



Crossing the Racial Divide: Close Friendships Between Black and White Americans

Kathleen Korgen

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In interviews in cities and towns across the United States, from New York to Los Angeles, and from Madison to Dallas, members of 40 black and white pairs of friends reflect on how they became friends, how racial issues are addressed, and how their friendships have influenced their views and, in some cases, their actions. Utilizing a sociological framework to examine the friendships, Korgen offers readers a rare glimpse into an even rarer phenomenon and sheds light on important aspects of race relations in America.

How do close friendships between blacks and whites develop? Why are cross-racial friendships so rare? How do these friendships navigate the issue of race? *Crossing the Racial Divide* answers these questions through a lively discussion of the problems and issues and through the voices of members of cross-racial friendships. In interviews in cities and towns across the United States, from New York to Los Angeles, and from Madison to Dallas, members of 40 black and white pairs of friends reflect on how they became friends, how racial issues are addressed, and how their friendships have influenced their views and, in some cases, their actions. Utilizing a sociological framework to examine the friendships, Korgen offers readers a rare glimpse into an even rarer phenomenon and sheds light on important aspects of race relations in America.

Challenging both the traditional notion that blacks and whites are opposites and the increasingly popular notion of colorblindness, the author reveals that, while close black/white friendships follow the concept of homophily, we cannot just wish away the tensions and disparities that exist between most white and black Americans. Cross-racial friendships provide a unique perspective that makes racism and racial separation both more visible and more vulnerable. Put into sociological context, the stories revealed in this book make evident the institutional barriers existing between most black and white Americans and offer insight into the means to dismantle them.

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