The Bootstrap Myth.
“Racism is a thing of the past.” “It’s a free country.” “Anyone who works hard can make it in America.”

“Reverse Racism.”
“People of color are just as racist as white people.” A myth. There is no such thing as “reverse racism.”

Minimizing.
“Maybe it’s not what you think” or “I’ve heard things that are much worse” when a person tells you about an experience they perceived as racist or oppressive.

Backtracking.
“That’s not what I meant.” “You took my words out of context.”

Blaming the Victim.
“You’re too sensitive.” “If you weren’t so vocal people wouldn’t pick on you.” “People of color are angry, it’s no wonder they get targeted.”

Waiting for Applause.
Thinking you should be considered heroic or special for doing anti-racist work. Awaiting recognition and a pat on the back.

Paralysis/Inaction.
Playing it safe for yourself instead of speaking up or acting against something that is oppressive.

Color-Blindness.
When white people pretend race does not matter in a racist world they are protecting their privilege as people whom racism benefits.

Self-Righteousness.
Thinking you know everything about racism, showing off to gain acceptance by people of color.

Being the “Good White.”
Distancing yourself from other white people who are more overtly offensive or don’t know the “right” anti-racist things to say.

“I Never Owned Slaves.”
We often hear individual blame whenever racism is brought up, so we react defensively without recognizing how we as a group and individuals benefit today from past and present forms of white supremacy.

The Penitent.
Being “sorry sorry sorry” out of guilt without acting to change ourselves or the situation.

Bending Over Backwards.
Accepting everything a person of color says as “Truth,” overcompensating because of your own guilt.

Justifying.
“But a person of color once treated me badly, so my racism comes from personal experience.”

Escapism.
“But I’m Oppressed Too!” as a woman, a queer or transgender person, a young person, a (dis)abled person or someone who is marginalized in other ways. This is also called making “false parallels” between your own oppression and racist oppression.