasonable by using an analogy. If you are yourself a member of a Marginalised Community™ exercising privilege over the group you're arguing with, the Marginalised Person™ may use an example of discrimination towards your community and how there are parallels in discrimination towards theirs. This will be to try and appeal to your basic humanity and provide you with an experience you can relate to, hoping you will use that relation to apply compassion. Don't worry! You can still get out of this one!

Simply become indignant and be very sure to emphasise that your experience is absolutely and one hundred per cent unique and there are no similarities whatsoever between the two situations. Be sure that you are very derisive of their experience, thereby indicating you believe it unworthy of consideration. You must also behave insulted, so as to indicate their issues are so worthless that it's deeply offensive your own would be compared to them!

Of course, the Marginalised Person™ was not trying to equate the two, simply trying to provide grounds for commonality. It's very important not to give an inch, however, so feign utter ignorance of this at all costs. Remember: you want them to feel they really are less than human. It weakens their position and that's important if you want to win.

Who Wins Gold in the Oppression Olympics?

Following on from this, if you are a member of another Marginalised Group™, you can also exploit it to indicate to the Marginalised Person™ how absolutely disdainful you are of their concerns and issues by making out that yours are far more important and imperative.

You can even suggest that your issues are more valuable than theirs, implying a hierarchy of oppression in which you always win.

You see, as a Marginalised Person™ yourself, it is all the more infuriating to another Marginalised Person™ that you're exercising the exact same prejudices and discrimination that Privileged People® exercise against you! The Marginalised Person™ will be tearing their hair out at your obliviousness and lack of perception

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and this will weaken their defences.

You Have A False Consciousness

In conversation, there are few things as degrading, enraging and hurtful than to tell someone their experiences are false, or that their perception of them is.

The idea behind this one is usually that oppressed people are simply too oppressed to know they're oppressed and therefore Privileged People® have to share their wisdom and insight with them.

This one crops up a lot in issues that affect women: women who enjoy dressing in conventionally feminine ways (they're engrained in the patriarchal construct of femininity and therefore are incapable of making a choice), women who are kinky, regardless of the gender of the person they play with (they're engrained in the patriarchal construct of gender roles and therefore are incapable of making a choice) and sex workers who claim to enjoy their work and/or practice it with autonomy (they're engrained in the patriarchal construct of female sexuality and therefore are incapable of making a choice).

But this also affects People with Disabilities who are routinely told they simply don't understand what is best for them and need a Privileged Person® to make decisions for them. People with Disabilities are not able to make any decisions for their own protection. Remember to stress that: *it's for your own protection*.

With the trans community, you must routinely deny their gender identity by equating their experiences as having happened to someone of the gender they were designated at birth. For example, denying the reality of gender dysmorphia means you can tell a trans woman her childhood experiences happened to a little boy, because that's how she was being raised, and so communicate your belief her reality as a little girl was false, thoroughly undermining it.

In arguments about race, it takes a slightly different form, generally in white people telling People of Colour that they're "seeing race where none exists". You, on the other hand, are "colour blind" and we live in "post-racial" times. It's them who are making everything about race and their experience of racism in their daily lives is simply imagined. If only they could let it go, the whole world would live in post-racial harmony!

You really want to ignore any claims the Marginalised Person™ may make about having done thorough research, deconstructing and unpacking of these issues. You also really want to deny their autonomy. There are few things so infuriating as infantilising an adult and telling them they're delusional about their own reality. But they need to understand that, no matter what, *you* know better.

You're Not Being A Team Player

Shifting blame is very important in these matters. You don't ever want to have to own up to any responsibility for hurt or distress caused and you most definitely do not want to admit your prejudice or bigotry. You also want that Marginalised Person™ to be continuously aware just how "on the fringes" they are, and always will be (providing you get your way - but that's what Privilege® is for, after all!).

You can achieve both these things by accusing the Marginalised Person™ of not playing fair, or of not playing with "the team" (i.e.: you and all the other Privileged People® backing you up).

"C'mon", you say, "we're all doing our best to participate in a reasonable, impartial debate. You aren't joining in. You're trying to turn this into a fight. You're ruining it for everyone else!"

In other words: *if you just did and said exactly everything we Privileged People® demand of you, life would be so much easier. For me. For you, well, what gave you the impression I care about you?*

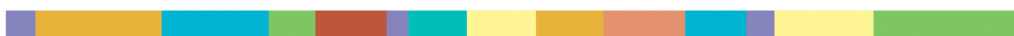
This tactic subtly combines several of the above points: *You're Taking Things Too Personally*, *You're Arguing With Opinions, Not Fact* and *You Have A False Consciousness*, and really makes the Marginalised Person™ feel ganged up on.

It's great to gang-up on someone, particularly someone who faces such othering every day of their lives. It reinforces their sense of isolation, which will distress and disorient them, weakening their stance.

Deliver it in just the right condescending tone too, and you will really unhinge them...

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You've Lost Your Temper So I Don't Have To Listen To You Anymore

This one is particularly effective because it really pushes home a sense of futility and hopelessness to the Marginalised Person™. Remember they should never get the impression they can win one of these arguments, because you should be consistently implying that there was never anything to argue over to begin with.

If you've been following the steps correctly so far, by this point any reasonable person is going to be feeling pretty angry. This anger could lead to them being more aggressive and abrasive. The Marginalised Person™ has possibly even decided that you're simply too obnoxious to waste patience on and is venting their sense of frustration.

This is when you whip this step out!

You can use it to disregard everything they've said to you and just not deal with the issue, in particular ignoring your prior behaviour that led to the anger. Conventions of social conduct hold civil discourse as the ideal at all times. When people get angry, it gives you a convenient "out" without having to concede to any of their objections or acknowledge their pain.

Furthermore, with this one you can make it seem as though you were ready and willing to listen, but then they ruined it. This way you can leave them with the sense that *if only* they'd been a good little Marginalised Person™ and toed the line, then they may have won someone over to the cause!

It just adds a particular distaste to the whole affair that no derailing should be without!

You Are Damaging Your Cause By Being Angry

By now their feelings are probably deeply hurt and they're very angry. Don't forget they encounter this kind of discrimination in subtle ways every single day of their life, so they're bound to be emotional about it, even resentful.

You can take advantage of this weakness to emerge the victor! After all, *everyone* knows the Marginalised™ have an obligation to conduct themselves with quiet dignity in the face of infuriating tribulation and if your quarry begins to get angry and "aggressive" then you have won! Why? Well, it's very simple - just hold them as representative of their entire group! You could try saying something like "you realise you're making all X look bad?", or "well, congratulations for backing up the stereotype of X as being angry, irrational and oversensitive!" Maybe you can even say "well, I was about to say I was willing to listen to you, but then you got insulting so now I don't have to!"

Don't worry about silly things like their feelings - c'mon, they're grownups, aren't they! The only thing that matters is defending your discrimination as completely fair and to avoid examining your prejudiced arguments in ways that may challenge them. You could even drop this little bomb: "You are damaging your cause by being angry, real understanding can only happen if all sides are respectful and patient".

Not only do you come across as a smug, self-righteous asshole (though you may prefer the term "bigger person") you can also manage to subtly make them feel guilty about their anger, as though it's undeserved! Everybody wins! Well, except them of course.

You're As Bad As They Are!

Definitely one of the last tactics you should bring out if you're finding that the Marginalised Person™ is simply relentless and you are running out of options.

This one is an outright insult. By now they have probably ripped all your prejudices apart and harshly criticised both your attitudes and the Privileged® system you reside within. You are probably taking it very personally because it's shaking the foundations of your beliefs and making you confront aspects of your own behaviour and nature that you would rather not.

That's when you say to them: *you are just as bad as the people who oppress you!*

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Because they're angry about the treatment they undergo and because they are aggressive and persistent in wanting to see change happen, you can target this behaviour (remembering that it is unseemly for Marginalised People™ – they're supposed to set an example at all times by being humble and long-suffering) by suggesting it puts them on a par with the people and system that stigmatise, ostracise and target them every second of every day of their lives. This also suggests that reacting to such discrimination is totally unreasonable and out of proportion (they should just take their knocks!) and that has the benefit of indicating your ignorance to just how pervasive and constant this discrimination truly is. This one is important if you really want to demonstrate what a scumbag you are so do be careful to whip it out at precisely the right moment. Used correctly and it can be something of a slamdunk!

Surprise! I Was Playing "Devil's Advocate" All Along!

It can happen: you may reach the point where, in spite of expertly using all of these tactics, you're suddenly struck by the discomfiting notion that maybe the Marginalised People™, uh, *have a point*. This doesn't feel very good for any Privileged Person®. It's highly uncomfortable for a start-off, the sensation *you may be wrong about something*. But even worse, it may mean you have to endure the humiliation of *admitting that!!*

But never fear, for all is not lost! You can still worm your way out of this one!

Simply say:

"It was all a social experiment!"

This makes it okay, you see! Not only does it imply to the Marginalised People™ you're really not the ignorant, obnoxious bigot you might be beginning to realise you are, you successfully communicate to them that you are *that* insensitive, *that* arrogant and *that* much of a douchebag you would take very real and serious issues that affect their lives and treat them as nothing more than a theoretical discussion for your own detached amusement!

In this way you cover your arse whilst affirming your privilege!

