

Privilege + Power

Interestingly, we all read this chapter from different perspectives, through our own lenses, life experiences and frame of reference.

- Liam – from the perspective of a relationship with personal therapist.
- Harriet – from the position of a future therapist.
- Vikki – from the experience of institutions.

What came out of that was the theme of **rank**, which is where we are going to base our discussion with you today.

WHITEBOARD - What is everyone's perception of rank?

Let's spend a few minutes brainstorming some words, phrases, people or situations that you might associate with rank?

Arnold Mindell describes ranks as *"the sum of a persons' privileges"*
"Whether you earned or inherited your rank it organises much of your communication behaviour"

We are going to ask some questions for you to percolate and sit with. Think about someone you have ranked above yourself?

We're not asking you to voice anything out loud, please just consider your thoughts for a moment or two and perhaps we can discuss in the 20 minutes that follows.

Perhaps it would be helpful to consider your relationship to your therapist, but it can be anyone you hold in a position of high rank.

LOOKING UP?

1. Have you ever taken a subject to your therapist / a person purely to please them?
2. Have you ever challenged your therapist / a person you perceive to be of a higher rank?
3. When did you start to trust them? (and why?)
4. Have you ever held anything back based on rank?

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Human development occurs in relational context. We are social creatures who need love and care from others to survive.

The innate subjectivity that unfolds with every human being can begin to be actualised only when it is accurately mirrored in the eyes of another. Confirmation is at the heart of the I-Thou relationship + human flourishing. Similar to the concept of not imposing 'conditions of worth'.

Martin Buber – talks about 'missed meetings' of not being affirmed in the eyes of others, resulting in losing part of ourselves.

When we realise confirmation is not going to happen, we seem to sacrifice true confirmation in the hope of preserving our attachment to others and place a 'seeming mask' better than nothing.

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LOOKING DOWN?

Perhaps you noticed that we took a step-down approach first? How many of you would have done the same?

We'd like you to think about this from another perspective:

Consider how you place yourself in a position of high rank / unconsciously or not?

Perhaps your reading and reflections of 'Me & White Supremacy' will help you in considering some of the following questions:

1. When has someone around you, made an assumption that you are a higher rank?
2. How do you feel about being a higher rank?
3. How does it serve you to be in that position of high rank?
4. Have you held anything back from someone that you perceived as having a lower rank?

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Carl Rodgers discusses teaching as not expert led, but an open forum for discussion, which could go in any direction. We are all learners and can only be expert of oneself.