

0:03 Marlon James: So I have a question for you. Are you “non-”, or are you “anti-”?

0:07 Several months ago, in response to Ferguson [background audio of person screaming], Baltimore, the killings of Freddie Gray, and Tamir Rice, my friend Kit had put up a Facebook post breaking down the difference between non-racism and anti-racism.

0:19 Most of us are non-racist. Because racism is looked upon as some moral lapse, we feel quite self-assured by simply not being racist. “I’m not a bigot, I don’t say the n-word when my favorite rap song comes on...I didn’t vote for that guy. I’m not burning any crosses. I’m not a skinhead. I don’t, I won’t, I’m not, I’ve never, I can’t.”

0:42 What you end up is an entire moral stance, an entire code for living your life, and dealing with all the injustice in the world, by not doing a damn thing. That’s the great thing about “not”: you can pull it off by simply rolling over in your bed and going to sleep.

0:57 So why are you sitting at home and watching things unfold on TV, instead of doing something about it? Because you’re a non-racist, not an anti-racist. Now do this for me: take the “c” out of racist, and replace it with a “p”. “I’m not a rapist. I’m not friends with any rapists, I didn’t buy that rapist’s last album.” All these things that you’re not doing. Meanwhile, people are still getting raped. And black boys are being killed.

1:24 It’s not enough that you don’t do these things. You’re going to bed with a clear conscience is not going to stop college students from getting assaulted. You thinking climate change is terrible is not going to stop climate change. You being so assured that you’re not anti-black, anti-Muslim, won’t stop the next hate crime. And it’s wonderful that you recognize how brave gay people are when facing persecution, but they aren’t the ones who need to be brave.

1:49 We need to get active. We need to hold people accountable. We need to accept that what hurts one of us hurts all of us. And we need to stop thinking that injustice going on in the world isn’t, to an extent, our fault. We need to stop being “non” and start being “anti”.