HORATIO ALGER EXERCISE

OBJECTIVE
To examine unearned privilege based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, etc.

TIME
60 minutes

GROUP SIZE
15 or more

MATERIALS
None

INSTRUCTIONS
1. The Facilitator asks everyone to line up around the perimeter of the room in a large circle. Everyone should be on the same line—no doubling up the line.

2. No one other than the facilitators should speak during the activity.

3. As the facilitator reads a statement, each participant should respond as asked if the statement pertains to them.
   ♦ If when you walk into a store in at home, the workers sometimes suspect you are going to steal something because of your race, take one step back.
   ♦ If you or your ancestors have ever learned that because of your race, skin color, or ethnicity, you are ugly or inferior, take one step back.
   ♦ If you have attended private school, take one step forward.
   ♦ All those who were or are now educated in schools where the vast majority of the faculty members and staff were of your ethnic group or race, take one step forward.
   ♦ If you studied history and culture of your ethnic ancestors in elementary and secondary school, take one step forward.
   ♦ If you started school speaking a language other than English or the dominant language of that school, take one step back.
   ♦ All those who come from, or whose parents came from rural areas, take one step back.
   ♦ All those with immediate family members who are doctors, lawyers, or "professionals", take one step forward.
   ♦ All those who ever got a good paying summer or after-school job because of a friend or family member, take one step forward.
   ♦ All those who were given a car by their family, take one step forward.
   ♦ All those who were told by their parents that you were beautiful, smart, and capable of achieving your dreams, take two steps forward.
   ♦ If, prior to your 18th birthday, you took a vacation outside the U.S. other than Mexico,

Adapted from I-Lead, Association of College Unions International (ACUI), 1999
take one step forward.

- If your parents had to sit you down when you were young and explain to you "This is what people might call you, and this is how they may treat you, and this is how you should deal with it" because they knew you were going to encounter it and because it was an important issue in your family and community, take one step back.

- If you had negative role models of your particular identity (religious affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity) when you were growing up, take one step back.

- If school is not in session during your major religious holidays please take a step forward.

- If you ever had to take a final or other type of test on one of your religious holidays or other culture event you observe, please take one step.

- If one of your classmates or your fellow employee/student leader wished you a Merry Christmas when you left for break, forgetting/or not knowing that you did not celebrate Christmas, please take one step back.

- Hispanic children are three times more likely than White children to have no medical insurance. Even though African Americans are more likely than White children to be covered through publicly subsidized health care programs, they are still twice as likely to be uninsured as White children. All Latinos and African Americans, take one step back. (S.F. Chronicle 10/6/92 report of study by Institute for Health Policy Studies).

- If you have ever felt like no one else looked, or acted like you in your hall or classes, in the campus union, please take one step back.

- If you have ever been afraid to walk home alone from campus at night, please take one step back.

- If you have ever had a crush on someone in your hall, but were unable to tell anyone because you were afraid that people would judge you, please take one step back.

- If you wanted to go on a ski trip or camping trip that your committee or organization planned, but you just did not have the money to go, please take one step back.

- If you have never had a faculty member who looked like you (ie Ethnicity or Gender), please take one step back.

- If you took an SAT Kaplan course before taking the SAT, please take one step forward.

- If you were afforded the opportunity to take summer prep courses at a local community college before coming to your campus, please take one step forward.

- If you can arrange to be in the company of people of your identity (religious affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity) most of the time on campus, please take one step forward.

- If you had negative role models of your particular identity (religious affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity) when you were growing up, take one step back.

- If you can turn on the television or open the front page of the paper and see people of your ethnicity or sexual orientation widely represented, please take one step forward.

Adapted from I-Lead, Association of College Unions International (ACUI), 1999
If you can go into a supermarket and easily find staple foods which fit into your cultural traditions, please take one step forward.

If you have difficulty finding products for your hair or someone to cut your hair, please take one step back.

For every dollar earned by white men, women earn only 72 cents. African American women earn only 65 cents; and Hispanic women earn only 57 cents to the dollar. All white males take a step forward. (The Arizona Republic, August 4, 1996)

4. Process the activity.
   - What do you think was the purpose of this exercise?
   - What did you learn from it?
   - What went happened?
   - Were there any surprises or puzzlement?
   - What did you observe?
   - What were you aware of?
   - How did it feel to be part of a group that took at step forward or backward or that ended in the front or the back of the group?
   - Did you want to be part of the group moving forward or backward?
   - How did you react when you were asked to run to the front of the room?
   - Why did some people run to the front and some move very slowly or not at all?
   - What is the campus connection?
   - How can you apply what you learned here to what you will do this year on campus?

SEE ALSO
Crossing the Line
Stand up for Diversity
Take a Stand