

## Marshall's Follow-On Diversity Learning

### Privilege for Sale

What is privilege, and what does it mean to have it, or not to have it? This activity explores privilege **from the perspective of race**. It is based on [the brilliant work of Peggy McIntosh](#).

It is designed as a **group exercise**, suitable for a medium sized group, working in small sub-groups of 3 or 4, and it requires a facilitator.

What you will learn:

1. Identify the privileges that exist in today's society, which are based on race.
2. Investigate access to privilege and the effect on individuals of having different degrees of access.
3. Reflect on the experience of having/not having privilege, related to race.

Instructions for the facilitator:

1. Split the whole group into small groups of 3 or 4 people.
2. Download the list of privileges. Each participant will need to see a copy.
3. Explain the activity in this way:  
"We are going to imagine that we are living in a world where none of us has any privileges. You have been given a sheet that has a list of privileges on it. As a group, you can only get these privileges if you buy them. Each privilege costs £100. In a moment, your group will be told how much money you have to spend on purchasing privileges. You'll be given a few minutes to collectively discuss and decide which privileges you will buy. Mark them on your list, and we will come together as a group and discuss."
4. Tell each group separately how much money they have. Give each group a different amount (in multiples of £100), ranging from £300 - £800.
5. Allow the groups a maximum of 10 minutes to decide which privileges they will buy.
6. Then ask each group to present to the whole group, sharing how much money they had, and which privileges they bought, and why.

Discussion questions:

1. How did this activity make you feel?

People may never have thought about privilege in this way before. It can be deeply triggering because of the reality which it exposes for those who do not have privilege. Or it can elicit guilt, shame or embarrassment if people become aware of privilege which they take for granted.

2. How did you pick your privileges?

Some groups take a democratic approach, with each person choosing a privilege. However, groups with less money may not have that opportunity. Other groups might pick on the basis of shared values, or individual life goals may come into the conversation.

3. Having done this activity, what did you learn about privilege?

Privilege describes benefits or advantages, or absence of challenges or experiences of discrimination which are related to certain aspects of identity, and outside the control of individuals. It is not requested and may not even be noticed without education about its existence. Privilege is ever-present and affects how power is distributed in society. Money is a form of privilege – it allows people to have greater choice and to obtain things that address their lack of privilege.

Having privilege doesn't suggest or indicate that someone's whole life has been easy, and the concept shouldn't be used to judge or create conflict. Realising that you have privilege is an important first step to understanding how you can use that privilege to make a difference for those who don't.

4. How will you use your privilege to contribute to change?