



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

How do we live together when we profoundly disagree?

john a. powell

### In This Episode...

john a. powell holds the Robert D. Haas Chancellor's Chair in Equity and Inclusion; is a Professor of Law, African American Studies, and Ethnic Studies; and leads the Othering & Belonging Institute at University of California, Berkeley. He tells Eboo why "bridging," building connections with others, is the crucial, hard work of our time.

### Episode Guest: john a. powell

john a. powell (who spells his name in lowercase in the belief that we should be "part of the universe, not over it, as capitals signify") is an internationally recognized expert in the areas of civil rights, civil liberties, structural racism, housing, poverty, and democracy. He is the Director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, and appears regularly in major media to offer expert insights on a host of issues.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- john discusses how his principled stance on compassion toward other cultures caused a rupture between himself and the community into which he was born. He describes how it was hard on him, but that when he thinks about it now, he realizes that it was also very difficult for his parents. What is one time when you experienced a rupture with your community? How do you feel about that event now?
- Eboo says that, in his experience, religion is "the great changer of eyes". Would you agree? Has a spiritual or religious tradition ever completely changed your perspective on something? Was it the tradition in which you were raised, or an idea from a different tradition? If your worldview is non-religious, what forces in your life have you experienced as perspective changing?
- john describes his son's transformational conversations with his father, despite their differences in belief. Have you ever experienced something similar? What about that conversation was special?
- Eboo describes john's tendency to see the best in people as a "pair of glasses" that he hands around to others. What's one such "pair of glasses" or perspective that you think is somewhat unique to your experience? How can you share this way of looking at things with others?
- john talks about his ongoing efforts to live out his beliefs while also avoiding being too prescriptive towards others' lives. He gives the example of being an ethical vegetarian, while also recognizing that his family doesn't feel the same way. What is one issue on which you have a very different opinion than someone close to you? How do you navigate that?