*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather C. McGhee

Discussion Questions

1. Let’s begin with some general impressions of the book. Was there anything in particular that stood out to you while you were reading or something that really stuck with you?
2. McGhee uses the example of public pools to illustrate how racism caused people to destroy something that could have benefited us all. Can you identify other “pools”— public goods that you see America going without—and how do you now think differently about the role racism might have played in this dynamic?
3. Let’s talk about the way McGhee’s metaphor of “the drained pool” has led to the student debt crisis—and how it is influencing generations of Black and white college graduates.
4. McGhee writes that white people are the most segregated people in America. What are some of the costs of continuing to segregate like this? What are the benefits of integration—both culturally *and* economically?
5. McGhee coined the phrase “The Solidarity Dividend” to describe Americans reaching across racial lines to work together for the common good—and securing better lives for us all. Discuss some of the examples she shares where such solidarity has been achieved.
6. What’s one thing you can do this week to work toward solidarity?
7. What are some ways white people can work to challenge zero-sum thinking?