Four Agreements for Courageous Conversations

1. Stay engaged.
2. Speak your truth.
3. Expect to experience discomfort (later in the book I read it written as "Lean into discomfort")
4. Expect and accept a lack of closure.

(Source reference: Singletown & Linton, 2005, *Courageous Conversations,* Newbury Park, CA: Corwin - cited in; *Raising RACE Questions: Whiteness & Inquiry in Education* by Ali Michael, 2015.)

　　　AND 　　　　　　 ## Grice's Maxims
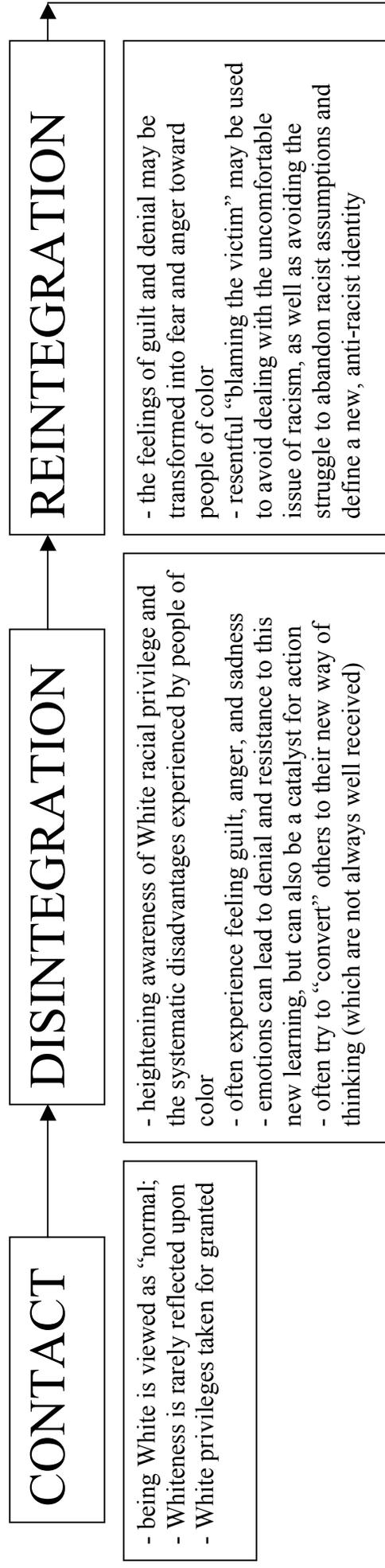(Maxim: a well-known phrase that expresses a general truth about life or a rule about behavior

1. **The maxim of quantity**, where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more.
2. **The maxim of quality**, where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence.
3. **The maxim of relation**, where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion.
4. **The maxim of manner**, when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity.

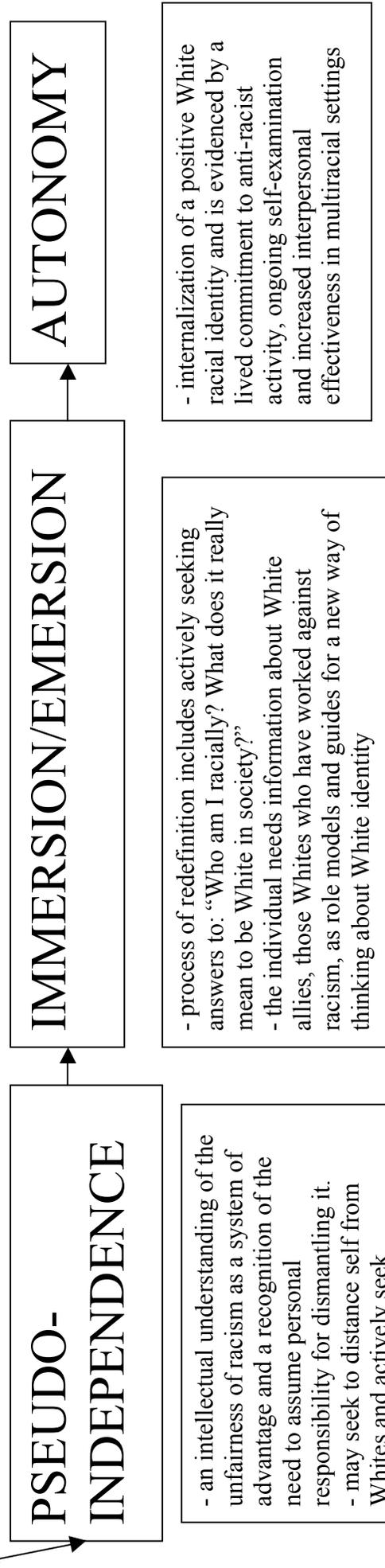**SURJ: Calling IN (as opposed to Calling OUT)**

Strategy	Example:
Explicitly thanking the person/welcoming the comment as a learning opportunity while Calling In:	"I want to thank you for speaking up, we are all on a learning curve, and you just said something that a lot of us say, which is something that collectively we need to work on"
Asking permission to use comment as a learning example	"You've said something that would be very valuable to us to address as a group, for all of our growth and learning. Do you mind if I use what you just said as a segue to that conversation?"
Setting ground rules and expectations at the beginning of the session so that both making mistakes, and being Called In, is something that there is room for in the training environment as part of the training experience	"I would like to propose that we use the training experience to practice a technique called "Calling In." This is part of our strategy to become better allies and better communicators. Can we commit to allowing ourselves to be "Called In" during the course of the next two hours?"
Using personal experience to avoid singling out the commenter as a person with an individual problem	"I used the exact same language until someone explained to me why it was harmful. I'm so glad you bring this up, because none of us know any of this stuff until we learn it" OR "I have heard others use similar language...and until I read/heard others' explanations about why it could be harmful, I didn't realize it either".

AND Maintaining a stance of curiosity/non-judgement (e.g., ok to notice, just not judge; Ask, "Can you say more about what you mean/what leads you to think/feel/believe that?

Phase 1: Abandonment of Racism

CONTACT → **DISINTEGRATION** → **REINTEGRATION**

CONTACT
- being White is viewed as "normal;
- Whiteness is rarely reflected upon
- White privileges taken for granted

DISINTEGRATION
- heightening awareness of White racial privilege and the systematic disadvantages experienced by people of color
- often experience feeling guilt, anger, and sadness
- emotions can lead to denial and resistance to this new learning, but can also be a catalyst for action
- often try to "convert" others to their new way of thinking (which are not always well received)

REINTEGRATION
- the feelings of guilt and denial may be transformed into fear and anger toward people of color
- resentful "blaming the victim" may be used to avoid dealing with the uncomfortable issue of racism, as well as avoiding the struggle to abandon racist assumptions and define a new, anti-racist identity

Phase 2: Defining a Nonracist White Identity

PSEUDO-INDEPENDENCE → **IMMERSION/EMERSION** → **AUTONOMY**

PSEUDO-INDEPENDENCE
- an intellectual understanding of the unfairness of racism as a system of advantage and a recognition of the need to assume personal responsibility for dismantling it.
- may seek to distance self from Whites and actively seek relationships with POC as a way of reducing the social isolation experienced earlier
- cross-racial interactions may lead to further awareness of need to actively examine and redefine the meaning of own whiteness

IMMERSION/EMERSION
- process of redefinition includes actively seeking answers to: "Who am I racially? What does it really mean to be White in society?"
- the individual needs information about White allies, those Whites who have worked against racism, as role models and guides for a new way of thinking about White identity

AUTONOMY
- internalization of a positive White racial identity and is evidenced by a lived commitment to anti-racist activity, ongoing self-examination and increased interpersonal effectiveness in multiracial settings

NOTE: An individual *may* operate from more than one status at a time, and which status predominates may vary with particular situations. Because the ideology is so deeply embedded in our culture, the process of "unlearning

From Janet Helms' White Racial Identity Development Model (1990, 1995)

PRE-ENCOUNTER

- "Absorbed many of the beliefs & values of the dominant white culture, including the notion that "white is right" and "Black is wrong"
- Though the internalization of negative Black stereotypes may be outside conscious awareness, the individual seeks to assimilate and be accepted by whites and may actively or passively distance self from other Blacks.
- In order to maintain psychological comfort at this stage of development...this person must maintain the fiction that race and racial indoctrination have nothing to do with how he or she lives. It is probably the case that the Pre-encounter person is bombarded on a regular basis with information that he or she cannot really be a member of the "in" racial group, but relies on denial to selectively screen such information from awareness. (p 93)"

ENCOUNTER

- "Typically precipitated by an event or series of events that force the individual to acknowledge the impact of racism in one's life. For example, instances of social rejection by white friends or colleagues may lead the individual to the conclusion that many whites will not view her as an equal.
- Faced with the reality that she cannot truly be white, the individual is forced to focus on her identity as a member of a group targeted by racism. (pg 94)"

IMMERSION/ EMERSION

- "Characterized by the simultaneous desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity and an active avoidance of symbols of whiteness
- At this stage, everything of value in life must be Black or relevant to Blackness.
- This stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate white people, simultaneously glorifying Black people.
- Actively seek out opportunities to explore aspects of their own history and culture with the support of peers from their own racial backgrounds.
- Typically white-focused anger dissipates during this phase because so much of the person's energy is directed towards her own group- and self-exploration.
- The result of this exploration is an emerging security in a newly defined and affirmed sense of self."

INTERNALIZATION

INTERNALIZATION/ COMMITMENT

- "In general, pro-Black attitudes become more expansive, open, and less defensive.
- While still maintaining connections with Black peers, the internalized individual is willing to establish meaningful relationships with whites who acknowledge and are respectful of her self-definition. The individual is also ready to build coalitions with members of other oppressed groups.
- There are few differences between the 4th and 5th stages, however, those at the fifth stage have found ways to translate their "personal sense of Blackness into a plan of action or a general sense of commitment' to the concerns of Blacks as a group, sustained over time.
- Internalization allows the individual, anchored in a positive sense of racial identity, to both proactively perceive and transcend race. Blackness becomes the point of departure for discovering the universe of ideas, cultures and experiences beyond Blackness in place of mistaking Blackness as the universe itself."

NOTE: "Though the process of racial identity development has been presented here in linear form, in fact it is probably more accurate to think of it in spiral form. Often a person may move from one stage to the next only to revisit an earlier stage, though the experience of the stage may be different than the 1st time."
From Cross's model of Black Racial Identity Development (1971, 1978, 1991) in _Beverly Tatum's (1997) Women's Growth in Diversity,_ **"Racial Identity Development..."**

"Children learn about race from every aspect of the classroom, not simply from the curriculum" (Ali Michael, 103).

How DO/MIGHT race play out in the classroom/school through these aspects of school life?	What COULD an anti-racist classroom/school look like?
Decorations	
Expectations	
Discipline Policies	
Food	
Recess Habits	
Adult-student Relationships	
Relationships with families	
Communication	
Community Traditions/School-wide Events	
Styles of speaking & Language Use	
Styles of Listening	
Student friendships	
Seating arrangements	
Classroom culture (& the invisible (to some) ways that some students may enjoy disproportionate access & belonging in the classroom)	
Classroom procedures	
Group Dynamics (& unwritten rules of behavior)	
The Home Cultures of ALL one's students	
Curriculum	

"This book is about White teachers learning the salience of race in every aspect of their classrooms. Race is not simply a benign demographic fact that describes our students; it is a social force that influences everything that happens in school, and that most educators do now know how to discuss" (Pollock, 2004) (Michael, 16).

An Antiracist Classroom/School – First, imagine what an antiracist classroom/school) would be like.

"Just as with the 'Autonomy' status in White Racial Identity Development, this vision of an antiracist classroom is not one that most teachers find themselves in every day. Even the classrooms of most racially proficient antiracist teachers do not look like this everyday. This image of an antiracist classroom is a sight to set our eyes upon so we don't get lost in the day-to-day slog of looking just one step ahead. It is also incomplete and requires the input and vision of readers, teachers, parents, and students" (Michael, 83).

Now, read Ali Michael's vision (left column), and take notes of your thoughts/reflections/goals on the right.

Ali Michael's vision for an antiracist classroom is one in which:

Teachers understand and take seriously that role of resistance to racism.	
The teacher is aware of their own biases and the ways those biases affect how they see their students or their students' families.	
The teacher understands that others might have those biases as well and works to challenge or confront them when they see them occurring.	
The teacher feels comfortable putting students in same-race groups or different-race groups according to what makes sense for students' needs and support. The teacher understands the different factors in this decision and is able to justify the decision to people who question it.	
Equity is a priority, so teachers differentiate not only by academic skill level but by behavior and need as well.	
Students learn to recognize and resist stereotypical messages that make them question their own intellect or that of their classmates, among other oppressive messages.	
Teachers understand that race is part of every student's identity and that it is never all of who a student is.	
Teachers work to get to know students and their families, their interests and ideas.	
Teachers have racial proficiency and the social skills to be able to form relationships with and ask questions of all the students and their families.	
Teachers understand the value of speaking more than one language and see students' linguistic abilities as assets, whether they speak Spanish, Korean, American Sign Language, African American Vernacular English, Hindi, Haitain Creole, Arabic, Hmong, German, Portuguese, Wolof, French, Mandarin, Vietnamese, or any other language.	
Teachers support the ongoing development of students' languages and encourage families to do so as well.	
Structures that reinforce socially constructed racial categories such as academic tracking are challenged and resisted.	

Students would be grouped heterogeneously by skill level, no academic tracking, and teachers would have the resources and the knowledge for instructing heterogeneous groups so that students with advanced skill levels would be challenged at their level while students with lower skill levels would be challenged too.	
The curriculum portrays the historical contributions of people of color and the connections among racial groups, going beyond an additive holidays and heroes approach to change the entire structure of the school year so that all students develop the capacity to understand the complexity of U.S. society, to see contemporary and historical events from the perspective of diverse groups, and then to problem-solve about current-day problems.	
Recognizes the hidden curriculum that is communicated to students everyday through their environment, such as the disparities in the racial makeup of the cafeteria staff and that of the administrative council thus encouraging students to recognize the hidden curriculum and to critically analyze it.	
The curriculum is rigorous in a way that demands the best of each student and holds them to high expectations	
Different class backgrounds and parental education levels among the students are recognized and structures are created to support students according to their needs, rather than continuing to use a structure that is based on the assumption that all students are from middle-class or upper-middle-class families and have parents with college degrees.	
Different methods and styles of communication are recognized and validated as resources rather than as deficits.	
Uses games, activities, and intentional seating patterns and pairings to interrupt group dynamics that routinely exclude or alienate particular children.	
The teacher is open to feedback. They hear stories about a student's difficulty or a family's discontent and use them as data from which to make change, rather than as threatening feedback that demands an explanation.	
Antiracist teachers feel comfortable raising race questions, even "untouchable" ones (pgs 82-83).	

What would you add to Ali Michael's vision?	What other thoughts to you have/ goals do you want to set for yourself?