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If You Love Cycling, You Need to Have Uncomfortable Conversations About Race

DISCUSSIONS THAT LEAD TO MEANINGFUL CHANGE WILL DEFINE THE SUCCESS AND THE FUTURE OF OUR SPORT.

BY MONICA GARRISON Jul 27, 2020



When I ride my bike it feels as if I am doing my part to carve a path for other people of color in cycling. Being a black cyclist hopefully means that small actions on my part help break down the belief that people of color don't ride bikes.

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To be black is to wake up and navigate a world that feels like it is not designed for you to succeed. A world in which your best efforts, while good enough, may not be rewarded because of the color of your skin. A world in which trivial and critical decisions that affect your life are made every day without your best interest being considered. You become aware of this at a young age and you receive daily reminders of this throughout your life. If you fancy stepping out of your comfort zone then you are constantly navigating spaces that feel like they are not meant for you. To be black is a daily decision to assimilate, become more palatable, and dampen perceived threats, versus displaying the beauty and individuality of their personality. We carry these burdens into every experience. Cycling is no different.

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I believe that true diversity and inclusion strengthen industries and societies.

Folks don't like to have uncomfortable conversations, especially about race. I get it. Some people have a worldview that is filtered through a lens of fear of the unknown or they just simply lack the curiosity or empathy to learn about another person's experiences. But, as we all know, ignoring something doesn't make it go away. And in the end, I believe that true diversity and inclusion strengthen industries and societies. So if you love cycling then having discussions that lead to meaningful change will define the success of the future of the sport we all love.

I think it is important to acknowledge that people of color can excel at any sport. They don't lack ability. So when you look at the professional and even amateur levels of any sport and you see few faces of color then you have to ask yourself what is lacking. Is it resources or opportunity or something else? I'm confident we can root the causes and make cycling more welcoming to all.

Monica Garrison, 41, is a writer, photographer, and founder of [Black Girls Do Bike](#).

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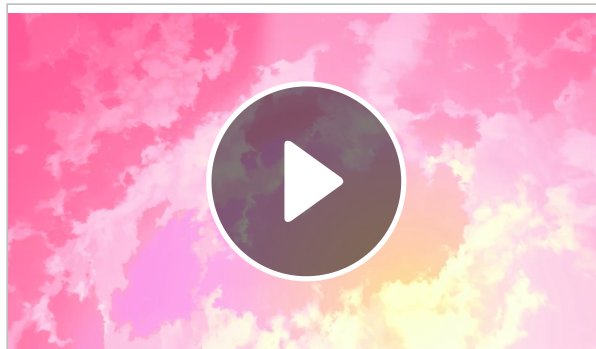
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