



Anti-racism Progress Report

June 2020 – May 2021

In 2020, I pledged to create a public report noting my commitments from the previous year and my progress in each area from the promises I made on behalf of my business to use my privilege to interrupt and dismantle racism.

This report covers the year from my adoption of the [Hello Seven pledge](#) through May of this year.

Here's what I committed to (in gray), what I followed through with, where I fell short, and what I plan to do in the coming year.

Name white supremacy and the impact of racism on both our personal and professional lives.

White supremacy impacts every aspect of my personal and professional life. Because I'm White, there are many ways I disempower Black people and uphold systems of oppression. This includes how I spend my money, which contractors I hire, which businesses I associate with, and the kinds of content I share. Looking at a list of my clients and collaborators, it's obvious that I operate in an almost completely White sphere.

To unlearn these behaviors and begin to undo the harm I've caused, I'll explore each aspect of my business immediately, including my policies, use of language and finances, and my marketing and networking tactics. As I discover racist aspects of my business, I'll change them to be actively anti-racist.

This year, I named White supremacy and my compliance with it by drafting and posting this pledge on my website, following and amplifying BIPOC voices online, and reading books by

Black authors. I also created two posts dedicated to race, one naming resources that I updated throughout the year and another exploring the capitalization of the words “black” and “white” when they refer to race.

This year I pledge to:

- Keep my anti-racism page up and post a link to this progress report on it.
- Continue to name White supremacy as a reality and force to be resisted and dismantled in my business materials and marketing.

Engage in anti-racist education for you and your team.

I pledge to engage in anti-racist education quarterly. I will pay for and attend a BIPOC-led workshop or training twice a year and engage in an anti-racism book study with other business owners twice a year.

I participated in the following trainings and webinars:

- Common Fire with Debra Baker, The Government Joy Network
July 15, 2020
- Another Tomorrow, Amber Cabral
October 26, 2020
- Ethical Storytelling, Nonprofit Quarterly
December 3, 2020
- How to Talk About Native Nations, Native Governance Center
May 12, 2021 (recording)

I read the following books:

- Caste by Isabel Wilkerson
- How To Be An anti-racist by Ibram X. Kendi
- Green Grass, Running River by Thomas King
- Me And White Supremacy by Layla Saad (summer and winter study groups)
- Parable of the Sower and Parable of the Talents by Octavia Butler
- The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates

I paid for one training (with Amber Cabral) and engaged in group discussions. I attended at least these four training sessions during the year. But I did not engage in book studies or other training sessions with business owners, as I pledged I would.

Next year, I pledge to:

- Find and attend two paid anti-racist trainings and attend at least two other training sessions that are free or ticketed.
- Continue to read books by BIPOC authors and consume other media created by (and uplifting) BIPOC content creators and marketers.
- Initiate at least one study group of business owners to more deeply explore anti-racism in our businesses.

Commit to open conflict and allow discomfort.

Open communication is part of Pearl & Ink's stated values and includes full engagement in conversations about race and systemic racism. I pledge to embrace the inevitable conflict and discomfort that will arise during these conversations and to be an active participant in the conversation. It's not going to get better if we stay silent, pretend racism is over, or deny that we're part of the problem.

In 2020-21 I joined a small group of White business owners to form the Thurston County Anti-racism Collective. Our original goal was to develop a group of business owners and nonprofit leaders in our county to be a voice for anti-racism in the business community and an accountability group for one another as we strive to individually build businesses based on equity and anti-racist principles.

Most of the original members stopped attending. Three of us—myself, one business owner in the food sector and one nonprofit communications employee who is a former business owner—remained in an accountability group that has met every other week (with some exceptions) since we founded the group in June 2020.

In these meetings we have:

- Spoken frankly about and challenged each other on our professional processes and revamped some of our policies to decolonize our business practices and de-center Whiteness in our organizations.
- Admitted to shortcomings, sought feedback, given encouragement, and offered different perspectives.
- Explored and changed our use of language in our marketing.
- Sought feedback and edits on our anti-racism statements.
- Discovered ways to use our privilege to initiate with and on behalf of BIPOC in our respective industries.
- Amplified BIPOC groups and individuals on our social media pages.
- Established and systematized our giving to BIPOC groups.

- Funneled expenses toward BIPOC businesses by shifting purchases of supplies and services.

I did not engage with our local SURJ chapter as I'd planned. I attended two meetings early in this cycle but other than keeping up with their emails and projects, I did not engage.

This year I pledge to:

- Continue meeting with the accountability group bi-weekly and reach out to rebuild attendance, following a summer break.
- Explore how to engage with SURJ, particularly their monthly meetings.
- Explore other organizations doing anti-racist work, such as the local chapter of the YWCA, and see if there are ways to engage with them.
- Do more with mutual aid groups to concretely support BIPOC and people in need in our community.

Invest a portion of your monthly company budget to the Black community.

I pledge to invest 30% of my business budget into Black-owned products and services, including software, services, Black-authored business books, and writing tools.

In 2020-21, as in other years, I spent very little on supplies or other materials. In total, I bought just one book, *The Year of Yes* by Shonda Rhimes, that could be categorized as supporting Black creators/businesses. I didn't come close to meeting my goal, which would have been closer to \$20 per month.

I could have made more headway in this area if I'd hired a Black organizing consultant. Earlier this year, I spent \$175 on a 90-minute consultation session to help me with email, file, and desktop organization. The White consultant I hired was great and I made good progress when I implemented her strategies. But it didn't dawn on me until after our session that instead of hiring the first person someone recommended, I could have been more deliberate about my spending by researching BIPOC consultants who do similar work.

To help keep this from happening in the future, I started developing a list of possible Black collaborators, including BIPOC copywriters, web designers and builders, regional BIPOC photographers, and consultants.

I also created a list of Black-owned businesses who provide the kinds of products and services I will need in the future. So far, I have lists of virtual assistants and writing supplies retailers as well as a short list of business book titles.

This year, I pledge to:

- Research and use these lists before making any purchases. Since I purchase so few products and services, every purchase I make counts.
- Purchase actively. Instead of waiting until the business needs something, I can stock up on a regular schedule. This will spread out my spending and also supply Black- and BIPOC-owned businesses with ongoing rather than intermittent support.

Express your sincere, long-term commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization.

As a start, I've crafted a statement of Pearl & Ink's commitment anti-racism, which I include on my consumer-facing marketing materials, client documents, and internal policies:

Pearl & Ink is an anti-racist business. Through education, active involvement in anti-racist groups, information sharing, internal policies, spending, and action, this business is engaged in the ongoing work of dismantling systemic racism.

During the first half of the 2020-21 year, I'll forge a more detailed action plan.

I included the Pearl & Ink commitment at the bottom of my contracts and on my Home page.

In lieu of an action plan, I added areas of the business to explore, using a lens of anti-racism, to an exploratory document. Areas include policies, language, marketing, networking, collaboration, spending, and outlook.

Here is what I discovered and changed in each of these areas:

Policy

New giving policy.

The new policy identifies Black farmers as the core recipients of Pearl & Ink's monthly payments. The policy states that Pearl & Ink will be a sustaining member of two organizations that support Black farmers in the Pacific Northwest.

I pledged to give roughly \$1,200.00 yearly, based on my past income, with a goal of giving 5% of my annual income. Based on my projected income for 2021, I will have more to give. I plan to make up the difference by giving the balance to local BIPOC farms or organizations that support them at the end of the calendar year.

Between December 2020 and June 8 2021, the business paid Black and Native farmers \$950.00:

– Black Food Sovereignty Coalition (Portland)	\$350.00
– Black Farmers Collective (Seattle)	\$350.00
– Bunkhouse Acres (local farmer)	\$150.00
– Canoe Journey Herbalists (local farmers)	\$100.00

Reduced-fee policy

I developed a reduced fee policy for BIPOC business owners and organizations that align with my core giving policy. However, I did not implement the policy in a way that made it transparent or accessible to people it can help.

My core goal is to help conscious companies and community organizations connect with the right people through their marketing words so they can grow and do more good work. My 2020-21 hourly rate was \$80/hour.

To help particular groups of people do that, I offer reduced fees at a rate of \$40/hour for:

1. BIPOC independent entrepreneurs.
2. BIPOC small business owners.
3. Local (Puget Sound) businesses and organizations with a social justice or environmental mission that are working on food and land issues, including:

- Food access.
- Food security and the food system.
- Food production.
- Land justice.

Language

I researched and compared opinions on whether or not to capitalize “black” and “white” when referring to race and wrote a blog post about my decision to capitalize both. I remain flexible on this topic but, for now, that’s Pearl & Ink’s practice.

I also explored language usage using this AORTA document to assess the language on my website and social media. I recognized the “multiculturalist” approach to diversity that I grew up with and am using this guide to build my awareness of language I use that “celebrates diversity,” emphasizes tolerance, avoids conflict, and focuses on celebrating differences instead of acknowledging the pain and suffering caused by White supremacy, White entitlement, and White centering. I’m trying to use language that doesn’t default to highlighting achievements of BIPOC while minimizing or ignoring systemic oppression and the experiences of marginalized people.

Marketing

I follow primarily White people on Instagram, my central marketing platform. This year I focused on following, learning from, and engaging with more BIPOC marketers, copywriters, entrepreneurs, activists, and educators.

This year, I created a “HIRE POC” highlight on my Instagram page to draw attention to BIPOC copywriters. My goal is to make this an ongoing feature of my page to help potential customers find BIPOC copywriters to hire. In the first seven weeks I added six copywriters to the highlight, with their permission. I plan to continue connecting with BIPOC copywriters, sharing about their work, and continuing to engage with them online.

The next step is to find and promote the work of more BIPOC copywriters in this region, develop relationships with them, and hopefully send them referrals.

My goal is to continue increasing my engagement with these folks and to take the initiative with BIPOC business owners and potential collaborators online. I assume the algorithm is racist, so I want to keep reaching out, having conversations, and elevating

the voices of people who my followers wouldn't normally hear from. Slow, steady, authentic engagement is my goal.

Networking

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I attended no networking events this year and did not think through my relationships with other business owners, either online or in person.

Now that society is opening up, I plan to solicit BIPOC-owned businesses in person that I started following online over the past year, exploring ways to support their businesses, and encouraging others to do the same.

Collaboration

I often collaborate with social media managers, web builders, and web designers on client projects. All my collaborators are White or White-passing and I default to working with referrals from my mostly White clients and collaborators.

This year I will reach out to BIPOC web builders and designers and start filling in details about the kinds of clients they want to work with so I can more effectively refer potential clients to them. Next, I'll do the same with social media managers. Then photographers.

My goal is to eventually build up a solid, diverse network of professionals so I can learn from them, support them, refer to them, and spread out the success.