

# The Conversation:

How Seeking and Speaking the Truth About Racism Can Radically Transform Individuals and Organizations

By Robert Livingston

## OVERVIEW

“An essential tool for individuals, organizations, and communities of all sizes to jump-start dialogue on racism and bias and to transform well-intentioned statements on diversity into concrete actions—from a leading Harvard expert.

How can I become part of the solution? In the wake of the social unrest of 2020 and growing calls for racial justice, many business leaders and ordinary citizens are asking that very question. This book provides a compass for all those seeking to begin the work of anti-racism. In *The Conversation*, Robert Livingston addresses three simple but profound questions: What is racism? Why should everyone be more concerned about it? What can we do to eradicate it?

For some, the existence of systemic racism against Black people is hard to accept because it violates the notion that the world is fair and just. But the rigid racial hierarchy created by slavery did not collapse after it was abolished, nor did it end with the civil rights era. Whether it's the composition of a company's leadership team or the composition of one's neighborhood, these racial divides and disparities continue to show up in every facet of society. For Livingston, the difference between a solvable problem and a solved problem is knowledge, investment, and determination. And the goal of making organizations more diverse, equitable, and inclusive is within our capability.

Livingston's lifework is showing people how to turn difficult conversations about race into productive instances of real change. For decades he has translated science into practice for numerous organizations, including Microsoft, Deloitte, JP Morgan Chase, Under Armour, American Express, L'Oreal, and Bayer. In *The Conversation*, Livingston distills this knowledge and experience into an eye-opening immersion in the science of racism and bias. Drawing on examples from pop culture and his own life experience, Livingston, with clarity and wit, explores the root causes of racism, the factors that explain why some people care about it and others do not, and the most promising paths toward profound and sustainable progress, all while inviting readers to challenge their assumptions.

Social change requires social exchange. Founded on principles of psychology, sociology, management, and behavioral economics, *The Conversation* is a road map for uprooting entrenched biases and sharing candid, fact-based perspectives on race that will lead to increased awareness, empathy, and action.” (For this and more information, please visit:

<https://robertlivingston.com/books/the-conversation/>)

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**About Dr. Livingston:** Dr. Robert Livingston is a social psychologist and one of the nation's leading experts on the science underlying bias and racism. His research appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Harvard Business Review*. For two decades, he has served as a diversity consultant to scores of Fortune 500 companies, public-sector agencies, and nonprofit organizations. He has held professorships at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and the University of Sussex. He currently serves on the faculty of the Harvard Kennedy School.

“A cogent, hopeful contribution to an urgent issue” - [Kirkus Reviews](#)

“*The Conversation is an extraordinarily timely book. Just as companies and organizations in the U.S. and around the world are focusing anew on the entrenched bias in their culture, The Conversation comes along to offer a path forward. Livingston has digested his authoritative understanding of the science into a remarkably approachable volume, one that is animated by his storytelling and voice on the page. The Conversation is a major achievement, one that is poised to play a significant role in improving our understanding about bias and addressing systemic racism in the workplace.*”—Robin J. Ely, Diane Doerge Wilson Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School