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English Language  
Center

**Supplement to *The Person You Mean to Be***

created by

**The Vanderbilt University English Language Center**

[vanderbilt.edu/elc/](http://vanderbilt.edu/elc/)

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## What is our Supplement to *The Person You Mean to Be*?

This guide was created for incoming undergraduate students at Vanderbilt University who use English as an Additional Language (EAL). Our Supplement to *The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias* by Dolly Chugh<sup>1</sup> has two goals:

- to help you read texts about unfamiliar topics
- to help you internalize relevant themes from *The Person You Mean to Be*




First, we include several tools to equip you for a more complete understanding of the text:

- **reading strategies:** develops skills such as building background knowledge, identifying cultural perspectives, previewing, skimming, and scanning
- **recognizing organizational elements:** explores skills for reading accuracy and comprehension, including sections about argumentative structure and identifying Chugh's<sup>2</sup> arguments
- **Chugh's writing style:** identifies informal stylistic elements, cohesive devices, and author voice and tone
- **Applying Chugh's advice in international contexts:** guides reflection on how your cultural, linguistic, and educational background can support your choices surrounding bias

The second goal, internalizing relevant themes from *The Person You Mean to Be*, is more difficult to achieve. We focus the supplement on recognizing and interpreting organizational elements in *The Person You Mean to Be*, and we hope this helps you read more quickly and accurately. In turn, this may help clarify complex issues raised in your classes and [Vanderbilt Visions group](#) and even improve your persuasive and analytical writing during your first year at Vanderbilt.

**Find this supplement online at:** <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/resources/supplement-to-the-person-you-mean-to-be/>

Use the tools pictured below to help you as you read:

 <p><b>Want to Know More?</b></p>	<p><b>Expand your knowledge with links to online resources in these boxes.</b></p>
 <p><b>Focus on...<sup>3</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Complete activities to further your understanding by following the directions in these boxes.</b></p>
 <p><b>Notice...</b></p>	<p><b>Consider details not immediately apparent from examples or explanations.</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> *The Person You Mean to Be* by Chugh, 2018, Harper Business. This supplement is based on the Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> In this supplement, we refer to the author in two ways: by her whole name, Dolly Chugh, and by her last name, Chugh.

<sup>3</sup> Target Icon adapted from <http://webiconspng.com/icon/78516>

## Reading Strategies

### *Building Background Knowledge*

Before you read *The Person You Mean to Be*, consider what you know about the book’s major topic, how to fight bias, and its themes of unconscious bias, privilege, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you studied these topics previously?
- What can you remember about these topics?
- What is your understanding of these topics?

**Consult the following websites to build upon your current background knowledge:**

**Note:** The links in this section contain potentially distressing content.

Book Themes	The Historic Civil Rights Movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Bias</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Unconscious Bias</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Privilege</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Equity</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Diversity and Inclusion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Intersectionality</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Civil Rights Movement History</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Civil Rights Movement in Nashville</a></li> </ul>
The Current Civil Rights Movement	Vanderbilt University and Civil Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Summer 2020 Nationwide Protests</a><sup>4</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Video Footage of Summer 2020 Protests</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Black Lives Matter</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Diversity and Inclusion at Vanderbilt</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">VU Statement on the Death of George Floyd</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Milestones and Achievements</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Black History</a></li> </ul>

### *Chugh’s Audience: “Believers”*

Chugh wrote the person you mean to be with a specific audience in mind. In the preface, she writes the following under the heading, “Not Everyone Is Ready for This Book (but You Probably Are)”:

Not everyone is a believer. Being a believer requires more than believing in the values. **It also requires us to believe in the reality of a crushing volume of scholarly studies, research papers, and firsthand reports that offer excruciating detail on how we devalue the bodies, minds, souls, careers, incomes, life spans, and humanity of people who are not white, or male, or straight, or gender-conforming, or Christian.** I am not writing a book that summarizes that voluminous evidence, though I have read a lot of it, experienced some of it, and done scholarly research that supports it. **If you are absolutely convinced that these biases are not serious issues in America today, my book is not the place to start. My book is for those who have at least a vague belief that this reality might exist for some people and who want to understand and do something about that reality.**<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> If you have not set up [access to the New York Times](#) through the [Vanderbilt Library](#), you can [follow this guide](#).

<sup>5</sup> Emphasis added.

### Examine multiple points Chugh makes in this paragraph:

1. Chugh’s life experiences have shaped the way she expresses her opinions in the book. She grew up and has spent her life in the United States. As a result, when she uses pronouns like *us*, *our*, and *we*, it seems to be from an American point of view.
2. Chugh is writing for the people she calls, “believers,” which she defines here as people who know and accept that there are biases in the United States against people who are, as she describes, “not white, or male, or straight, or gender-conforming, or Christian.” In other words, people who do not fit those descriptors, including people of different races, sexual orientations, genders, and religions, are more likely to encounter bias in the United States. If you are learning about these biases for the first time, consider clicking on the [Background Knowledge](#) links above to learn more about this part of U.S. history and culture.
3. Because Chugh’s audience is so specific, she assumes that her reader already wants to explore bias in themselves and in the people and institutions around them. If you are reading this book from a non-U.S. perspective, you can use this as an opportunity to understand an American perspective and/or consider how these ideas might be adapted to fit your own background. Even though Chugh writes as though you have already decided to act, you can read this book and decide for yourself.

For more information, see the end of this supplement for strategies for [Applying Chugh’s Advice in Non-U.S. Contexts](#).

### The Person You Mean to Be at Vanderbilt University

Vanderbilt seeks “to promote academic success, professional and cultural education, and inclusivity and belonging among its students, faculty, and postdoctoral fellows,” as written in the mission statement for The Office for Inclusive Excellence.<sup>6</sup> Vanderbilt University seeks to offer a sense of support and belonging for all its community members.

To this end, the Ingram Commons theme for the 2020–2021 academic year is “Communicating Across Differences”. The university has chosen *The Person You Mean to Be* as the [Commons Reading](#) so that you and your peers can more fully participate in the ongoing conversation about equity, diversity, and inclusion at Vanderbilt University.

### Understanding the Book Title

The full book title is, “The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias.” There are two parts of this title that illuminate Chugh’s perspective:

1. Chugh uses the word “mean” in the title to signify an **intent**. For example, “I mean to try my best” is saying that the person **plans**, or **intends**, to give their best effort. Chugh is describing how we often **intend** to act in particular ways, but sometimes we do not meet our own expectations.
2. When Chugh refers to “Good People,” she is referring to those good **intentions** we just described. As Chugh explains in the introduction, “I study the psychology of good people. I see myself as a good person and yet my behavior is filled with evidence to the contrary.”<sup>7</sup> She explores the gap between our self-perception and reality and the roles that unconscious bias and unethical behavior play in creating that gap.

Her book can help us decide whether and how to fight internal and external biases by letting go of expectations of perfection and, instead, focusing on growth. Her TED talk offers an excellent summary of this idea.

 <p>Want to Know More?</p>	<p><a href="#">Dolly Chugh’s TED Talk</a> offers a helpful overview of her book’s central thesis.</p>
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<sup>6</sup> [Mission Statement for the Office of Inclusive Excellence](#), 2020

<sup>7</sup> *The Person You Mean to Be* by Chugh, 2018, Harper Business, Kindle Edition, p. 6

## Full Content Overview

*The Person You Mean to Be* first shows us strategies for how to identify implicit and explicit bias, both in ourselves and in the systems and institutions we interact with. After that, she focuses on showing us different strategies for how to counteract those biases in ourselves and those we observe, while reminding us that even though we do not have to fix everything, we can each work to improve if we choose to. Chugh's book is split into 4 parts:

1. “**Activating a growth mindset** of being a good-ish work-in-progress, not a premade good person;
2. **Seeing the ordinary privilege** we hold and putting it to good use on behalf of others;
3. **Opting for willful awareness**, though our minds and lives make willful ignorance more likely; and
4. **Engaging** the people and systems around us.”<sup>8</sup>



Want to  
Know  
More?  
Instructor  
Guide

HarperCollins Publisher provides an [Instructor's Guide to The Person You Mean to Be](#). It contains summaries of each chapter, discussion questions, and activities to prompt further reflection. Reading the guide summaries before you read each chapter in the book can help you follow Chugh's arguments and advice through complex chapters.

Reading chapter summaries does not offer the full experience of reading the book complete with examples, research, and practical advice. We recommend using these resources to support your experience while reading the book.

## Cultural References

As you read, click on the links below and learn more about distinctly North American historical and cultural references in each part of the book.

**Note:** The links in this section contain potentially distressing content.

### Foreword, Preface, and Introduction

- [Lin-Manuel Miranda's Musical, "Hamilton"](#)
- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)
- [Muhammad Ali](#)
- [Jackie Robinson](#)
- [The melting-pot narrative](#)
- [Gender-nonconforming](#)
- [Queer](#) (p. 1)
- [Matthew Shepard](#) (p.2)
- [Tyler Clementi](#) (p. 2)
- [Tina Fey](#) (p.4)
- [KKK](#) (p. 7)
- [Meryl Streep](#) (p. 11)
- [Rosa Parks](#) (p. 16)
- ["White tears"](#) (p. 20)

### Part 1: Builders Activate a Growth Mindset

- [Mansplaining and Whitesplaining](#) (p. 28)
- [The "1 percent"](#) (p. 29)
- [Tone police](#) (p. 33)
- [The South](#) (p. 70)
- [Jim Crow system of segregation](#) (p. 73)

### Part 2: Builders See and Use Their Ordinary Privilege

- [Humblebragging](#) (p. 123)

<sup>8</sup> *The Person You Mean to Be* by Chugh, 2018, Harper Business, Kindle Edition, p. 20 (emphasis in original)  
[The Vanderbilt University English Language Center](#)

### ***Part 3: Builders Opt for Willful Awareness***

- Images of [torches](#) and [robes](#) (p. 130)
- [“White tears”](#) (p. 154)

### ***Part 4: Builders Engage***

- [The Jim Crow South](#) (p. 235)
- [Rosa Parks](#) (p. 238)
- [Colin Kaepernick and others kneeling](#) (p. 237)

### ***Thinking before You Read: Previewing the Text***

Before reading each section in *The Person You Mean to Be*, browse through it. Ask yourself:

- How many pages do I need to read?
- How long will it take to read?

Knowing the approximate length of the chapters will help you be realistic about the time you will need to read them.<sup>9</sup> Also, because this text is structured as a persuasive argument, knowing whether you are at the beginning, middle, or end of the chapters will help you know where you are in the argument (see [Argumentative Structure](#) for more details).

### ***Skimming and Scanning***

Before reading *The Person You Mean to Be*, it is helpful to glance through the pages and focus on the important parts to better understand what the text is about.<sup>10</sup> This practice is called **skimming**.

Ask yourself:

- What do the chapter titles and section headers mean?
- What are the keywords in each title?
- What will each chapter’s content be?
- How will each chapter support the book’s overall argument?

**For example**, by looking at the front cover, back cover, and chapter titles, you can predict that *The Person You Mean to Be* examines different ways to fight bias. Furthermore, you can see the book reviews on the front and back covers and consider that this book is part of a larger conversation about equity and inclusion.

You can better understand the organization of the story by **skimming** the material for important elements, which may also help you predict what comes next.

**In each chapter**, Chugh uses section [headers](#) to highlight her main ideas. By paying attention to the headers, you can preview what each section will be about and predict the purpose of the section. **For example**, headers in parts 3 and 4 are all written in the imperative form, such as, “Be inclusive,” and this half of the book offers concrete actions you can take to fight bias.

<sup>9</sup> *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2

<sup>10</sup> *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 2–3

A similar skill is **scanning**. Scanning is to quickly look over a text without reading every single word. By looking over the text for keywords, definitions, and the central themes—not reading for complete understanding—you may quickly understand the important elements of what a specific passage mentions and how it fits into the larger argument.<sup>11</sup>

In *The Person You Mean to Be*, Chugh argues that fostering a mindset in which you learn from mistakes can allow you to fight bias and act more like the person you mean to be. As you read, you will notice that some passages are descriptions of anecdotes from people she interviewed or descriptions of social science experiments. These paragraphs are not always essential to the main argument, and it might benefit you to skim and scan these parts to focus on the main idea they are communicating. See the section on [Recognizing Organizational Elements](#) for more help finding places to skim and scan.



Want to  
Know  
More?  
Reading  
Efficiently

The ELC has published a [Scholarly Reading Guide](#) to help you better read and comprehend scholarly texts, such as peer-reviewed journal articles. If you would like to review the information about skimming and scanning, click here to read the section titled, [Reading Efficiently](#).



Focus on  
Reading  
Skills

You can also consult these reading textbooks for more information and practice:

- *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988
- *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006
- *A Good Read: Developing Strategies for Effective Reading* by Islam & Steenburgh, 2009

### Identifying In-text Definitions

Because this book was written for a general audience, Chugh has included definitions for terms that are specific to [social scientists](#) (those who study society and social interactions, such as economists and political scientists). Finding these definitions as you read will help you avoid looking up words in the dictionary, which increases your reading speed and flow. Also, dictionary definitions you find may not be helpful, as words often have more than one meaning and you will need a definition specific to the context of this book.

If you see a word you do not know, do not stop reading. Instead, look for a definition in the text. Definitions can be spotted by paying attention to punctuation, synonyms, defining verbs such as “called” and “means,” and descriptions in surrounding sentences.<sup>12</sup> In particular, Chugh frequently uses quotation marks around the terms she defines. See the table on the next page for examples.

**As you keep reading, if you do not see a definition in the text, you can follow these steps:**

1. Look for a prefix or suffix that might help you guess the meaning of the word and identify what part of speech (noun, verb, or adjective, etc.) the word has in the sentence.<sup>13</sup>
2. If the meaning of the word is still unclear, you can search for the definition in a dictionary. The ELC recommends using an English–English dictionary (such as the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) or [Merriam Webster](#)) for more precise definitions of the word. Choose the definition that best fits the context and part of speech for the sentence you are reading. If you prefer simpler definitions, you can use a learner’s dictionary, for instance, the [Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries](#).
3. If you are using the Kindle Edition of the book, you can double-click on each word in the text and a definition will appear from the New Oxford American Dictionary. However, some of the dictionary definitions may or

<sup>11</sup> *A Good Read: Developing Strategies for Effective Reading 2* by Islam & Steenburgh, 2009, Cengage Learning, p. 8

<sup>12</sup> *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006, Pearson Longman, Chapter 3: Use Vocabulary Strategies

<sup>13</sup> *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 11



may not fit the book’s context, so be sure to read the definitions carefully and choose the one that makes the most sense in the sentence. Also, keep in mind that the double-click dictionary feature does not work for multiple or hyphenated words.



**Focus on  
Identifying  
Definitions**

Use the table below to help yourself identify definitions in *The Person You Mean to Be* without using a dictionary. Fill in some of your own quotes from the text and definitions to guide your reading.

Term	Quote with a Definition	How I Recognized It
<i>tempered radicals</i>	Preface: We can be inspired by the research of organizational scholar Debra Meyerson on “tempered radicals.” <b>Tempered radicals are insiders in organizations who do not present as rebels and are often successful in their jobs. They are catalysts for change by challenging the status quo in small, cautious ways.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation: quotation marks</li> <li>• Definition is found in a descriptive definition in the following sentences</li> </ul>
<i>woke</i>	Preface: The relatively new use of the word “woke” was heralded by a New York Times piece about the cultural importance of signifying someone who is “hip to the realities of inequality.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition is found in a synonymous description at the end of the sentence</li> </ul>
<i>identity claiming</i>	p. 3: <b>In speech and action, we express how we see ourselves and how we want to be perceived by others</b> , a process that organizational scholars Caroline Bartel and Jane Dutton call “identity claiming.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation: quotation marks</li> <li>• Defining verb: “call”</li> </ul>
<i>self-threat</i>	p. 4: Psychologists call this a moment of self-threat— <b>our identity is being challenged or dismissed.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description in the sentence</li> <li>• Punctuation: dash</li> <li>• Defining verb: “call”</li> </ul>
<i>Low psychological safety</i>	p. 30: These are all normal responses to low psychological safety, <b>where interpersonal fear is high.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description in the sentence</li> </ul>



**Notice:  
Dictionary  
Definitions**

It may surprise you to learn that all except one of the phrases in the *Term* column above are not in the online [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#). However, you can use the techniques described above to understand these terms from their definitions in the text and increase your reading speed and flow.

## Recognizing Organizational Elements in *The Person You Mean to Be*

Think of *The Person You Mean to Be* as a long argumentative essay, and all the chapters as pieces of a puzzle that come together and support the overarching argument that changing your mindset can help you become the person you mean to be. This section can help you do two things to improve your reading comprehension and speed in *The Person You Mean to Be* and other materials you read at Vanderbilt:

1. Focus on Sections: Recognize pieces of the organizational puzzle
2. See the Big Picture: See how the pieces fit together to support the overarching argument

### *Argumentative Structure*

Think of *The Person You Mean to Be* as an argumentative essay meant to support Chugh’s overarching thesis: *If you use a growth mindset, you can take concrete action to fight bias and become the person you mean to be.* To make such a sweeping argument, Chugh breaks her thoughts into chapters, headings, and paragraphs. Recognizing an argumentative structure can help you read more accurately: it can help you understand the purpose of each section as you read.<sup>14</sup>

### *Personal Narratives*

In each chapter and in most sections, Chugh provides personal narratives based on individuals she interviewed while researching *The Person You Mean to Be*. These examples, which are often presented first, are then paired with descriptions of social science theories and experiments. Paired together, they offer a dual glimpse into her main ideas: one side offers the abstract theory, and the other side provides an example of how that theory was implemented in the real world. As you read, consider how these paired descriptions intertwine to create the clearest explanation of her arguments and advice.

### *Headers*

After Chugh divides her argument into chapters, she further separates her thoughts into sections with headers. Reading headers can help you see what the next few pages will be focused on and even help you fit these sections into the larger argument in the chapter. Some headers clearly show what the section will be about, while others leave room for interpretation by the reader.

**For example**, on page 23, the section header is “Growth Versus Fixed Mindset.” This header explicitly lists the two topics to be covered in this section. However, the next section header on page 25 is, “Talent Can Come from Anywhere.” This header leaves you to wonder what will be explained next, but you might guess that performance and ability could be discussed.

### *Roadmaps*

Sometimes, in complex sections, Chugh uses a roadmap, which is one or more sentences telling you what she is about to discuss. For example, on page 6, Chugh writes:

Rachel will return toward the end of the book to describe where she found the support she needed. First, we’re going to learn the four ways in which builders are different than believers. Let’s begin by exploring how good people like you and me think.

<sup>14</sup> [Reading Skills for Academic Study: Understanding Texts](#) by Gillett, 2020  
[The Vanderbilt University English Language Center](#)

Chugh does not number the four ways or create new section headings for each one, but with this roadmap, you know what information to look for in the rest of the chapter. However, identifying personal narratives, headers, and roadmaps can help you follow Chugh’s argument as she shares and analyzes complex evidence and examples over many pages.

## Chugh’s Writing Style

### *Informal Stylistic Elements*

Chugh wrote *The Person You Mean to Be* as a guide to teach ordinary people how to fight bias. This goal has influenced her writing style and formality. You may notice the following stylistic elements in the book which are not often found in formal academic writing:

- **Contractions:** When words are combined with an apostrophe (e.g., *we would* → *we’d* or *we have* → *we’ve*)
- **Using *I*:** In some academic fields, writers are encouraged to use *I*, but it is uncommon in many fields of study
- **Direct Address:** When the author speaks directly to the reader, often using **imperative verbs** (e.g., “Be Inclusive”<sup>15</sup>) or pronouns such as *you*, *we*, or *us*
- **Informal Word Choices:** Word choices that reflect a more casual audience (for example, words often used in conversation, but not in formal writing)

Example	Informal Stylistic Elements
p. 6: First, <b>we’re</b> going to learn the four ways in which builders are different than believers. <b>Let’s</b> begin by exploring how good people like you and me think.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contractions</li> <li>• Direct Address</li> </ul>
p. 223: <b>I laid out</b> my issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using <i>I</i></li> <li>• Informal Word Choice</li> </ul>

### *Voice and Tone*

Chugh wrote *The Person You Mean to Be* by interweaving evidence from personal experience, interviews, and social science theories and experiments to support and explain her recommendations. As you read, it will be important to recognize when you are reading Chugh’s own ideas or descriptions of others’ ideas. This skill is known as identifying the author’s **voice**. Once you find Chugh’s voice, you can analyze the **tone**, which is the author’s attitude or opinion about a topic. Distinguishing between Chugh’s **voice** and reports of others’ ideas as well as analyzing the **tone** can help you identify the source of each idea.

*For example:* I asked Brittany what it was like to work in that context, on issues of race and gender. “As a **woman of color**, a part of me felt ‘I should’ve known this.’ I should have known how to ‘formally do diversity,’ but it is something you have to learn.” **She was highlighting the difference between being a believer and a builder. Her experiences as a black woman had given her firsthand reasons to be a believer, but they did not equip her with the skills to be a builder. She, too, needed to have a growth mindset (pp. 29–30).**

The sentences in quotation marks separate Brittany’s words, while the subsequent sentences in bold show Chugh’s **voice**. The bold phrase reveals Chugh’s **tone** of approval regarding Brittany’s work, as she endorses Brittany as a “believer.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *The Person You Mean to Be* by Chugh, 2018, Harper Business, Kindle Edition, p. 167

<sup>16</sup> See the section **Chugh’s Audience** for an explanation of her term, “believer”



Want to  
Know More?  
Author Voice

**Read this [handout](#) about identifying whose voice you are reading and how to write with an academic voice.**

### *Cohesive Strategies*

*The Person You Mean to Be* is a non-fiction book, and the audience is the general public, so Chugh needed to break down complex material in more comprehensible ways and carefully guide her readers (us) through her writing. She did this by using the set of 4 strategies listed below to create **cohesion**, or logical connections between ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and chapters.<sup>17</sup> Understanding **cohesive strategies** can help you follow Chugh’s arguments throughout the book.

#### **Keyword Repetition**

Repeating keywords helps the reader follow a topic clearly, especially when absorbing new information. Find keywords in the first sentence of each paragraph (topic sentences) or in definitions (see [Identifying In-text Definitions](#)). You may be surprised to see how many times these words are repeated even though it does not feel repetitive when you read. See the example on the next page to help you see how this appears in the book.



**Notice:  
Repeated  
Keywords**

**As you read, notice how many keywords are repeated not just in a paragraph, but throughout the book, and not solely in individual sections. You may find that they appear more than you expect, as that is one of the ways Chugh helps connect big pieces of the book’s overarching argument.**

#### **Known to New Information Flow**

Following a known to new information pattern can help your writing flow logically from one idea to the next. It can also help avoid a repetitive feeling even though the writer is repeating keywords. Each sentence starts with a **topic** and ends by sharing new information in what we call the **stress** position.<sup>18</sup> Then the next sentence can build on the stressed information to add more content. Read the labeled excerpt below to see how this works.

#### **Generic Transitions**

Transition words, such as *for example*, *however*, and *since*, help the reader see how information connects in precise ways. For instance, *however* signals disagreement, and *as a result* signals effect.

#### **Hook and Summarizing Phrases**

The hook connects readers to an idea in the previous sentence(s). Some examples of hooks are: *this*, *these*, and *such*. Then the summary noun, keyword, or phrase explicitly tells the reader what is being referred to.<sup>19</sup> This strategy can also be used to define and characterize complex concepts, as Chugh does with “binary notion” in the sample paragraph below. Note that Chugh sometimes uses hooks without the summary phrase attached.



**Focus on  
Cohesion**

**The paragraph below offers a labeled example of how Chugh implements these cohesion strategies (logical connections between ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and chapters). After considering this example, you can look for these strategies as you read this and other texts. Noticing cohesion and flow can help you connect the authors’ ideas as you read.**

<sup>17</sup> *The International Student's Guide to Writing a Research Paper* by Carlock, Eberhardt, Horst, & Kolenich, 2017, University of Michigan Press

<sup>18</sup> *Making Complex Writing Intelligible with the Known-new Contract* by Carnegie Mellon University Global Communication Center, 2020

<sup>19</sup> *Just Writing: Grammar, Punctuation, and Style for the Legal Writer* (4th Ed.) by Enquist, Oates, & Francis, 2013, Wolters Kluwer Law & Business

This paragraph from pages 8–9 has cohesion strategies labeled as follows to indicate cohesive devices:

- Keywords
- Generic Transitions
- **Hook (+ Summary phrase)**
- Known to New Information Flow: Connections between (topic) and stress positions

As a result, (*good people*) are prone to what my mentors—business school professor Max Bazerman and psychology professor Mahzarin Banaji—and I call “*bounded ethicality*.” (*Bounded ethicality*) is the psychology of “good-ish” people. (*Good-ish people*) are sometimes good and sometimes not, sometimes intentionally and sometimes not, like all of us. (**This model of *bounded ethicality***) challenges ways of thinking and talking in which you are either a good person or not, a racist or not, an unethical human or not. We argue that (**this binary notion**) is seductive but misleading and scientifically inaccurate. (We) do not need to fall for this false notion.



Want to  
Know More?  
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If you would like to learn how to improve your own writing clarity and flow using these cohesive strategies, consider signing up for our [writeELC](#) course or [1-to-1 Consultations](#) at the English Language Center.

### *Metaphors*

Throughout *The Person You Mean to Be*, Chugh uses **metaphors and similes** as tools to explain ideas. Simply put, [metaphors](#) and [similes](#) are a comparisons that help describe something. These comparisons are usually not literal, and often help us understand something more quickly and succinctly. A simile is a type of metaphor, but slightly different because it uses *like* or *as* to make the comparison.

Even though metaphors and similes are more commonly found in fiction literature, non-fiction also uses many metaphors and similes to help the reader to interpret a deeper meaning. Chugh and other non-fiction writers use metaphors and similes to be descriptive and persuasive as well as to communicate [tone](#) (*i.e.*, feeling) to the reader. For example, on page 52, Chugh discusses a metaphor established by Beverly Daniel Tatum:

In her outstanding book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum describes how these unconscious associations are shaped by what she calls “smog.” We breathe in these cultural associations, whether we consciously believe in them or not.

The metaphor of smog and breathing can help us understand unconscious bias. Both smog and unconscious bias are difficult, but not impossible, to see up close. The comparison shows how unconscious cultural associations can surround us while remaining unnoticed. The next section demonstrates how you can **interpret** other metaphors in the book.

### **How can you interpret a metaphor once you identify one?**

Metaphors and similes come in three parts. Follow these steps to interpret them:

1. All metaphors are comparing two items, so first, identify the **focus** of the metaphor (the **main item** you are meant to better understand).
2. Separate it from the **secondary item** (what the main item is being compared to).
3. Once you have identified those two parts, think of what the metaphor’s **ground** is, namely, the aspect that both items have in common.
4. Then use the ground to analyze the metaphor’s **meaning**.




## Focus on Metaphors

Use the table below to help you recognize and interpret metaphors and similes in the book.

Metaphor or Simile	Main Item	Secondary Item	Commonality (the <i>ground</i> )	Meaning Analysis
Foreword: “We all have an idea of who we believe we are, which stands in modest contrast to the person we actually are. The faint tickling of that disconnect, like the moment you first feel an ant’s tread halfway up your calf, is part of the human condition.”	the disconnect between who we believe we are and who we actually are	the moment you first feel an ant’s tread halfway up your calf	Both situations give us an uncomfortable sensation that we would like to stop.	The metaphor shows how recognizing the disconnect can be uncomfortable, but like the ant, we cannot realistically ignore the reality of the disconnect.
p. 64: “Antiracist educator and author Debby Irving uses an often-cited headwinds and tailwinds metaphor to explain the invisibility of these systemic, group-level differences. Headwinds are the challenges—some big, some small, some visible, some invisible—that make life harder for some people, but not for all people.”	Systemic, group-level differences	Headwinds and tailwinds	Headwinds push against people (like runners) and objects (like airplanes) and make it harder for them to move forward. Tailwinds do the opposite: they blow from behind, pushing the person or object forward. Further, wind and the force it exerts is invisible and only felt by the people in its path.	We are lucky that Chugh explains the first metaphor for us: “Headwinds are the challenges—some big, some small, some visible, some invisible—that make life harder for some people, but not for all people.”  By extension, we can infer that tailwinds do the opposite by invisibly helping people.

## Applying Chugh's Advice in International Contexts

Chugh's main goal in *The Person You Mean to Be* is to empower you to decide what actions you may or may not want to take to fight bias.

 <p><b>Focus on Your Context</b></p>	<p><b>Reflect on your cultural, linguistic, and educational background. How might you want to apply Chugh's advice in your life?</b></p>
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Consider these questions adapted from HarperCollins Publisher<sup>20</sup> that can help you decide:

**WHO** should you engage with and who should you avoid?

**WHY** are you engaging (to change behavior or to change social norms)?

**HOW** are you engaging in order to make your growth mindset visible to others?

**WHERE AND WHEN** do you engage (on the spot or later in public or private)?

**WHAT** can you say? Is it best to share stories or facts?

As Chugh discusses in the book, you may decide that you would like to sit in a different seat the next time you attend a meeting, or practice listening more than talking if your self-threat<sup>21</sup> is activated. No matter what, remember that Chugh is asking us to explore “a mindset in which the less we worry about being good people, the better people we will be.”<sup>22</sup>

### Summary

We hope that you are ready to implement our advice as you continue reading *The Person You Mean to Be*. As needed, refer to this guide to develop your reading skills throughout your time at Vanderbilt University.

For further guidance from the English Language Center, sign up for [1-to-1 Consultations](#) while classes are in session. If you have questions, please contact [elc@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:elc@vanderbilt.edu).

**Find this and more online at:** <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/resources/supplement-to-the-person-you-mean-to-be/>

<sup>20</sup> *Instructor's Guide: Dr. Dolly Chugh's The Person You Mean to Be* by Zafer, 2018, HarperCollins Publishers p. 23 (emphasis in original)

<sup>21</sup> Chugh defines self-threat on page 4 as a time when “our identity is being challenged or dismissed.”

<sup>22</sup> *The Person You Mean to Be* by Chugh, 2018, Harper Business, Kindle Edition, p. 20