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Race Matters Because Racism Does

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The Tale of Two Kindergartners

Just imagine the excitement of the first day of “real school.” Both Michael and Jonathan are 5-year-old, inquisitive young scholars. They are elated that today marks their first day of school with the “big kids.” Both are up early to start their first day of kindergarten. You can feel the synergy in the homes of both boys, and you can sense their pure joy to meet all of their fellow classmates for the first day of official learning. While there are many similarities associated with this day for these two boys, there are distinct differences as well.

Meet Michael

Michael is a smart, active, and delightful 5-year-old prince. He is so thrilled to leave Grandma Lucy’s house to finally attend school. While Grandma Lucy always had scheduled activities such as walks to the park and cartoon time, Michael was happy to begin learning to read and write his name like his big sisters. Therefore, when it finally came time for the first day of kindergarten, Michael was beaming. At 7:00 am on the first day of school, Michael’s big sister Elizabeth had him up, dressed, and fed with one frosted strawberry Pop-Tart, his favorite. Cheryl, his mother, arrived home at 7:15 am. She was rushing in from the graveyard shift. There was no way Cheryl would miss taking Michael to his school for his first day of kindergarten. However, she was drained upon arriving home from work. She worked a double the day before, as raising three children as a single mother presents financial challenges. Accordingly, all additional funds were needed.

As Cheryl walked Michael to school, they discussed his hopes for the first day. Since times were tight, Cheryl could not obtain his school supplies for the first day, but they discussed all the items she

should purchase on Friday, payday. When they arrived at the school, Cheryl stopped by the office to pick up a free backpack with generic school supplies. The school previously communicated this process for parents/guardians, like Cheryl, who were unable to secure a book bag and supplies before the first day of school. When Michael entered the classroom, he was beaming. He met Ms. Tallador. She was a young and kind teacher. She took Michael's book bag and gave him a gigantic hug. Then Ms. Tallador began talking to Cheryl. Simultaneously, she asked Michael to look for his name on the desk. Four minutes later, Ms. Tallador noticed Michael in the back of the room, crying. She went over to ask why he was crying, and he said he could not find his name because he did not know exactly how to spell his name yet. Michael said Grandma Lucy told him he would learn how to read and write when he got to real school. Ms. Tallador bent down and gave Michael a heartfelt hug. Then, she whispered into Michael's ear, saying, "You will learn how to write your name and so much more this school year."

Meet Jonathan

Jonathan is an active, inquisitive, and kind 5-year-old future artist. The first day of kindergarten was finally here. Since 2 years of age, Jonathan had been waiting for this day. Although he had been in a Montessori Early Learning Center for three years, he knew that kindergarten was the real deal. It was formal school, and it was the time when he could begin attending school with his older brother, Martin. At 5:00 am Mary was up early preparing lunches for Jonathan, Martin, and Timothy, her husband. Soon after lunches were made, Mary started preparing breakfast. She was determined to prepare Jonathan's favorite blueberry pancakes, sausage, and a tall glass of apple juice. At 6:30 am, Mary began singing, "It is the first day of school, it is the first day of school," as she walked into Jonathan's room to wake him up. Jonathan popped up and yelled, "Mommy, it is finally here!" As the family ate breakfast at the dining room table, Timothy kissed the children and Mary and excused himself early. He had an early meeting at work but apologized for missing taking Jonathan to the first day of kindergarten. However, he promised to pick him up after school. As Timothy left, Mary promised to take tons of pictures throughout the day as she already signed up to be a room parent. Therefore, she would be present for the entire day, helping the teacher, supervising the café during all three lunch shifts,

and supporting the librarian in the afternoon. Mary and the boys left the house around 8:15 am. The boys' elementary school was not in the neighborhood; their special admit elementary school was a 30-minute drive from their house.

Upon arrival at school, Jonathan and Martin scurried to their classrooms, as the school held several pre-first day events such as an ice cream social, a mix and mingle, and a school carnival. For each event, students were able to meet their teacher and classmates, visit their classrooms, and tour the school. Therefore, Jonathan already knew exactly where to go. Notwithstanding Jonathan's comfort level, he was stopped by three adults to make sure he did not need assistance. Upon arrival at the classroom, Jonathan placed his items in his locker. He immediately grabbed his just-right reading book from the class library and joined his friends on the rug near the "read and chill" center. Jonathan's teacher, Ms. Battlefield, had already screened students, and Jonathan was pre-determined to be in the highest reading group. His group actually went into one of the first-grade classrooms for reading class.

We are almost one quarter into the 21st century, yet so many of our youngest learners have starkly different experiences. Here, we have two children, Michael and Jonathan, who live in the same city, are the same age, and are in the same grade, yet they arrive at kindergarten with two uniquely different sets of lived experiences and school expectations. Michael, a White American student, lives on the west side of town. His mother, Cheryl, is a single parent. She is determined to raise her three children well on her annual salary of \$24,000. Graduating top of her high school class, Cheryl lives with her mother, Lucy, who serves as the core of her support system. Jonathan, a Black American, lives downtown with both of his parents and his brother. Mary, Jonathan's mother, is a stay-at-home mother. Mary and Timothy decided that Mary would quit her job as an accountant to stay at home with the children. Notwithstanding this family decision, their annual household income is still over \$125,000.

In "The Tale of Two Kindergartners," there is a layered texture associated with each student. This texture accounts for the wide variance in experiences shared among and between many of America's public school students. For example, Michael did not have any formal early learning experience, whereas Jonathan attended a Montessori Early

Learning Center. Although there are some personal non-financial reasons many elect not to expose their children to a formal learning experience, many simply cannot afford this often costly expense. Here, Michael was not afforded any previous introductions to his new elementary school, yet Jonathan was exposed to several summer engagement activities. Understanding context and routines are two vital components for students to connect to and relate to learning experiences. Additionally, Michael's parent worked long hours, requiring him to spend a significant amount of time with his loving grandmother and helpful older sister. On the other hand, Jonathan had two parents, and one parent was a college-educated stay-at-home parent. Although Michael was White and Jonathan was Black, you might be tempted, at first glance, to describe Michael and Jonathan's experiences based on their socio-economic/class status. Before jumping to that conclusion, consider a new study from Stanford, Harvard, and U.S. Census Bureau economists that states that inequalities, primarily between Black Americans and White Americans, cannot be explained by socio-economic status/class (Chetty et al., 2018). Although discussing outcomes in terms of socio-economic status/class is more comfortable for many, we must challenge ourselves to be uncomfortable and truly contend with what report after report and statistic after statistic reveal. Race, unfortunately, is a keen predictor of a student's likelihood to read by third grade, graduate from high school, and avoid adverse interactions with the criminal justice system (Aud et al., 2010; Carson, 2015; Neill et al., 2014). What we know is this:

- Despite Jonathan having a parent available all day to support him,
- Despite Jonathan's parents being financially stable,
- Despite Jonathan's parents being college-educated, and
- Despite Jonathan having the benefit of two in-home parents available to support and love him,

Jonathan is three times less likely than Michael to be reading proficiently in the fourth grade (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014). Jonathan will not be treated by society in the same way as Michael. Jonathan will not have the same opportunities, and he will not be afforded access to high-quality education in schools that see his Blackness as an asset instead of a deficit.

When you sit with this information for a moment, you might, like us, become deeply troubled. The sad and the indisputable reality is race matters only because racism does. The issue of Jonathan and Michael's respective races would be inconsequential if they weren't about to enter a system that was intentionally designed to favor White individuals (irrespective of socio-economic status) over their Black counterparts. Even knowing "The Tale of Two Kindergartners," some Americans will still ponder these questions: Why must we dwell upon racism if we are finally living in a post-racial society? Haven't we progressed beyond that as a nation? The two-term presidency of Barack Obama, the first African American president of these United States of America, is often advanced as proof of our post-racial society. While President Obama's tenure inspired many, it concurrently revealed an unprecedented increase in public and unambiguous anti-Black messages.

Through a close examination of America's history, evidence of the horrendous treatment of individuals based on race, gender, gender orientation, sexual orientation, sexual identity, immigration status, religion, and/or disability is well documented (Painter, 2010). However, the treatment of individuals based on race—through the institution of racism—has forever tarnished the legacy of America's founding fathers, coupled with the legacies of many subsequent local, state, and national leaders. Accordingly, to explain why race matters because racism does, we will use the experience of White and Black people in America to solidify our message. Using a historical account, we maintain that understanding the White/Black binary in exploring racism in America is essential to our efforts to cohere our collective humanity.

We Must Begin at the Beginning

Guyatt (2016) and Painter (2010) provide a provocative historical account of the treatment of Indigenous individuals, African enslaved individuals, and select voluntary and involuntary immigrants. This treatment was initiated, allowed and maintained through the system of racism. To that end, a review of American history documents how the socially constructed idea of racism permeates the thinking, being, and living of most (if not all) Americans (Wilkerson, 2020). We should pause and norm the idea that race, for us, is a social construction and not a biological reality. Our thinking is aligned to Wilkerson (2020). There are no

genes associated with race. Instead, race is a human classification system used to justify racism.

From the first documented Spanish settlement in the 1400s to the first documented English settlement in 1600s and then to this precise moment in history, how non-White settlers were treated served as a blueprint of how to advance racially involved and/or motivated political, economic, and social actions (Taylor & Foner, 2002).

Consider the following: The Declaration of Independence states, in relevant part,

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. (Jefferson, 1774)

Pause and Reflect

Consider how a nation could be created without regard for those who were present and occupied the land first.

Consider how a nation could be created without regard for those who helped to build this nation, the enslaved Africans.

Consider what messages had to be communicated to justify such actions.

Although the preceding excerpt reads “all men,” the reality is, at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Africans were enslaved. This race-based enslavement was supported by the ideology that the Black/African enslaved individuals were “less than” their White counterparts. This 1774 ideology perpetuated the system of institutional racism, a system that has endured over the course of centuries of American history and continues to this day. Further, 16 years later, the Nationalization Act of 1790, outlined criteria for granting citizenship in the United States of America (Hannah-Jones et al., 2019). The provisions for citizenship excluded

Indigenous individuals, enslaved individuals, free Black people/Africans, indentured servants, and all Asians. Only individuals who were “free White . . . and of good character” were eligible for citizenship (Coulson, 2015).

The Thirteenth Amendment, enacted in 1865, abolished slavery except as “as punishment for a crime” (Alexander, 2010). This was a *technical solution* (Heifetz et al., 2009) to address institutional racism, which at the time, exclusively impacted enslaved Africans. Our nation’s history reveals all too many instances in which such technical solutions didn’t pinpoint the root causes of the challenge. Typically, the flaws of technical solutions fall into two categories that often co-exist: (1) Those who benefit by sustaining the status quo often find “workarounds” that subvert the intent of the technical fix, and (2) such solutions are superficial in that they simply do not disrupt the systems (in this case, institutional racism) that are at heart of the problem.

The first such “workaround” can be traced back to the period following the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, a constitutional amendment that was designed to abolish slavery. Almost immediately after the federal legislation went into effect, multiple states instituted the Black Codes, the first manifestation of Jim Crow laws and a mechanism to restrict the freedoms of Black people/Africans (Alexander, 2010) and to compel them to work for low wages. Not only was race used legislatively, but it was also pronounced boldly through the judicial system, including the highest court in the land. Contemplate the rulings of the Supreme Court, of these United States of America, for example. In the landmark cases of *Dred Scott v. John F.A. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1857) and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), the judicial system was used to extend the race-based laws that legally solidified the hierarchy of individuals based on the socially constructed idea known as race. In the former case, the highest court ruled in a 7–2 decision that the U.S. Constitution was not intended to protect Black individuals (enslaved or free). In the latter case, the highest court ruled in a 7–1 decision that Black individuals were not entitled to interact in public spaces with White individuals and ultimately declared that separate but equal public accommodations were legal (Klarman, 2004). Although the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) eventually overturned the 1896 “separate but equal” doctrine, keep in mind that it took 68 years to overturn the *Plessy* decision and 114 years to overturn the *Scott*

decision, and the decision was still a technical solution in that the implementation of school desegregation didn't change the root cause of the problem, which was institutional racism.

Today, the mass incarceration of Black and Brown individuals closely resembles the impact of the Black Codes. This striking similarity is analyzed critically in Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* (Alexander, 2010). Once again, the technical solution of the Thirteenth Amendment was subverted by workarounds like the Black Codes/Jim Crow laws, higher rates of criminal prosecution for Black and Brown individuals, and mandatory sentencing requirements for crimes frequently associated with Black and Brown communities that have endured to the present day.

Although we've only presented a glimpse into the manner in which race and White supremacy have been woven into the fabric of our country's history, by now it should be clear that the social construction of race, as well as its subsequent use to solidify institutional racism, systems of oppression, and systems of privilege, have had a profound impact on all facets of American life. The most prominent display of why race matters can be realized by examining our nation's carefully constructed and intentionally designed public education and mass communication/media systems.

How Race Influenced the Development of Our Public School System

Monica, a Black female, sat down to have her exit interview with the 12th-grade counselor, Mrs. Green, who is Black. Mrs. Green told Monica that although she had successfully completed all of her high school requirements with honors, it was best that she look for a steady job or consider the military rather than college because after all "none of the kids from this neighborhood go to college because they mostly end up just working somewhere."

This brief, but all too common story—Black children being limited by the dominant narrative informing who they can or cannot be—is yet another powerful reminder of why race matters. Race matters because systemic racism continues to uphold laws, policies, and societal norms that pre-determine the value and visibility of Black people. Whether you are White or even Black, like Monica's 12th-grade counselor, the socialization of Whiteness reaches all. If you are not

conscious of this socialization, you will unconsciously, or even consciously, inflict the marginalization of others. To understand the gravity of the impact of the history of America and its direct influence on public education, we must first admit that the Black experience was poisoned by the direct and indirect results of slavery. Race matters when examining the public education system because once Black people were able to legally gain access to a free education, they were unwelcomed and purposefully disadvantaged. These disadvantages were not due to happenstance but were a by-product of a system of laws that directly hindered fair and equal access to a free education for Black people, thus upholding and sustaining systemic racism. In 1933, Carter G. Woodson stated that “to handicap a student as by teaching him that his Black face is a curse and that his struggle to change his condition is hopeless is the worst sort of lynching” (p. 8). When you combine the blatant disregard for the lives of Black people that has endured for hundreds of years with an educational system that consistently failed to create a safe psychological or physical space, the result is academic learning gaps and an overall sense of exclusion. The simple idea of changing the reality of the Black experience in public education requires nothing less than an abrupt and direct confrontation with and dismantling of systemic racism.

In the midst of our current “post-truth” era, we urge you to critically examine the historical and contemporary realities of the Black experience in public education. The facts are abundantly clear. After the 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, American schools were legally mandated to integrate. Consequentially, the court ruling was met with a massive amount of opposition. Over 20 years later, after some states blatantly attempted to ignore the court’s ruling, buses of Black people students had to be escorted to school by police escorts.

This type of psychological and physical warfare has only one goal, and that is to destroy the basic premise of education for the Black student. Black people were legally owed a free (meaning of no cost), public (provided by the government versus a private institution) education. For clarity, the previous statement means that all American children, regardless of race and/or socio-economic status, should be able to “leave school with skills that position them to compete fairly and productively in the nation’s democratic governance and occupational structure” (Rothstein, 2004, p. 1).

Pause and Reflect

Reflect on your educational experience, and racialize your experience as a student. What were your racial noticings?

Reflect on the curriculum that you were exposed to during your educational experience: Were the experiences of people of color acknowledged? If so, were their stories made visible from an inclusive standpoint, or did you have to infer?

Reflect on the overall subliminal messages you received during your educational experience. Did you feel like the education system was designed to promote your overall academic and psychological success? If not, why?

The educational journey of Black people in the context of systemic racism in this country is much like a qualified runner participating in a race for their psychological, emotional, academic, and physical freedom. Regardless of (or perhaps because of) their qualifications, they are forced to start 300 meters behind their White opponents. The 300-meter deficit could be defined through the lens of racism as continuous exposure to segregated schools, problematic curriculums that purposefully promote “race invisibility,” high teacher turnover that results in a lack of rigorous and innovative instruction, and the absence of high expectations for success. To confront and disrupt the systemic racism that upholds the ills of public education, we must examine its inception, continuous equity disparities, and how it is marketed in the media.

Race and Racism Shape the Media’s Message

A California teacher was placed on leave for a second time after allegedly telling students she wanted to “bring back slavery” and making other racist remarks. (DailyMail.com, 2019)

Black Alabama students and parents are speaking out after a student leaked a teacher group chat, calling one student the n-word and denigrating another’s intelligence. (Defender News Service, 2019)

A New York school district is being hit with a lawsuit over a racist slideshow allegedly created by a science teacher. WCBS-TV reports the slideshow featured a photo of four Black students on a class trip to the Bronx Zoo, and one of a gorilla, and the label “Monkey see, monkey do.” (CBS News, 2020)

These headlines are not fake news. Racism is consistently communicated through various media platforms. These stories are among the many shared through national media outlets. But, to further elaborate on the theme of this chapter, race matters in the media because racism matters and negatively impacts Black people daily. One might argue that these news stories expose the presence of racism in our schools, yet we must also remember that a Black person’s character, ability, and/or behavior is pre-determined based on socially fabricated indicators of difference rooted in White supremacy. The impact of racism through personal, structural, or systemic actions founded on a premise of predictions based on a person’s race is evidenced in our daily consumption of information from the media. If you are a Black or Brown student in an American school, you are likely to experience the impact of national media stories. Like the educators who were hired to serve them, Black and Brown students are not shielded from the influence of the media’s messages.

Pause and Reflect

Consider the last five news updates you watched.

- How was race used and/or disregarded in the framing of each of these stories?
- What words were used to describe the individuals in the stories?
- What conclusions were drawn?

As advocates of children, we appreciate the media bringing to awareness the injustices suffered by students. However, it is the same media that consistently provide messages steeped in racism, which does harm to the same students. There are some scholars, such as William Julius Wilson and Roland Fryer, who would argue

that if you are a Black person, today your life has less racism and discrimination. The national media stories captured earlier in this section do not support that Black students are experiencing a world with less racism and bigotry. The media's daily portrayal of Blackness perpetuates and profits from the disenfranchisement of Black people. The media's influence on the narrative of race and racism cannot be ignored, specifically its influence on teachers and how that subsequently impacts Black and Brown students.

The media's impact on ideas and values is not a new phenomenon. Historically, the media have influenced shared ideologies, biases, and how we negotiate our values. This historical influence has always been steeped in a narrative created by the dominant White culture. From its inception, the media's messages have been ingrained with racial prejudices, racial bias, and racial discrimination resulting in a legacy of racism. "Communities of color have been targeted and harmed by fake news and media manipulation since colonial times" (Torres, 2018). The White dominant culture controlled media and subsequently commanded the images portrayed of all Black people. With no ability to control the narrative, Black people struggled to represent their beliefs, identities, and stories accurately. For example, there was a propaganda poster from World War I that advertised the U.S. Army using an image of a menacing Black gorilla gripping a bloody club with one hand. In an attack stance, the Black gorilla stands with bloody hands while cupped in its arms appears to be a barely covered White woman in distress. The title of the poster, created by Harry R. Hopps in 1917, was "Destroy This Mad Brute." Fast-forward to 2008, when *Vogue* magazine's first Black male graces the cover. If you look at the "Destroy This Mad Brute" poster and the cover of the *Vogue* magazine, side by side, the image brings into question the message *Vogue* was attempting to communicate regarding the first time a Black man graced the cover of the popular magazine (<https://www.thefashionspot.com/runway-news/439187-controversial-vogue-covers-published/3/>). LeBron James seems to emulate the Black gorilla, who is seen as a brute or savage from the "Destroy This Mad Brute" predecessor. On the *Vogue* cover, the bloody club is replaced with a basketball, and the distressed White woman is substituted with super model Gisele Bündchen. Gisele's teal-colored dress is the same colored dress as the distressed White woman from "Destroy This Mad Brute." The visual perpetuates the negative imaging of Black athletes. It is also a reminder that it took 116 years for the

first Black man to be on the cover of *Vogue* in 2008. In a mainstream, world-renowned magazine, Black male beauty was not worthy of the front cover, and when it was acknowledged, it was compared to a Black gorilla, an animal. In this example of print media, the media's message is blatant, and instead of the platform being used to dismantle systems of oppression, the racist depiction attempts to legitimize the hostility and fear toward Black men.

As educators, we have a thirst for information, and the media provide an endless faucet of flowing information. What is the impact on students of color and teachers when they are bombarded with stories that demonstrate the marginalization and oppression experienced by Black and Brown people?

Malcolm X (n.d.) described the media's influence as "the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses." As we transcend 61 years to 2021, Malcolm X's quote seems timeless, especially if you are Black.

Ideas to Sit With

Being shot for having your hood up and walking home with Skittles

Having your death ruled a suicide when you are shot while handcuffed in the back of a police patrol car

Being 14 years old and choked to the point of urinating on yourself because of a look you gave police

During a pandemic, being profiled by police for being in a store with a mask covering your mouth and nose

Being perceived as King Kong, a brute, a savage

Being killed while sleeping in your bed

As an educator, the influence of the media's messages on you do not magically disappear when the school day begins. Just as the media can be used to generate profit, it can also be used to marginalize through a repeated constructed narrative. For Black students, the

media's influence of repeated racially constructed narratives can have an impact on their academic reality. In a research study conducted by Dixon (2017), representations of families by race were examined through television, print, and online. The findings revealed these constructed, distorted narratives for Black families (Dixon, 2017):

- More Black families live in poverty than White families.
- Black people utilize public government assistance because of laziness, drug dependency, or dysfunction.
- Black fathers are not present in the lives of their children.
- Black single mothers make bad decisions related to relationships.
- Black families are associated with crime.
- Black families are not stable.

Information communicated through the media can impact how people construct social identities and realities for others outside of their race group. When people have little knowledge, background, or experience related to race, the messages delivered by the media become their framework for making meaning of the world. This framework is especially dangerous when the information being shared enhances the systemic subjugation of Black and Brown people. These audiences rely on the media to shape their reality and in the absence of a counternarrative, the distortions of White dominant messaging become that reality (Happer & Philo, 2013). How might a distorted narrative of Black families impact the treatment of Black students?

Research supports the correlation between repeated negative stereotypes and Black people in the media. These negative stereotypes often highlight deficit attitudes and beliefs about intelligence, values, family structures, criminality, socio-economic status, and the ability of Black people to achieve (e.g., Dixon, 2007; Mastro & Kopacz, 2006; Tan et al., 2000). In 2011, research conducted by the Opportunity Agenda provided specific data associated with the impact of negative mass media on Black males. The study indicated a “troubling link between media portrayals and lowered life chances for Black males” (p. 13). Donaldson (2015) further analyzed the data and added clarity to our understanding of the media's impact on the lives of Black males.

Given this dynamic, students of color internalize these negative messages from media about the diminished potential of Black boys, and this contributes to *actual* diminished potential—a self-fulfilling prophecy. Consequently, Black boys who may in fact have great potential internalize the negative messaging to the point they follow the “script.” The effect, if not addressed, manifests not only in lower academic achievement but future implications of denied jobs, declined loans, and a continued pervasive antagonism toward Black boys, who eventually become Black men. All the more reason that we must cultivate an understanding of the power dynamic in our collective effort to dismantle systems and structures that were never designed for the benefit of Black and Brown students.

Racism is real. It is a daily exhausting experience for people of color. This chapter sets the stage for how racism through institutionalized policies and practices is deeply rooted in our history, in our education systems, and through how we communicate. The complexities of racism and its impact on the outcomes for people of color require an approach just as textured to address those complexities. In subsequent chapters, you will develop an understanding of the conscious anti-racist engendering (CARE) framework. The CARE framework is a thoughtful systemic approach to uproot and advance the capacity to engage in the work of dismantling racism with the goal of collectively disrupting systems of oppression.

What Nobody Talks About

The stories told to us by our community, public and private institutions, the media, and history reinforce the complex system of racism. These stories were created by design and must be deconstructed with the same sense of intentionality.

Your Lived Experience

Your lived experiences inform your worldview.

- How have your lived experiences impacted your perspective of racism in America?

- Do you readily see and/or experience issues of racism in your daily lived experience? If your answer is yes, how do you respond to these observations/experiences? If your answer is no, why do you believe this is the case?

Chapter Reflection

- How does “The Tale of Two Kindergartners” speak to what you know about inequalities in our nation’s school communities?
- In terms of student outcomes, are you challenged by the idea that when race and class intersect, race typically serves as the driving factor? Reflect on your thinking.
- In the past, have you experienced any events that required you to reflect upon racial dynamics of all those involved in a particular situation?
- What happened that promoted you to notice the racial dynamics?
- When was the last time you noticed a racial inequity in your classroom, school, and/or workplace? How did you address the racial inequity?
- Do you recall a time when you tapped into racial bias to inform your decision making? What can you do differently to be more self-aware in the future?
- What systemic racist practices have you observed during your time as a student or educator?
- Considering the idea that the public school system was not designed for the academic or psychological advancement of Black students, how can you use your positional power to disrupt on their behalf?