

THE SPIRAL

OF INJUSTICE

BORN BLACK



Wassmuth

**CENTER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**

Home of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial

CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| INTRODUCTION | “Reminded Who We Are” 6 Lemuel W. Watson, Ph.D. and B. Grant Hayes, Ph.D. |
| LANGUAGE | “I Am a Black Man” 9 by Wes Spencer |
| AVOIDANCE | “Black, Like Me” 19 by Melanie Bullock-Harris |
| DISCRIMINATION | “To Be Black” 26 by Carlisle Greaves |
| VIOLENCE | “Black America Is So Tired” 30 by Elizabeth Ogunwo |
| ELIMINATION | “Black Lives Matter” 36 by Paul-Robert Pryce |
| CONCLUSION | “I Swear Never to Be Silent Again” 43 by Dan Prinzing, Ph.D. |

SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

"the other"

LANGUAGE

AVOIDANCE

DISCRIMINATION

VIOLENCE

ELIMINATION

Language

targeting "the other" through language, word choice, connotation, and imagery (name calling, ridicule, telling jokes, belittling, accepting and promoting stereotyping, etc.)

Avoidance

excluding "the other" through conscious or unconscious treatment that denies participation, limits and/or restricts access (social avoidance, scapegoating, portrayal and non-portrayal of marginalized communities)

Discrimination

denying and disadvantaging "the other" through direct and non-direct acts based on class, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, or religious preference (employment and/or educational opportunities, workplace and housing)

Violence

intimidating or harming "the other" through physical acts (threats, assault, desecration, stalking, harassment, arson, murder, terrorism)

Elimination

eradicating "the other" through deliberate and/or systemic destruction of life and/or liberty (CULTURAL: customs and traditions, language, music, art, history, science, political participation; BEHAVIORAL: segregation, isolation, relocation, resettlement, removal; PHYSICAL: murder, genocide)

"The Other"

an individual who is perceived by the group as not belonging, as being different in some fundamental way; often targeted because of association with a group based on class, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, or religious preference



Wassmuth
CENTER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS
HOME OF THE STATES AND TERRITORY HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR

Copyright © 2016 by Wassmuth Center for Human Rights.
All Rights Reserved.



THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

Inscribed in the stone of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial, Mahatma Gandhi reminds us to “Make injustice visible.” Models used to illustrate a pattern or progression of injustice – making it visible - assist in educating for and about social justice.

The **Spiral of Injustice** is a model created by the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights to illustrate the devolution of humanity whether discussing the Holocaust, other genocides, or contemporary acts of injustice. The model suggests that the “stages” of injustice (language, avoidance, discrimination, violence, and elimination) are in motion and employed as weapons targeting “the other.”

“The other” is defined as an individual who is perceived by the group as not belonging, as being different in some fundamental way; often targeted because of association with a group based on class, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, nationality or religious preference.



When I'm born I'm black, when I grow up I'm black, when I'm in the sun I'm black, when I'm sick I'm black, when I die I'm black, and you... when you're born you're pink, when you grow up you're white, when you're cold you're blue, when you're sick you're blue, when you die you're green and you dare call me colored.

Oglala Lakota



“Reminded Who We Are”

Lemuel W. Watson, Ph.D. and
B. Grant Hayes, Ph.D.

OUR LIVES, PERSPECTIVES, HOPES, AND DREAMS ARE influenced by our race and place. However, race is not the true determinant of our future or what we were put here to be or do. Race is a social construct and its meaning in the lives of individuals varies. Although there is a definition of race, there is not one universal practical way that one lives or defines his or her individual way of being in a race that would make a lived experience monolithic.

The same can be said of place. The assumptions that are made about one's place of origin are powerful. Humans are conditioned to assume identities and to make assumptions about their values and identities based on what they know about their places of origin and how those beginnings situate within a more world view.

Growing up Black in the rural South, the context of family was extremely influential on our development and expectations of responsibility to self, family, community, and world. The ability to interact with multiple generations of family members gave one a sense of identity and belonging

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

that was extremely important for the developmental years. Just sitting at the feet of our elders conveyed a family structure that honored and simply respected them and trusted what they said to be of value. Looking at their hands and their faces penetrated our consciousness of the fact that their ordinary existence was proof enough to honor their extraordinary lives and spirits.

We are reminded each day of who we are and of our elders' love for us by the fact that they took the time not only to be with us but to involve us in the daily simple tasks of life so that we could bring our unique selves into being -- from getting water out of the country well; to picking beans from the garden; to helping gather wood for the stove; to making biscuits for dinner. We were never judged for being ourselves or thinking out of the box to solve simple everyday problems.

Because we were born and raised in the 60s and came of age in the 70s and 80s, we have experienced some of the most transitional and powerful discoveries in history that affect how we are in the world. We have always lived in an integrated world. We experienced classrooms with both Black and White teachers and Black and White classmates whose social economic status was like our own. We watched men go off to work, pray in church, take part in building our communities. We watched mothers who stayed home while others headed off to work in textile mills, in hospitals as nurses, or in the field for seasonal work. Regardless, there was the expectation that you would get an education and be the best you that "you" could be for yourself and community. Make a difference in the world; put God first; do unto others as you would have them do unto you; and know that you are loved. These were the messages that sustained us through our adolescence and young adulthood.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

Our ways of knowing and being in this world are not rooted in trying to prove our “Blackness”, “masculinity” or “southernness” to anyone or any group, Black or White. We take the stance that we are blessed and are able to achieve our dreams because we believe in the unseen and because we were told we could by people who first informed and showed us who we were. We continue to penetrate the consciousness of all with the message from Kathryn Stockett, author of *The Help* – “You is kind. You is smart. You is important.”

We internalized this message.



LEMUEL W. WATSON is Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs and Provost Professor and Senior Scientist at the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University.

B. GRANT HAYES is Acting Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Distinguished Professor at East Carolina University.

“I Am a Black Man”

by Wes Spencer

LANGUAGE: targeting “the other” through language, word choice, connotation, and imagery (name-calling, ridiculing, joke-telling, belittling, accepting, and promoting stereotypes, etc.)

LANGUAGE FRAMES HOW WE INTERACT WITH THE WORLD. EVER perform a self-examination to assess your own use of words? Our perceptions through language are literally embedded within the interface of most every human interaction.

Let us begin with how two specific words have framed our social structure, ultimately breeding the psychological states that perpetuate the mental psychosis of race, racist ideology, and racist behavior. Those two words are “Black” and “White.”

The term “Black” is a function of language, rich with layers of history and deeply rooted perceptual associations. At and before the founding of the United States, its use was intended to create a perpetual “other.” “White” as a function of language was intended to create a perpetual “insider.” Although we have moved beyond the initial intended insidiousness of the

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

application of those terms to qualify humanness (or not), many of their historical associations and the accompanying propaganda needed to warp belief in those falsehoods are still present today.

Throughout my personal journey, I always knew that something about the labels “Black” and “White” was not real.

Early on, it occurred that these labels are a superficial construct that leads people to endow one another with qualities and behavior that may, or may not, be true. For some, the influence of the associations attached to the labels “Black” or “White” are so strong that they “perform” an expectation of the label (ex: Black people do *x* things...White people do *y* things... etc.). Such individuals perceive themselves only through that socially constructed paradigm. Although some label associations are based on real facts, patterns, and history, many of those facts feed into narratives that perpetuate the misperceptions. Misperceptions often spread inequities and injustices. This leads people, who rely too heavily on the labels as their primary source of identity, into living warped versions of a reality that are disconnected from universal human truth.

Growing up, I quickly realized that some people saw themselves as either “Black” or “White.” In Texas, where I spent the first years of childhood, people were “Black,” “White,” “Red” (Indigenous), or “Yellow” (Asian). Individuals who used those labels conclusively were often content with accepting whatever they had learned without questioning the origins of the stereotypes. Many adults and children never thought of themselves nor their human experience as anything beyond the labels. Missing was the deep self-reflective examination of one’s identity as a being before the label, separate from the label. On some level, it seemed they had deep

“holes” in their psyches that handicapped their development in ways I could not yet comprehend.

Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think. (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

How did I learn to process the world differently? Mostly, it was instilled through family upbringing. But I remember knowing intrinsically that whatever I am as a being, the terms “Black/White” did not fully encapsulate my identity. They were simply descriptive “slices of a pie” made of the many complex layers that form an entire identity. “Black” or “White” were *a part of* the identity but were not *the* identity.

How did I know that the labels were a *part of the* identity, not *the* identity? Because depending on my environment and presentation of Self to the outside world, people shifted their perceptions of where I fit into a paradigm of Black/White. Shifting so easily led me to believe that the labels were not fixed; they were artificial categories that attempted to fit the complex, and often impalpable, human experience into a well-defined box.

While living in Texas, my family encountered some Black people who did not consider us “Black” for various reasons: the way we talked, a few of our physical features, how we dressed, our interests, etc. To them, the label “Black” was determined by superficial characteristics, less a function of genetics or how we identified. They based their perceptions on what they had *learned* “Black” to be. Ironically, we also encountered racism from some “White” people who *did* consider us “Black” for various superficial

reasons. I thought, “How can we be both *not* Black *and* Black at the same time?”

Eventually, because of my father’s work as an officer for the three branches of the military, we moved and experienced the greater world -- environments in which we encountered people of different and international backgrounds. In most of these settings, race never arose as the primary source of identity. The places in which it *did* usually presented challenges. For example, in one city, my mother recounted conversations with neighbors who did not realize that we were Black. They were shocked and embarrassed by the comments they had made about Black people when my mother revealed that we were a Black family. To be fair, in my family I personally have more physical ethno-signifiers (complexion, hair texture/color, eye color) of “Blackness” than my parents and siblings; people’s confusion about our family identity was understandable. Their confusion revealed the possibility of huge variation in genetic expression (DNA) vs. phenotypic expression (how one looks).

As a teenager, I attended an International Baccalaureate magnet high school for the “gifted.” My White best friend once shared his negative thoughts on Black women. When I reminded him that “I am Black and that my sisters and mother are Black women,” his response was “Oh, I wasn’t talking about you all. You know what I mean. I know you’re Black, but you all aren’t *really* Black.” That’s when it occurred that no matter the shade of brownness of my skin, nor the complex and cloud-like density of my curly black hair, my friend did not consider me culturally Black because of how I spoke and through my presentation of Self. For him, Black was an “other” that was defined not only by physical characteristics, but also by cultural expression. I noted how he described Black women’s bodies and

features. To him, because my sisters and mother *did not align* with what he *defined* as “Black,” he did not consider them Black. Peculiarly, the physical characteristics he associated with “Blackness” were not exclusive to Black women; many of those traits could be seen expressed in all women. The associations created a theory in his mind in which there were categories that also included physical traits -- traits he ignored in some and noticed in others.

My friend was measuring elements of his external environment in relation to a pre-constructed mental framework...whether or not the alignments to that framework were true. He was not interacting with the truth of the moment in real time. In fact, he actively denied the truth and its indication that his definition of “Black” was incorrect. The truth of his real experience (the fact that my family identified as Black) contradicted the pre-constructed mental perceptions of race. My friend was psychologically “tied” to that specific mental construction of race so devotedly, he was willing to reject the experienced truth in service of the superficial Black/White paradigm he had internalized. I wondered, “Why was he so ‘tied’ to that narrative? What purpose did the delusion serve?”

The attempt to fit human beings into a superficial mindset in such a way was partially due to the stage of our psychological development. Teenagers often cling to learned frameworks of identity to give a semblance of stability as they try to understand themselves in the context of the world around them; their minds are not ready to handle greater understandings. As the mind continues to healthily develop, people eventually begin to see themselves beyond learned social constructs. My friend later dated and fell in love with many Black and Brown women throughout early adulthood. He was able to grow.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

Although the labels are superficial, historical facts have led to label associations and stereotypes. The by-products of specific historical practices can be seen through current social inequities, leading some people to believe the labels *are* true...that there *are* definitive differences among races. This is where language is crucial.

The people who do this thing, who practice racism, are bereft. There is something distorted about the psyche. It's a huge waste and it's a corruption and a distortion. (Toni Morrison)

Humans are one species; we are interrelated beings with a shared origin. We each possess much more shared biology than we do differences; that biological, philosophical, historical, spiritual, and universal truth is undeniable. We are not “Black,” “White,” “Red,” “Yellow,” “Brown,” etc., in any definitive way that measures our abilities. Sure, we are a species with variations in our physical expressions, but that is the extent to which our “colors” can indicate anything. Our DNA contains genetic diversity that dates back tens of thousands of years; “how we look” can betray the complexity of that glaring truth. How we look only shares a *possible* narrative within two or three generations. Fixating on these most fleeting characteristics of identity discounts hundreds of years of genetic evolution and development. Therefore, “race” determined through “color” as the basis for identity leads to mischaracterizations and potential inhumanity.

Historically, as well as today, there have been egregious attempts to deny that universal humanity is present in *every* individual. We continue to live with some of the by-products of incredulous human rights violations. Characteristic of genocides, these ideas were able to infiltrate the social structure through language, the tool that shapes how people perceive one another. In Germany, books were written that demonized the Jewish

people. Charts and “science” were created to support the lies. In America, Whites did the same with Blacks and other people of color. Manufactured falsehoods in books, science, entertainment, religious texts, charts, and essays detailed the differences among races.

Today, emphasis on labels as absolute identity are the roots of “othering” -- of racism, sexism, classicism, homophobia, gender discrimination, religious discrimination, oppression, *and* repression. I wonder, *Why do many people rely so totally on pre-constructed narratives to shape their behavior?*

Language facilitates an indoctrination into Black/White narratives largely absent in crucial chapters of American history. Accounts warped to glorify terrorism and couched in patriotic fervor, deny universal human truths. These slanted narratives discount the heinous, criminal treatment of at least 60 million Black lives who were the catalysts for the European, North American, Caribbean, and South American economies. These narratives have erased the explanations of the social/ cultural/ educational/ psychological/ economic remnants of the trauma visible today. The economic standard we now “enjoy” came at immeasurable and unpardonable expense.

Objectively, warping the narratives in these severe ways could be perceived as a pathological psychosis with ill intent. The cognitive dissonance it takes to actively deny historical truth in such a way can only be described as a deeply rooted deficiency, a hole in the psyche that allows for rationalizing what is irrational -- the assault on human life (men, women, and children) in some of the most unimaginable ways in the pretense that it was heroic. A simple investigation into archives of the heinous practices towards the persecuted peoples (well into the 20th century) reveals a perpetrator state-of-mind easily characterized as perverse, criminal, and psychotic.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

In a context of Black/White labels, “White” has been used as a tool to qualify/disqualify members of the human species resulting in crimes against humanity.

This understanding is not an attack on “Whiteness” nor “white” as a physical descriptor. It is separate from a label that describes cultures which also contain many “white” ethnicities such as Scottish, Irish, German, etc., which are all separate cultures steeped in differences beyond complexion. This distinction concerns the application of “White” itself as a socio-psychological tool of language which gives some the mistaken belief that they have permission to take life from, or attempt to dehumanize, members of our own species. Placed in the proper historical context, “White,” as possessing any meaning beyond a physical description, points to something much more insidious, directly connected to extreme obstructions. The abject denial of this truth, and the responsibility that comes with that understanding, is often at the root of the current dissonance.

The problem with the Black/White paradigm is that, by default, the social-structural relationship inside peoples’ minds is a “conflict of opposites.” People structure their identities in relation to what they are “not,” forcing an identity to be completely dependent upon its relation to “the other.” For the White person to be “White,” there must exist an imagined “Black” person attributed with opposite characteristics. This codependent structure leaves little incentive to develop psychologically beyond it and is dehumanizing to both, seducing the populous into adversarial mindsets that have no place in reality. It *centers* on difference. Racism places a disproportionate amount of weight on the label as the primary way of understanding the individual, not as an *aspect* of the individual(s). Developing an identity

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

that honors and goes beyond a spoon-fed narrative built around superficial characteristics takes self-reflection, working through fear of the unknown. Who has the courage to do that? To be a *real* hero?

Language alone protects us from the scariness of things with no names. Language alone is meditation. (Toni Morrison, 1993)

Do not misunderstand my observations on the superficiality of race. I am a Black man. I honor people of all backgrounds and expressions. Regardless of the multiple ethnicities present in my genetics, I identify as a Black man. In fact, there is a stronger case for me to identify with and embrace my Blackness. Why? To honor and reclaim the humanity that was assaulted due to hundreds of years of persecution through application of the label “Black.”

Embracing Blackness honors the human resilience born despite crimes against humanity, the by-products of which we are still resolving today. Language can trap your mind, but it can also be the tool to free it. Black means freedom.

I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence. (Frederick Douglass)



WES SPENCER is a classically trained actor, scriptwriter, and humanitarian currently residing in New York City, New York.

References

Frederick Douglass. *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 1845.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. *Strength to Love*, 1963.

Toni Morrison. “Nobel Lecture” December 7, 1993.

Toni Morrison. “Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am” Documentary, *Magnolia Pictures*, 2019.

“Black, Like Me”

by Melanie Bullock-Harris

AVOIDANCE: excluding “the other” through conscious or unconscious treatment that denies participation, limits and/or restricts access (social avoidance, scapegoating, portrayal, and non-portrayal of marginalized communities)

I SAT IN A RETREAT WITH COLLEAGUES AND, TO OPEN OUR TIME together, we were given the prompt: “What was one of your first memories of being in school?” Many talked about the joys of learning how to read or even of recess, filled with outdoor adventures including tag, swings, or a game of four-square. But for me, the first memory that came to mind was my very first day of kindergarten. I grew up in a predominantly White town and went to predominantly White schools for most of my life. I remember that day well and how I felt. My parents dropped me off and said their farewells. Our teacher started class with introductions and a tour of the classroom. Then the time came for recess and kids started finding others with whom they wanted to play. I walked over to a group I assumed were friendly girls and was told, “We can’t play with you or be your friend because you are Black.” Not knowing what to say or how to respond, I walked away.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

My parents instilled values in my brother and me that made us feel special. They taught us early about Blackness, not only in their words, but in the music we listened to, the books they read to us, and the art that adorned our house. My family always shared their joys of being Black and taught us with great pride the richness of who we were. They were intentional about helping us recognize that not everyone would understand us and that there would be people and other kids our age who did not look like us. I overheard conversations my parents had about their days that included their strategy on navigating spaces with others who were different. Yet my five-year-old self, at that moment when rejected by the group during recess, experienced feelings of self-doubt and believed that maybe I did something wrong. I felt like I didn't belong and that being different wasn't as great as my parents shared that it could be. At that moment, I felt like "the other."

Many researchers have studied how and at what age children perceive difference and race. However, there are those who believe children don't see or understand race, that children are color blind. The research of Louis Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards in their work *Learning About Racial Identity and Fairness* indicates that children as young as three begin to understand differences including features like skin color. We are living in a time of increased protest regarding racial injustice and police brutality. As there is an increased need for our society to engage in conversations about race, racism, and racial injustice, families also have an opportunity and a responsibility to address these topics with children at early ages as well, particularly families from the majority, privileged backgrounds.

Dr. Erin Winkler, professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and author of *Learning Race, Learning Place* shares how children learn about race. She suggests that their learning is developed not only by their parents but also from their environment such as media and other societal factors. Winkler states, “What we need to do is focus on the kids as active learners and agents, fielding and interpreting messages they are getting from all over – parents, teachers, media messages, and just what they see in the world.” From conversations to actions, parents can take part in helping their children engage with others who are different from themselves in a healthy and positive way.

The avoidance that I encountered in kindergarten would continue throughout my years in elementary, middle, and high school. Avoidance showed up in layers for me. It showed up in the ways we were taught that the history of Blackness begins and ends with Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., while failing to mention the stories of Claudette Colvin and Bayard Rustin. It showed up in the lack of Black authors of assigned books in my English and literature classes. I met avoidance in the suggested class of home economics rather than the computer science and technology class in which I was interested. It also showed up at times when a teacher corrected the way I pronounced words, when I was required to wear the pink “flesh” tone tights as a dance student, and in the lack of Black teachers in the schools I attended. Beyond my lived experience, avoidance also shows up in how Black students are more likely to be suspended or expelled than White students, less likely to be identified as gifted students, or criticized and sometimes punished for wearing their hair in a style that reflects their Black identity.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

Like parents and families, educators too have an opportunity to turn avoidance into engagement that addresses and confronts racial injustice and racism. It may begin with taking the time to engage in learning and critical dialogue with others around anti-racism. By rethinking the approach to classroom content, educators can reframe their curriculum and class materials to make it more inclusive and representative of all students. They can understand and question their own biases and how they are revealed in the classroom and then identify best practices to support marginalized students.

At home, my parents did an incredible job of constantly helping my brother and me understand who we were as Black people. But when I left home to go out into the world, I was met with this constant dissonance that I had to do my best to fit in. I encountered avoidance by those who would not accept me for who I was or who tried to label me as “the other.” I’ve walked in the footsteps of that label, perceived as not belonging.

I attended Spelman College, a historically Black college / university (HBCU), home to what I call “Black Girl Magic.” Spelman College, founded in 1881, is a private, liberal arts college with a history of educating women, the majority of whom are Black women. I felt safe; I felt comforted. I finally felt that I was in a place where I belonged ... and it felt so good. Former President Dr. Beverly Tatum shares that Spelman is a place where she witnessed “the transformational power of an affirming educational environment on the lives of generations of Black women.” We celebrated Blackness each day as if Blackness had a birthday. My professors were Black, and the administrators looked like me. Our textbooks and readings told the stories of Black kings and queens, Black legends, and history makers that somehow were omitted from the schoolbooks, social studies,

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

and history classes. I could walk down the halls of my academic buildings, my residence hall, and administrative offices and see myself reflected in the people and the art displayed. And anytime we had special guests arrive on campus, their stories sounded like my own. I felt safe in a place where I was free to be me, and free from those who had avoided seeing me.

However, after leaving this safe space, I realized that the world was not quite like the Black mecca I once was in. I entered graduate school and then the working world having to readjust my thinking about how I show up in different spaces. I knew I had a great educational background, incredible experiences, and a skill set that could adapt to any working environment. Yet, I was still met with challenges.

Often at work, I would be one of the few Black women on the team. I had colleagues who didn't trust my work or devalued ideas and perspectives that I brought to the table. And that's presuming, that I had even been invited to the table. I learned how to code-switch and channel my younger self – to show up and be viewed in an “acceptable” way. I've been told that I had to work extra hard and did not have any room to make mistakes because not only was I representing myself in spaces, but also those who looked like me. I did my best to make others feel comfortable around me, chuckled at jokes that raised red flags, and barely spoke out about conditions that needed to be changed. I wasn't invited to after-work socials and was left out of coffee chats and lunch dates. In roles that I did receive or positions I held, many people believed that it was only because of a diversity card being drawn, selected strictly based on my race, and doubted my qualifications to obtain the job and do the work. I walked this fine line between confrontation and conflict avoidance. Imposter syndrome was real and policing myself became a common practice. I

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

would overthink how to wear my hair, the words I chose to say, and if my choice of clothes were representative of who I was. I cared about what people thought way too much. I wanted acceptance not avoidance.

Then there came a point where I realized that I didn't deserve that. In the Ted Talk by Dena Simmons "How Students of Color Confront Impostor Syndrome," she stated, "There is emotional damage done when young people can't be themselves, when they are forced to edit who they are in order to be acceptable. It's a kind of violence." I felt the weight of that statement. I did not want that for myself nor others. My career is in higher education and I work with college adult-aged students. I needed to show up for myself so that my students, specifically Black women, could learn how to show up for themselves. For my non-Black students, I needed them to see and experience my full authentic born Black self to challenge their thinking and help them understand ways to circumvent "avoidance" -- to understand how they exclude "the other" through their conscious or unconscious actions.

Now, this Black woman consciously takes up space and enjoys it. I also make it my work to help others learn how to navigate different spaces to do the same. When met with those whose treatment presents avoidance, denies my participation, or restricts me access, I have learned to ask questions, to ask them why or why not. I have learned to challenge other's thinking to include voices and perspectives that may be missing. And instead of asking for a seat at the table, I have learned that it may be time to start building my own because those tables I thought I wanted to be invited to were created around institutionalized, systemic, and problematic structures that are no longer effective and no longer serve us.

In the words of James Baldwin, “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”



MELANIE BULLOCK-HARRIS is a higher education director at a university Leadership Center, committed to developing students who will in turn transform their organizations, their campus, their communities, and their world.

References

Derman-Sparks, Louise. Edwards, Julie Olsen. “Anti-bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves.” Washington, DC: National Association for The Education of Young Children, 2010.

Nittle, Nadra Kareem. “How Racism Affects Minority Students in Public Schools.” ThoughtCo, Aug. 25, 2020, [thoughtco.com/how-racism-affects-public-school-minorities-4025361](https://www.thoughtco.com/how-racism-affects-public-school-minorities-4025361).

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations About Race*. New York: BasicBooks, 1997.

Simmons, Dena. “Transcript of ‘How Students of Color Confront Impostor Syndrome.’” *TED*, 2016, www.ted.com/talks/dena_simmons_how_students_of_color_confront_impostor_syndrome/transcript.

Winkler, Erin N. *Learning Race, Learning Place: Shaping Identities and Ideas in Childhood*. Rutgers University Press, 2012.

DISCRIMINATION

“To Be Black”

by Carlisle Greaves

DISCRIMINATION: denying and disadvantaging “the other” through direct and non-direct acts based on class, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, or religious preference (employment and/or educational opportunities, workplace, and housing)

WHEN MOST THINK OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, THEY THINK about someone who is blatant, ignorant, loud, and bull-headed, purposefully and intentionally making someone feel unwelcome or trying to cause harm. While this overt sense of racism is prevalent throughout recent history, my personal experience has shown a different form of racial discrimination that is layered and subtle. Often, people do not realize that they are being racist because they are acting out cultural norms that seem right in each situation. This, however, does not consider how differences in culture can cause others to understand or see these circumstances differently. They may take a different approach for meeting the same goals or standards and a different approach for resolving a conflict. Inevitably, one approach may be seen as the most accurate or the “right way,” while other approaches are seen as less evolved or less intelligent.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

One of my personal experiences with this clash came from my career as a professional singer. I was in an all-male singing group, the only Black member of the group at the time. For several years, I was not given the opportunity to solo during the performances. It became clear that when I had the occasion to solo, audiences enjoyed my singing voice and questioned why I was not soloing more often. While this did not mean that I was a better singer than my counterparts in the group or that my voice was preferred, it did suggest that my style was well-received and that there was a demand for my voice to be heard more often. However, it was not until my third year in the group that I received a full-fledged solo, not part of a compilation of soloists on one song. This came about after a number of our fans requested that I be given a solo. One member of our group, in a leadership position, took it upon himself to arrange a specific song for me aware that my “style” of singing was not only distinct, but also from a traditionally Black sub-cultural Rhythm and Blues / Soul that heavily uses the “Blue Note.” This is a way of hitting a pitch in which a singer slides into the pitch from beneath the pitch of the note rather than attack the pitch directly. While this can be considered pleasing, I was often told that my pitch was off and that I was coming in flat. Eventually, I had to adjust to fit into the group.

I realized I would have to adopt the cultural values of my White counterparts for them to hear my singing as “correct.” Their tendency to value a soloist who has an attack that is on or closer to the center of the pitch, may have been the reason I was frequently passed up for solos. Despite the audience’s appreciation of my style, the group’s cultural sense of what it meant to sing “correctly” was perceived as a matter of accuracy rather than as a cultural difference. This too factored into the group’s

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

decision about my ability to solo on songs that were not specifically an R&B / Soul arrangement.

My colleagues were not being racist in their intentions about the way I sang, nor were they conspiring to prevent me from soloing more often. I know that they believed in my talent. However, racism was reflected *outside their awareness* in the very application of their cultural values as *the* standard for what was the best, most accurate form of singing. It was cultural racism/discrimination -- the unquestioned assumption that *how they sang* was how singing should be. The sense that *their* method of singing on pitch was the standard meant that they could have no variance in the expectation of the sound. For the group, there could not be multiple ways of singing on pitch. To them, there was one best method that involved singing with a direct attack of the pitch.

Although I had a pleasing way of singing, to them it was a pleasing way of singing slightly off-pitch, not a different and effective approach to singing on pitch. Regardless of how my voice sounded, I could not win a solo audition because my *style* was always “incorrect” or “sub-optimal” for non-R&B songs. Though not explicit, discrimination occurred because their cultural values masqueraded as objective “facts” and objective “standards” about what is “right” or “wrong.” In a way, their culture functioned as though they were wearers of masks that filtered their vision; they weren’t even aware that they were wearing masks.

I don’t believe they treated me badly or as an “other” intentionally. In their minds, they had a standard, an ideal sound. There was no sense that we could find “our” idealized sound based on the strengths of all individual members and the unique pleasing characters of all our voices combined. Racial discrimination often plays out in these stylized differences of

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

approach. The way that Black or non-White cultures approach living and being is often considered morally wrong or sub-optimal.

It is as if just by not being White, we are already *wrong* -- just by being alive and just by being “different.” Subconscious perception can make it easier to rationalize racist acts -- the Black person *already* had to be doing something wrong to justify or deserve the actions. This rationale can extend to the obstruction of universal rights or even the justification for harming or taking a life. The Black person was wrong for just being Black.

In our shared humanity, there are multiple paths to the same destination. How you get there is not the destination. If Whiteness is viewed as the only “right” way, it negates the richness of diversity, the richness of multiple paths – that blend to create harmony. Perceived “right,” does not justify discriminatory wrong. Whiteness is not an end onto itself; Whiteness does not make wrongness “right.” My Blackness is what I bring to the song of life.



CARLISLE GREAVES is a mental health therapist residing in Lanham, Maryland.

“Black America Is So Tired”

by Elizabeth Ogunwo

VIOLENCE: intimidating or harming “the other” through physical acts (threats, assault, desecration, stalking, harassment, arson, murder, terrorism)

If this image doesn't disturb you and piss you off, then idk. I've seen a lot of people speak up and try to articulate how fed up and angry they are. All good and well but it's the same same same reality we live in. George Floyd. George Floyd. George has a family. George didn't deserve to die. George pleaded for help and was just straight up ignored, which speaks loud and clear that his black life didn't matter. George was murdered. George wasn't human to the cop that slowly and purposefully took his life away. #georgefloyd (Steph Curry, May 29,2020)

THE YEAR 2020 OPENED THE FLOODGATES FOR MY VERY existence to be surrounded by voices of young Black male athletes, frustrated, hurting, scared and paralyzed. Within each hour of the

workday, and in conversations with my family and friends, the isolation and standstill of the economy in the wake of the coronavirus, created the space to identify and understand persistent violence against Black Americans like never before.

Is police brutality stemming from systemic injustices really a thing? My entire upbringing as a first-generation Nigerian-American dispelled this notion, largely due to having a proud Nigerian father, who immigrated to the states in the 1970s and saw his American dream come to fruition. He had access to all the resources necessary to buy property, start his own business, and get involved in politics as a well-respected Republican party member in Northern Virginia. He even donned an American name, Steve, to fit the mold. Violence and hardship for Black Americans was largely due to a lack of work ethic, and if they tried harder and obeyed the law, they wouldn't have so many problems. This was the mantra in my household until the American housing bubble burst in 2007 and the recession followed. Bankruptcy and financial hardship led to a clearer picture of the nation for my dad, one filled with microaggressions, discrimination and mistreatment by the police force. In 2008, my dad voted for President Barack Obama and finds time in every conversation with me to this day to remind me of the treatment of people who look like us and how we continue to maintain second-class citizenship.

This is a landmark day in the history of American sport. The Milwaukee Bucks decided to postpone their playoff game against Orlando Magic...NBA teams refusing to play their scheduled games in protests of racial injustice in this country. All you hear is Donald Trump and all of them talking about the fear. We're the ones getting killed. We're the ones getting

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

shot. It is amazing to me why we keep loving the country and this country does not love us back. (Bleacher Report, 2020)

Reminders of second-class citizenship came to a head on Wednesday, August 26, 2020, when the NBA Milwaukee Bucks refused to play in a playoff game in response to the violence against a Black man Jacob Blake.

Throughout the season restart, our players have been unwavering in their demands for systemic justice. This week we witnessed another horrific, shocking and all too familiar act of brutality in the shooting of 29-year-old Jacob Black in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The players have, once again, made it clear - they will not be silent on this issue. We stand with the decision of the players of the Milwaukee Bucks to protest this injustice and support the collective decision to postpone all of today's games. (Statement from NBPA Executive Director Michele Roberts on player protest and postponement of games; August 26, 2020)

Yes, my work allows me to support these players to speak out and act on issues that matter most to them, but the heaviness of it all is weighing. They're tired. I'm tired. Black America is so tired.

I am still lost in understanding how and why this violence will not relent. Help me to understand. Beginning in the late 1800s and into the 20th century, racial violence was heightened in response to Southern Whites losing the wealth they accumulated from slavery. Since the establishment of this nation, we have known that racism continues to flare when financial security is at stake. The cycle of systemic injustice persists. "The wealth gap between America's richest and poorer families more than doubled

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

from 1989 to 2016...In 1989, the richest 5% of families had 114 times as much wealth as families in the second quintile (one tier above the lowest), at the median \$2.3 million compared with \$20,300. By 2016, the top 5% held 248 times as much wealth at the median.” (Schaefer, 2020) And while the wealth gap has increased, the protests and outcries against social injustice and violence against people of color continues to rise. Where are these extremist, right-winged White terrorists coming from? What is their socio-economic status and employment history? Where does Kyle Rittenhouse, a Blue Lives Matter militia teenager who fatally shot two protesters, develop his distorted beliefs? How are extremists becoming more extreme and misdirecting their misfortune onto the backs of Brown and Black people?

Racism, hate, and violence are unacceptable and intolerable. As we focus on silencing hate, we cannot lose sight of economic justice and the capitalist powers that continue to squeeze even more money out of the communities in which they are operating. We must teach, preach, and live love while remembering the goal of the fight -- a better quality of life for all, and not just the wealthiest few.

But it is not enough for me to stand before you tonight and condemn riots. It would be morally irresponsible for me to do that without, at the same time, condemning the contingent, intolerable conditions that exist in our society. These conditions are the things that cause individuals to feel that they have no other alternative than to engage in violent rebellions to get attention. And I must say tonight that a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it America has failed to hear? ... It has failed to hear that the promises of

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice and humanity. (Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., March 14, 1968)

In a nation where capitalism has grown and flourished due to the continued exploitation of Black people, and continues to thrive on our exploitation, we can no longer hide beneath the myth that capitalism grew through the American dream, hard work and sacrifice, and a strong work ethic.

While we examine the violence of police brutality and seek social justice for people of color, my hope is that we do not lose sight of the underlying trigger of wealth inequality. Meanwhile, the wealthy .1% breathe a sigh of relief as they continue to hold on to 90% of the nation's wealth via wage stagnation, rising healthcare costs, and "riots" that distract from monopolies which are not being held accountable within the communities they serve -- the ultimate red flags that our systems are failing.

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. (Proverbs 31:8-9)

Violence begets civil disobedience. Black lives do matter.



ELIZABETH OGUNWO is the program director for the National Basketball Association's Players Foundation.

References

Bleacher Report. “The NBA Took a Stand Yesterday,”

August 26, 2020. <https://bleacherreport.com/post/trending/875c2d7a-c0eb-420c-b944-808a16a5be2d>

Schaefer, Katherine (February 7, 2020). 6 facts about economic inequality in the U.S. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/02/07/6-facts-about-economic-inequality-in-the-u-s/>

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. “The Other America.” Grosse Pointe High School, March 14, 1968.

ELIMINATION

“Black Lives Matter”

by Paul-Robert Pryce

ELIMINATION: eradicating “the other” through deliberate and/or systemic destruction of life and/or liberty (CULTURAL: customs and traditions, language, music, art, history, science, political participation; BEHAVIORAL: segregation, isolation, relocation, resettlement, removal; PHYSICAL: murder, genocide)

You hate me don't you.

You hate my people.

Your plan is to exterminate my culture

You fuckin' evil ...

Kendrick Lamar, “The Blacker the Berry”

KENDRICK LAMAR’S RHYMES CUT DIRECTLY AND UNFLINCHINGLY. He calls out a truth that is very difficult for many to acknowledge. He does not care if it makes you uncomfortable; he calls it as he sees it - the systematic state-sanctioned political, economic, and human elimination of Black people in America.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

Often when we speak of elimination, particularly in terms of human rights violations, it is the most savage atrocities throughout human history that come to mind. The genocide in Kosovo and Rwanda in the 1990s, the Holocaust, and the trans-Atlantic trade of enslaved Africans are each a brutal chapter of man's inhumanity to man. More recently, we can point to the "modern-day lynching" of Black men at the hands of the police. However, in Lamar's lyrics I posit that the "extermination" he speaks of today also exists in unseen racist policy and systemic prejudices that permit persistent inequities throughout American life.

Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, professor and director of the Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University, defines racism as "... the marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities." He further defines racial inequity "... when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing."

Are we aware of the generational damage caused by sophisticated tactics of institutionalized and systemic forms of eradication designed to quietly eliminate Black people through both racist policy and collective apathy?

As a Trinidadian immigrant to the United States, it took me a long time to understand the ways of my new home. I arrived here young, ambitious, and filled with dreams. I was warned to beware of America -- that it was not what it seemed. To me, I had nothing to lose. I was off to pursue my dream of becoming an actor. In the worst case, if plans did not work out, I could go home to Trinidad before things got bad. Little did I know that I would become a statistic counted among the many faceless, forever touched by the insidious inequity targeting the country's Black population.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

In 2012, my now ex-wife and I were expecting a baby, our first child. I was a second-year graduate student in the Yale School of Drama. Yale New Haven Hospital, perhaps one of the best medical institutions in the country, was our healthcare provider. I was freaking out; we both were. Terror and excitement combined as we awaited the baby. We were two Caribbean immigrant students adjusting to life in Connecticut. My wife was scheduled to begin her doctoral studies at Columbia University in the next academic year. It was going to be a challenge, but with some help from our families, we figured we could weather the storm. I even warmed up to the idea of being a student dad on campus, bringing the baby to rehearsals and trusting my classmates to provide care while I worked onstage.

With no setbacks, the pregnancy went smoothly. We were scheduled for regular checkups. We were told as we got closer to the due date, we would need to meet with the other obstetricians, any one of the three White doctors on call who would deliver the baby.

Joined by friends and family, we had a jubilant baby shower. In our preparations for the baby's arrival, we moved into a larger apartment with an extra room -- the baby's room with a crib, changing station, a rocking chair, and a mountain of little clothes. It was a hodgepodge of *girl* stuff and *boy* stuff passed down to us while we kept the sex of the baby a surprise. Selfishly ... I was hoping for daddy's little girl.

Our routine of scheduled hospital appointments included meeting with the doctors; they'd take my partner's vitals and measure her stomach, ask a few rudimentary questions, do an ultrasound to check the baby's heartbeat, and in general, assure that all was progressing as planned.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

Just one week before the due date, we met with one of three obstetricians. We had met him once before. Normally professional, today he was visibly agitated, rushed, and annoyed, abrupt, and unresponsive to us. It was not the same care that we had grown accustomed to from the other doctors. We chalked it up that he was having a bad day and that we, unfortunately, happened to be the recipients of the experience because of his attitude. Nonetheless, we tried to put the appointment behind us.

Days later, my wife felt oddly as if something was wrong with the baby. She could not recall the last time the baby had moved. We thought back to that last visit with the doctor, the doctor who failed to fully see or be with us. Could he have missed something that day? We tried taking comfort in the belief that everything had been fine until now. *Why would anything change mere days before the due date?*

Back at the hospital for our final appointment with the doctor before delivery, this time another doctor. She was nice. We told her our concerns and we mentioned that it had been a while since we felt the baby's movement. An ultrasound and search for a heartbeat. Nothing. More gel on my partner's stomach, the head of the ultrasound detector cleaned, search again, still no heartbeat. I got one of those sinking feelings that can engulf you. The doctor called in a colleague to confirm what I instinctively knew. Confused and disoriented by the terror that was slowly revealing itself, we stumbled into one of the darkest days of our lives. We were rushed to the hospital and prepped for what became eight hours of labor to deliver our daughter, Laure Nelly Nicole Pryce ... dead. She was perfect. Full head of hair and fully formed. The doctor even commented on how 'perfect' she looked. I cradled her. I dressed her. We stayed with her as long as we could. *What had happened?*

Much a blur, I finished school and my wife deferred her enrollment for a year; I descended into depression -- angry, confused, and traumatized. We turned on each other. Immigrants, away from family and dealing with such loss took its toll on both of us and our young marriage. It exacerbated fissures present in our relationship. Unable to afford the counseling we needed, ill-equipped to support one another, we drifted apart, eventually separated, and finally divorced.

It took years for me to rise out of that hole of despair. I was told to accept the loss as just one of life's unexplainable misfortunes. Although rare, the hospital told us that stillbirths like these do occasionally happen. The autopsy did not reveal anything unusual in the baby they said. *So, what actually happened? We were young, healthy, able to access good health care. How am I just to accept it and move on?*

“Researchers from George Mason University analyzed data capturing 1.8 million hospital births in Florida between 1992 and 2015 for a new study to be published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, also known as PNAS and published on CNN Health. The study found that Black newborn babies in the United States are more likely to survive childbirth if they are cared for by Black doctors, and three times more likely than White babies to die when looked after by White doctors. The mortality rate of Black newborns in hospitals decreased between 39% and 58% when Black physicians took charge of the birth. According to the research, racial disparities in human healthcare can affect even the first hours of a person's life. By contrast, the mortality rate for White babies was largely unaffected by the doctor's race. The findings supported previous research, which had shown that while infant mortality rates have fallen in recent decades, Black children

remain significantly more likely to die early compared to their White counterparts.” (Picheta, Rob. 2020)

Another study by Dr. Robert Silver, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Utah Health Sciences Center, reported that “according to the most recent estimates, the stillbirth rate for Black women is more than twice that of White and Asian women — just as Black women in the U.S. are at least three times more likely than White women to die during childbirth.” (Pearson, Catherine. 2018)

Additionally, in an article published in *Reuters* sourced from the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, “the racial disparity was even more pronounced among more educated (Black) women. Higher education (beyond high school) was linked to a 30 percent reduction in stillbirth risk among White women, while there was little evidence of benefit among Black women. Higher education, often a marker of advantage including income level and better healthcare, is generally associated with better pregnancy outcomes. Why better educated Black women failed to show a substantial decrease in stillbirth risk is unclear.” (*Reuters Health*, 2009)

My lived experience shattered any notion that my ex-wife and I were exempt from the hand of racial inequality hiding in America. We did everything right. We attended the best schools, got a good education, supposedly had access to the best healthcare, and yet still became poster children to the horrific statistics.

There is a hidden hand of elimination silently at work -- killing Black, Indigenous and people of color in America every day. The destruction of a people happens in the shadows -- in the legislative policies enacted, embedded in sterile statistics that are ignored, signed off in corporate

boardrooms without our access. In the light of the “Black Lives Matter” movement and a growing awareness, an awakening on anti-racism and social justice, it is incumbent on each of us to recognize the injustices we have been conditioned to just accept.

Counted among the statistics, Laure’s life mattered.



PAUL-ROBERT PRYCE is an actor, screenwriter, filmmaker, and an adjunct professor of acting in the Graduate Theatre program at Brooklyn College and the director of the Hagen Core Training and the Hagen Summer Intensive at HB Studio in New York City.

References

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to be an Antiracist*. 2019.

Pearson, Catherine. “A Quarter of Stillbirths in the US are Preventable, new Research Finds,” *Huffington Post: Health*. January 2018.

Picheta, Rob. “Black newborns more likely to die when looked after by White doctors,” *CNN Health*, August 2020.

Reuters Health. “Stillbirth risk higher for black women,” November 2009.

“I Swear Never to Be Silent Again”

by Dan Prinzing, Ph.D.

IN HIS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, ELIE WIESEL stated, “I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation.”

A Romanian-born Jew, Elie was 15 years old when he and his family were deported to Auschwitz. His family was murdered, and he suffered under those whom Anne Frank described in her diary as “the cruelest monsters ever to stalk the earth.” But the “monsters” did not work alone.

“Some Were Neighbors,” the national exhibit produced by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, points out that in countrysides and city squares, in stores and schools, in homes and workplaces, the Nazis found countless willing helpers who collaborated with or were complicit in their crimes. Many supported the suffering and humiliation of others by merely being silent.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis – by one man with his knee on his neck, three who stood by and watched, and the scores of complicit throughout the country who have failed to A.C.T.

A.C.T. is an acronym the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights uses in the “Be an Upstander” program.

An upstander is defined as a defender, advocate, and supporter of human rights and human dignity; an upstander acts when witnessing inequality, injustice, and oppression. The A.C.T. is just that. It is a call to action.

“A” stands for ask. When you hear someone tell a joke that belittles others or use a word that is demeaning, ask “Do you know what that word means? Did you intend to be hurtful?” How many dinner or watercooler conversations have ended in uncomfortable silence for lack of candor or fear of confrontation? If not with our family and colleagues, when and where do we begin to confront implicit bias and racism?

“C” stands for choose. Being an upstander is a choice, just as being a bystander is a choice. Doing or saying nothing in the face of injustice implies agreement. How often have we heard, “It’s not my problem, that wouldn’t happen here, I don’t want to get involved, or I don’t know what to do.”?

Even the choice to be an upstander comes with choices. Today, individuals and businesses alike are using social media to publicly voice their commitment to social justice; others are protesting in the streets; many are donating to support organizational efforts; some are educating themselves; others are having tough conversations.

THE SPIRAL OF INJUSTICE

“T” stands for teach. Teach by example of how you live your life. “Upstander” is a verb, as well as a noun. I cannot call myself an upstander if others do not witness me as such.

During the June 2, 2020 vigil at the Idaho Statehouse, one man took a selfie with the crowd behind him; he captioned the photo “My city standing with me” and the photo went viral. It captured a very poignant moment of our shared humanity. I posted Jason’s photo, noting yes, we stood last night with our neighbors of color, but today we commit to speaking out whenever and wherever we hear or witness injustice. We will stand up; we will speak out.

We commit to A.C.T. and are reminded of the quote by Dr. Seuss that is etched into the stone of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial. “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”

I care – and I swear never again to be silent.



DAN PRINZING is the executive director at the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights. The Center’s mission is to promote respect for human dignity and diversity through education and to foster individual responsibility to work for justice and peace.

BE AN UPSTANDER AND



A

ASK

When you hear someone tell a joke that belittles others or use a word that is demeaning, ask, "Do you know what that word means? Did you intend to be hurtful?"



C

CHOOSE

Being an upstander is a choice, just as being a bystander is a choice – but doing or saying nothing in the face of injustice implies that you agree.



T

TEACH

Teach by example of how you live your life. "Upstander" is a verb, as well as a noun. I cannot call myself an upstander if others do not witness me as such.



Wassmuth
**CENTER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**
Home of the Edna Rene Frank Human Rights Memorial



Recognized as the educational arm of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial, the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights provides programs and resources designed to bring the Memorial's message into classrooms and communities.

We envision an inclusive society where Idahoans take responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights; where everyone is valued and treated with equal dignity and respect; and where everyone's human rights are a lived reality. We believe that the way to realize this vision is to engage and educate fellow Idahoans to dismantle the complex, intersecting dynamics and conditions that foster and perpetuate systematic discrimination.

Our mission is to “promote respect for human dignity and diversity through education and to foster individual responsibility to work for peace and justice.”



www.wassmuthcenter.org
www.annefrankmemorial.org



Wassmuth
**CENTER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**

Home of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial