
Focus on Ally Skills

Valerie Aurora
(she/her/hers)

<http://frameshiftconsulting.com/>

Outline

5 min: Introduction and definitions around ally skills

10 min: Why we should focus on teaching ally skills

20 min: Description of about a dozen ally skills

1 min: How to learn more about ally skills

20 min: Q&A

Who am I?

Founder Frame Shift Consulting

Taught ally skills to 4000+ people in
U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia,
New Zealand, Spain, Germany,
Ireland, UK, Sweden, Ukraine, etc.

Software engineer for 10 years and
non-profit director for 4 years

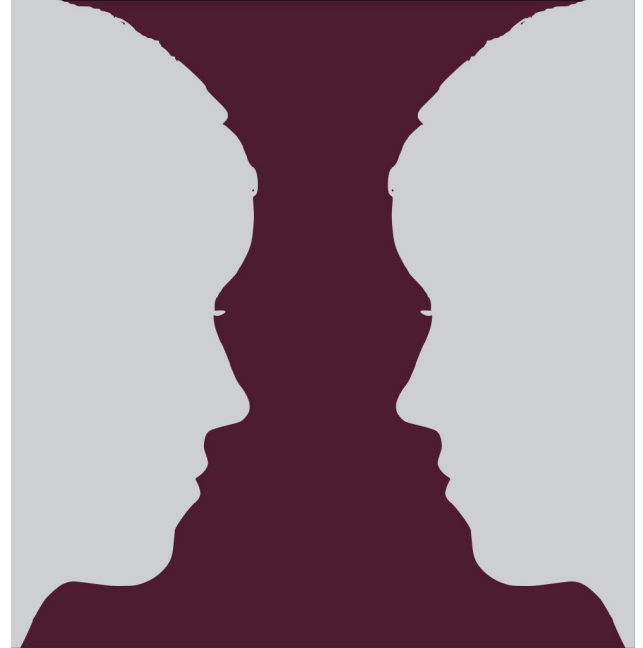


Valerie Aurora
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What are ally skills? Some terminology first:

Privilege: an unearned advantage given by society to some people but not all

Oppression: widespread inequality that is present throughout society, that helps people with more privilege and harms those with fewer privileges



More terminology

Marginalized person: a member of a group that is the main target of a system of oppression

Ally: someone that society gives privilege to that is **working to end oppression** and **understand their own privilege**



Allyship is an action, not an identity

Being a marginalized person takes no action - oppression just happens to you, no matter what

Being an ally is about what you do, so let's talk about "ally skills" instead of "allies"

Depending on the situation, you may switch between being a marginalized person and being able to take action as an ally

Example

Privilege: The ability to interview for a job and have the interviewer assume that if you have children, you will continue doing a good job at work

Oppression: Family expectations that mothers do more childcare, belief that mothers don't want to do paid work, financial systems unwilling to extend credit to mothers, laws that put more burdens on mothers than fathers, paying men more than women...

Example

Marginalized person: Any woman who wants to work for pay for an employer, regardless of her plans for children

Ally: A man who takes on significant childcare responsibilities, donates to women's causes, votes for feminist candidates and laws, speaks up at work against stereotypes about mothers, reads news articles about privileges fathers enjoy and mothers don't...

What's wrong with diversity and inclusion today?

Most work focuses on changing **marginalized people**

Less work focuses on changing **people with privilege**

Examples of diversity and inclusion efforts

Volunteer-run affinity groups

Travel scholarships

Advice books

Conferences

... all aimed at marginalized groups



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Reasons to focus on changing marginalized people

They want to make their lives better

They are often more aware of oppression

They are often lower status and easier to tell what to do

They are seen as the cause of the problem

It lets privileged people avoid thinking about their unearned advantages

Why not focus on marginalized people?

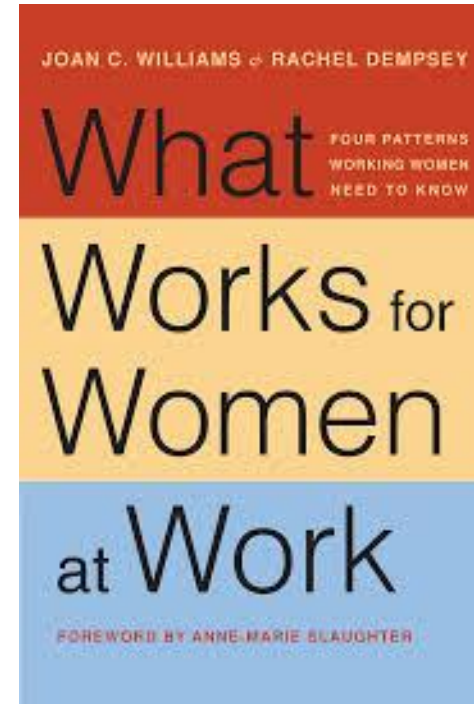


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Marginalized people are overworked



Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire
© RKO Pictures



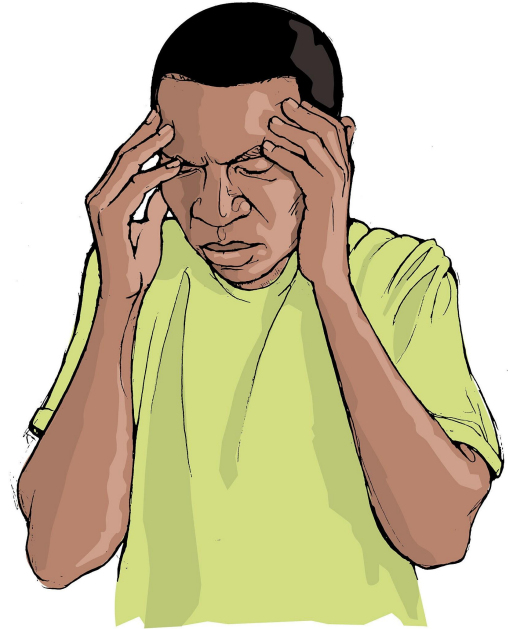
Marginalized people are under more stress

Discrimination

Harassment

Abuse and assault

Post Traumatic Stress
Disorder (PTSD)



Marginalized people have less money

79%: Lesbian couples vs. men married to women

78%: white women vs. white men

73%: mothers vs. fathers

65%: Black women vs. white men

63%: people with disabilities vs. those without

58%: Latinas vs. white men



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Marginalized people risk retaliation

In an experiment, researchers found that when **marginalized people** work to increase diversity, supervisors give them **worse** performance reviews

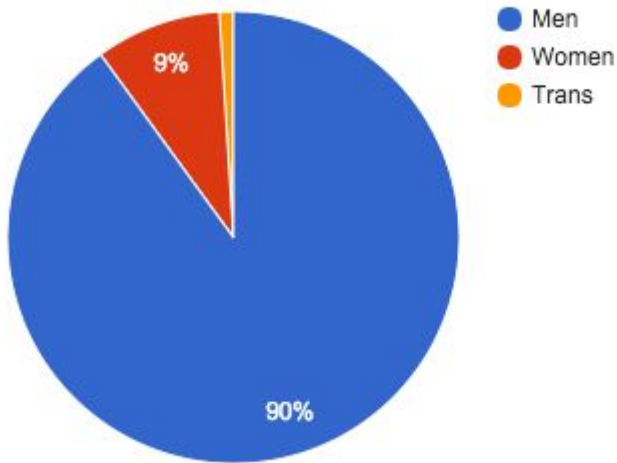
But when more **privileged people** work to increase diversity, it does not harm their performance reviews (and may improve them)

Does valuing diversity result in worse performance ratings for minority and female leaders?

<http://amj.aom.org/content/early/2016/03/03/amj.2014.0538.abstract>

Marginalized people are often in the minority

Gender of Wikipedia editors (2011)



Marginalized people have less power and influence

Fortune 500 CEOs: <8% women, <1% Black, <1% openly LGBTQ+

“The probability that a woman occupies a top management team position is 51 percent lower if another woman holds a position on the same team.”

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/smj.2461/full>



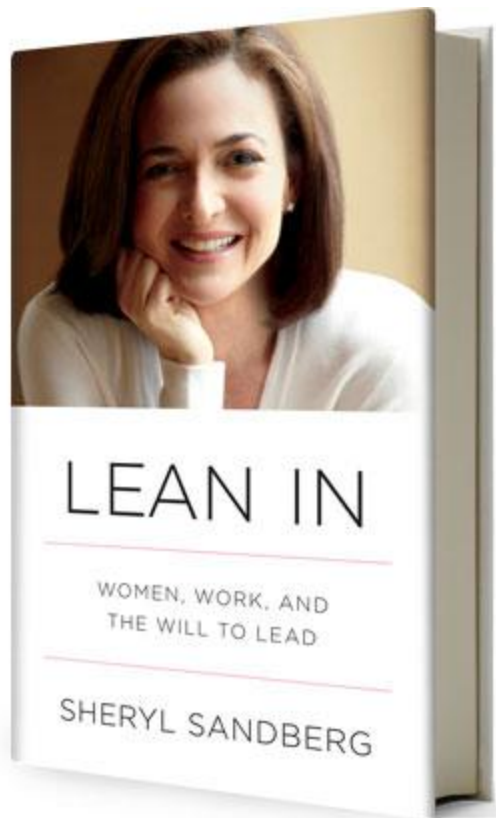
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Marginalized people are seen as biased & selfish

**"You're just mad because you didn't
get the job/promotion/award"**

*— no matter how accomplished a
marginalized person is*

And yet...



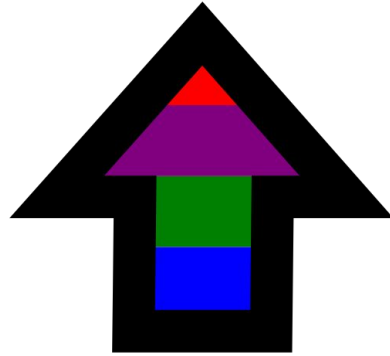
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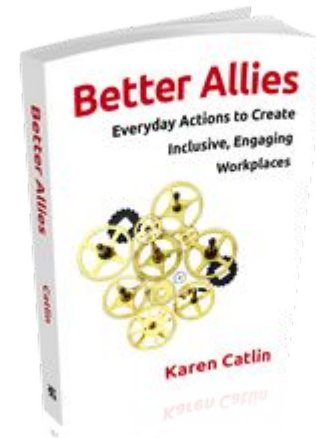
and many more....

Resources for developing ally skills



Ally Skills Workshop

@frameshiftllc



@betterallies

A night view of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The bridge's towers and suspension cables are illuminated with warm orange lights. In the background, the city skyline is lit up with various colors, including a prominent blue light from a skyscraper. The sky is filled with a large display of fireworks in white, red, blue, and green, exploding over the city.

Proposal: This year, focus on ally skills

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Allies have more time and energy



CC BY Nick, edited by FSC

Allies have more money



CC BY Pictures of Money, edited by FSC

Allies are less likely to be harmed



Allies are often in the majority



CC BY Senorhorst Jahnsen, edited by FSC

Allies have more power and influence



CC BY [Chris Brown](#), edited by FSC

Allies are seen as altruistic, giving, kind



CC BY Kat Ter Haar, edited by FSC

What do good ally skills look like?



An ally self-educates



Before you ask, think, "Could someone send me a 'Let Me Google That For You?' link?" e.g.

[https://lmgtfy.app/?q=incarceration+by+race+\[COUNTRY\]](https://lmgtfy.app/?q=incarceration+by+race+[COUNTRY])

An ally listens and "passes the microphone"



Alan Eustace

@alan_eustace

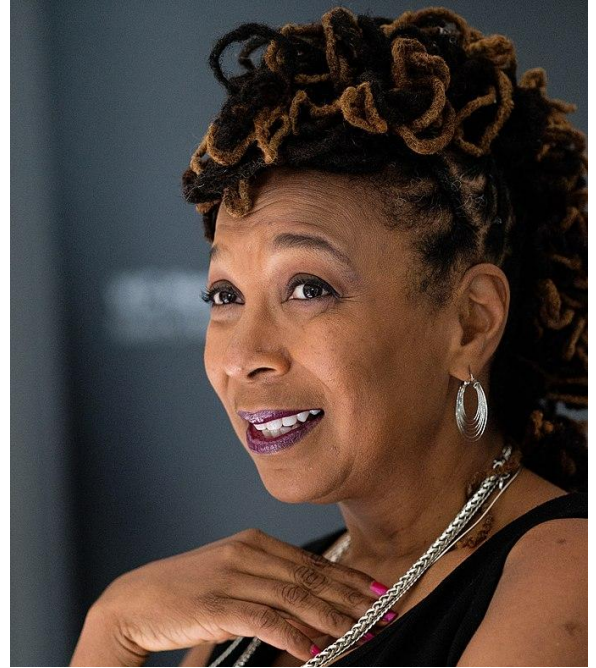
[#ghcmanwatch](#). Let's reverse the male allies panel. You talk. I listen. Telle gave me West 201 board room at 2pm today at GHC.

An ally gives credit scrupulously

Credit often gets assigned to the most powerful person instead of the person who deserves it

Fight by pro-actively giving credit

Example: Always credit legal scholar **Kimberlé Crenshaw** by name for "intersectionality"



CC BY-SA Mohamed Badarne, edited by FSC

An ally asks for consent whenever possible



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An ally keeps the focus on marginalized people



birdsrightsactivist @ProBirdRights · Aug 16, 2013
I am feel uncomfotable when we are not about me?

An ally keeps the focus on marginalized people

"I feel sorry that your actions were mistaken for anti-Asian racism, **and I feel even more sorry** for the person who experienced so much anti-Asian racism that they reacted that way. Let's focus on fighting anti-Asian racism."

An ally speaks up when it is unpopular

First person: My caste privilege in India blinded me to the reality of racism in the US

Ignorance is often bliss, but sometimes it is nothing short of a crime.

Mauktik Kulkarni

Jun 04, 2020 · 07:30 am



An ally uses their energy wisely



Eirik Solheim - www.eirikso.com

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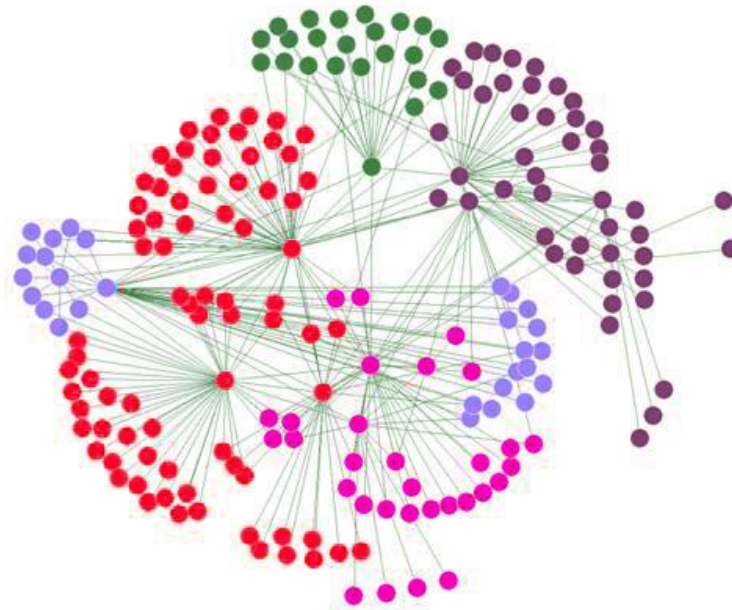
Charles' Rules of Argument

1. Don't go looking for an argument
2. State your position once, speaking to the audience
3. Wait for absurd replies
4. Reply one more time to correct any misunderstandings of your first statement
- 5. Do not reply again**
6. Spend time doing something fun instead

An ally spends money



An ally uses their social capital



An ally acts even when it's uncomfortable



CC BY [Philip Bump](#), edited by FSC

An ally sacrifices personal gain (sometimes)



An ally follows leaders from marginalized groups



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Disability activism: "Nothing about us without us"

Watch "Crip
Camp" on
Netflix

Nominated for
an Academy
Award



An ally makes mistakes - and apologizes



CC BY [butupa](#), edited by FSC

How to learn ally skills?

Follow [@frameshiftllc](https://twitter.com/frameshiftllc) on
Twitter

Read Dear Ally Skills Teacher
<https://dearally.com>

Attend an Ally Skills Workshop
<https://allyskillsworkshop.com/>



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In conclusion

Most D&I efforts focus on changing marginalized people

But allies have more time, energy, power, and influence

Ally skills can be learned

Let's focus on ally skills

Q&A

Valerie Aurora

Frame Shift Consulting

<http://frameshiftconsulting.com/ally-skills-workshop/>

Software slides

Who am I?

Founder Frame Shift Consulting

Taught ally skills to 4000+ people in
U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia,
New Zealand, Spain, Germany,
Ireland, UK, Sweden, Ukraine, etc.

Linux kernel and file systems
programmer for 10+ years



Valerie Aurora
(she/her/hers)

Non-software slides

Valerie Aurora

Founder Frame Shift Consulting

Taught ally skills to 4000+ people in Spain, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Sweden, Mexico, New Zealand, UK, and across the U.S.

Former software engineer and non-profit director



Valerie Aurora
(she/her/hers)

European slides

Example

Privilege: The ability to interview for a job and have the interviewer assume that if you have children, you will continue doing a good job at work

Oppression: Family expecting mothers do more childcare, belief that mothers don't want to do paid work, laws that put more burdens on mothers than fathers, paying fathers more than mothers, assuming mothers don't want to travel for work...

Example

Marginalized person: Any woman who wants to work for pay for an employer, regardless of her plans for children

Ally: A man who does at least half the work of caring for his children, donates to women's rights causes, votes for politicians who support women, speaks up at work against stereotypes about mothers, and reads news articles about advantages fathers get and mothers do not

Marginalized people have less money

EU women make 41% less than men

Germany: women 22% less per hour

France: overall unemployment is 9.7%,
for immigrants it is 17.3%

For French citizens of African descent,
only 61% of difference can be
explained by skills & education



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Marginalized people have less money

EU: 28% of disabled people at risk of poverty vs. 18% of abled people

Netherlands: women make 15% less than men

Germany: Immigrants make 20% vs. otherwise identical people born in Germany



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Marginalized people have less power and influence

In 2018, Black people made up 0.4% of MEPs vs. 3% of the EU population

In 2019, women made up 26% of corporate board members in the EU

In 2019, women were 6% of CEOs of publicly listed companies in the EU



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An ally gives credit scrupulously

Credit often gets assigned to the most powerful person instead of the person who deserves it

Fight by pro-actively giving credit

Example: Men received Nobel Prizes for work done by Chien-Shiung Wu, Rosalind Franklin, Lise Meitner, etc.



An ally speaks up when it is unpopular

Cis

v

Meet The Feminist Academics Championing Trans Rights

The fight over trans rights has ignored a key group: pro-trans feminists. Here, leading feminist thinkers told BuzzFeed News why feminism should include trans people.

Akwugo Emejulu, Sally Hines, Alison Phipps, Vanita Sundaram, Tracey Jensen, among many others in the UK

An ally sacrifices personal gain (sometimes)

An All-White Panel on German TV Decided Racism Wasn't a Big Deal



US slides

Example

Privilege: The ability to walk into a convenience store and have the owner assume you are there to buy things and not steal them

Oppression: The self-reinforcing system of stories, TV, news coverage, police, and legal system stereotyping Black people as criminals, that benefits non-Black people and harms Black people

Example

Marginalized person: Any Black person who wants to enter a convenience store

Ally: A non-Black person who donates to legal system reform organizations, actively objects to racist stories, calls their representatives to support police reform, and reads news articles about this privilege

AU slides

Marginalized people have less money

80%: women's total full-time comp vs. men

66%: Aboriginal & Torres Strait

Islander median weekly income vs.

non-Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

48% of disabled people are employed

vs. 80% of non-disabled people



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Marginalized people have less power and influence

Fortune 500 CEOs: <8% women, <1%
Black, <1% openly LGBTQ+

ASX200 CEOs: 5% women, 4%
non-European descent, 0%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

NZX CEOs: <3% women



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New Zealand slides

Example

Privilege: The ability to walk into a convenience store and have the owner assume you are there to buy things and not steal them

Oppression: The self-reinforcing system of stories, TV, news coverage, and legal system stereotyping Māori people as criminals, that benefits non-Maori people and harms Māori people

Example

Marginalized person: Any Māori person who wants to enter a convenience store

Ally: A non-Māori person who donates to legal system reform organizations, actively objects to racist stories, votes in anti-racist ways, and reads news articles about this privilege

Marginalized people have less money

90%: white women vs. all men

87%: Asians vs. whites

86%: women vs. all men

81%: Māori vs. whites

77%: Māori women vs. all men

72%: Pacific women vs. all men

Source: June 2016 hourly wages from:

<http://cevepnz.org.nz/Gender%20pay%20gap/gender-ethnicity.htm>



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Marginalized people have less power and influence

CEOs for top 50 NZ publicly listed companies include zero women (& few non-white people)

“The probability that a woman occupies a top management team position is 51 percent lower if another woman holds a position on the same team.”



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Israel slides

Example

Privilege: The ability to legally marry the person you love in the ordinary way and have that marriage respected by legal and religious authorities as well as your community

Oppression: The self-reinforcing system of stereotypes, pseudo-scientific studies, religious teachings, and the legal system that normalize and reinforce homophobia

Example

Marginalized person: Any person who is attracted to people of the same gender

Ally: Any heterosexual person who donates to marriage equality organizations, calls their representatives to support gay rights legislation, asks religious leaders to reject homophobia, joins demonstrations for gay rights, and opposes casual homophobia in their daily lives

India slides

Marginalized people have less power and influence

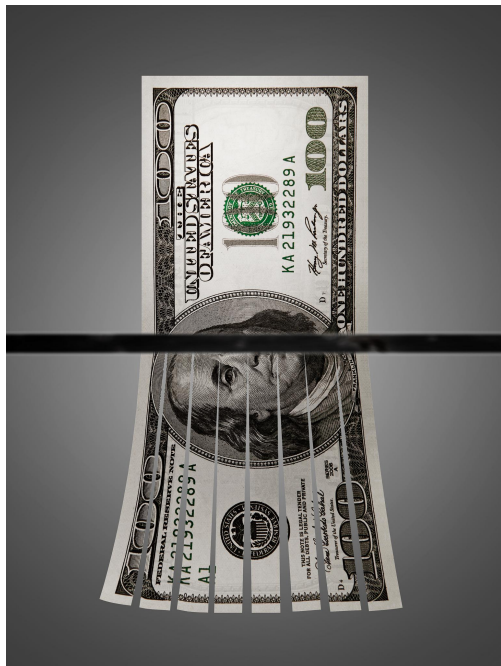
Fortune 500 CEOs: <8% women, <1% Black, <1% openly LGBTQ+

Fortune 500 CEOs of Indian descent include only 2 women and most (all?) are upper caste



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Marginalized people have less money



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An ally speaks up when it is unpopular

First person: My caste privilege in India blinded me to the reality of racism in the US

Ignorance is often bliss, but sometimes it is nothing short of a crime.

Mauktik Kulkarni

Jun 04, 2020 · 07:30 am



Canada slides

Marginalized people have less money

77%: Disabled people vs. abled (2017)

79%: Women vs. men (2018)

87%: Visible minorities vs. whites,
college-educated, Canadian-born
(2017)



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Marginalized people have less power and influence

In 2019, Indigenous people made up 3% of MPs vs. 5% of the Canadian population

In 2020, women made up 31% of board members of the CSSBI 100



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