

# America to me *real talk*

## EPISODE GUIDE 08

Code Switching: Managing Multiple  
Racial Identities

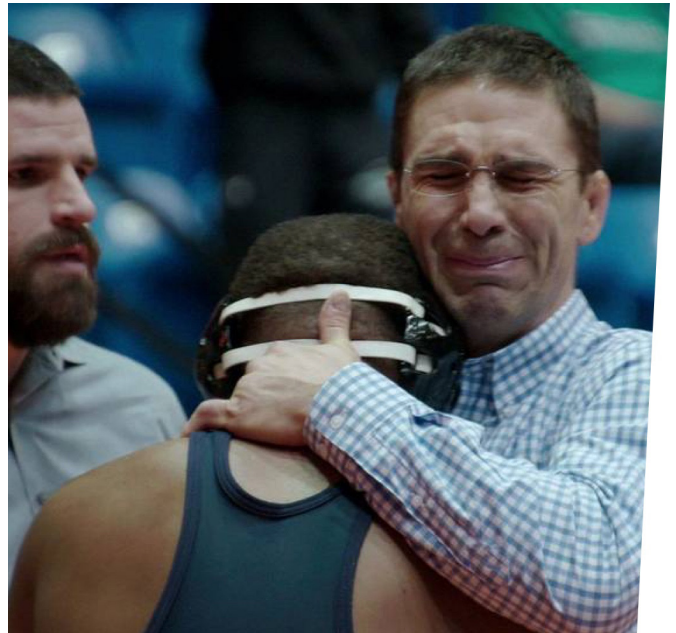
# Episode Guide 08

## TOPIC

### Code Switching: Managing Multiple Racial Identities

Identities, both authentic and assumed, play a strong role in Episode 8, as we see the students, teachers, and families of Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS) navigating multiple identities and finding the need to code switch in order to fit in and achieve recognition at the school.

**Organizing a Group Discussion?**  
**Be prepared! Before you start, read the Organizer Guide.**



## ANALYZE

- How are Chanti and Diane’s experiences with race similar and different from each other? What makes Chanti and Diane’s experiences unique?
- How is the process of racial identity development complicated by mixed racial identities at OPRFHS? Where do we see the different students and faculty at OPRFHS trying to fit in or code switch?
- Dave Bernthal references his “natural connection” with his AP students because they remind him of the type of student he was. How is his affinity for students like him impacting students of color?

### WHAT IS RACIAL CODE SWITCHING?

**Code switching is when a person of color consciously or unconsciously changes their speech, behaviors, or other traits in order to conform to / fit in with Eurocentric society.**

## REFLECT

- Where in your school, institution, or community do you see multiple racial identities being valued? What do those spaces look and feel like to you? Describe them.
- Who or what has had the most influence on your own racial identity development? How do you know?
- Who has agency and a voice in your community? How do you know this? How do you extend this access to all members of your community?

## RACIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**Describe a time when you felt as though you had to show up, act, or engage a particular way that differed from who you are culturally and racially, in order to get access or be accepted within a space.**

- **If this hasn't happened to you, describe why you think it hasn't.**

## ENGAGE

These can be group or individual activities. Encourage participants to share their findings with the whole group.

- A Day In The Life** [20 min.]  
Create a hypothetical “day in the life” journal entry on what a day in your life would look like if you were to become society’s definition/expectation of your racial identity.
- Engaging Multiple Perspectives** [1-3 hours]  
Seek out and attend an event in your community that exposes you to voices and cultures that are different from your own. Be mindful of how it feels to be an “outsider” and whether or not you find yourself changing your own speech or behaviors.

