

INEQUALITY IS

Hari Kondabolu on laughing at inequality

Onstage, comedian Hari Kondabolu can talk about things people don't like to talk about—like injustice and inequality.

A conversation about inequality in all its forms.

Transcript begins.

HARI KONDABOLU: It's hard to tell someone who's white that they have a privilege when they can also say, "But I grew up without access to money." Yes, and that's that particular discrimination that you face. Classism and racism, they go hand in hand, but they're not always together. You can have one advantage and have one disadvantage.

[Inequality is logo. A graphic black equal sign with an orange slash through it.
#InequalityIs. Hari Kondabolu, comedian. An Indian American with long curly black hair and thick black framed glasses.]

HARI KONDABOLU (performing standup): Hello, an absolute pleasure to be here. When people come up to me they usually say, "Hey man, where are you from?" And I tell them, "I'm from New York City." And then they're like, "No, I mean, where are you really from?" Which, of course, is code for, "No, I mean, why aren't you white?"

HARI KONDABOLU: People don't like talking about inequality, whether it's racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia. Go down the list. They don't like talking about it. And as a comedian, I'm given license to say what I want to say, because there's the promise of a laugh.

HARI KONDABOLU (performing standup): "Well, you're just saying that because you're a Muslim."

[crowd laughs]

HARI KONDABOLU: And I think when people do laugh, it's cathartic for them. And then for other people, it's a learning experience. While people are laughing at this, this is registering with them—"Maybe I should rethink my position."

HARI KONDABOLU (performing standup): Alright, thank you so much everyone.

[crowd applause]

HARI KONDABOLU: You end inequality by acknowledging your privileges. It's about saying what is unjust and being willing to potentially lose something for it. It's about supporting your friends who don't have as much as you do. That could mean money, connections, that could mean your racial privilege, your privilege as a man, your privilege as a straight cis person, whatever it is, it's about doing what you can to make it fair.

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End of transcript.