

Episode 81. Talking With Kids About Race with Dr. Lucretia B...

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SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Lucretia Berry, Kira Dorrian, Future Focused Parenting



Lucretia Berry 00:00

Also when children, you know, maybe ask a question, yeah, we don't want to silence them, we don't want to tense up. That's why it's important that we become comfortable because of course children read, you know, the body language and the nonverbal cues. And so if we're uncomfortable, then they're going to learn this is a conversation I shouldn't be having and color is bad.



Future Focused Parenting 00:25

What happens when two parent coaches, one a Christian and the other an agnostic Jew, sit down to talk about parenting? They take their listeners from surviving to thriving. I'm Deana Thayer, and I'm Kira Dorrian. Welcome to Raising Adults, a podcast brought to you by Future Focused Parenting.



Kira Dorrian 00:44

Well, hi, everyone. And welcome back to another episode of Raising Adults podcast. We are so happy to have you here with us today. We have Dr. Lucretia Berry from Brownicity on the show today, this interview is so awesome. And we are going to pretty much jump straight to it because as you may have noticed, it's the longest episode we've ever

released. But we just could not cut any of it. It's just fantastic. And it all just needs to be said and heard. So we do want to warn you that after we finished recording, we discovered that there was a sort of audio defect, a rustling sound that we just could not get rid of. So we just want to prepare you that you are going to hear that throughout the interview and we hope that you just won't let it worry you because it is just such a fabulous, fabulous interview. Don't you think?

D

Deana Thayer 01:29

Oh, tremendous. I, I learned a lot and I also just enjoy how relatable and accessible she makes everything.

K

Kira Dorrian 01:36

Yep, totally. So we're gonna just get straight to the interview. Enjoy. Alright, everyone. Well, we have Dr. Lucretia Berry here with us today. She is the founder of Brownicity, many hues one humanity, an agency dedicated to advocacy, education, and support for racial healing and anti racism. She is a wife to Nathan, mother of three little girls, and a former college professor whose love for humanity led her to author *What Lies Between Us*, fostering first steps toward racial healing. A journey guide designed specifically for beginners. And she's also an anti racism curriculum specialist for Community School of Davidson and a contributor for encourage.me, a TEDx and cue ideas speaker and a senior consultant for point made learnings, the American Dream game. She's amazing. Dr. Berry, thank you so much for being with us today.

L

Lucretia Berry 02:31

Thank you, ladies for having me.

K

Kira Dorrian 02:33

So can you start by just telling our listeners a little bit about you and your family and the work that you're doing? Because we have been following you very closely. I think you're phenomenal. So tell everybody about Lucretia.

L

Lucretia Berry 02:46

Sure. Okay. So I am an African American woman. I am from the North Carolina, so the South but North Carolina, and I married a white man from Iowa. And we met actually doing anti racism work through a church, actually we were desegregating a church, if I

could say it that way to make it brief. And we just, we met, developed a deep friendship and of course, have similar passions and outlooks about how we care about the world, how we care about people and, and knowing that we can actually, you know, impact and make a difference, even if it's just in our home. Before we had children, we even talked about narratives we would have to disrupt along, you know, racial narratives because we are an interracial couple and our children are multi ethnic. And so we knew that they would have to be where, we would have to equip them, to be able to navigate are very hyper racialized society, you know, a society that would want to put them maybe in you know, one racial category with a, you know, society that would racialized them you know, and not want them to embrace the multi ethnicity that they, that they are or that they have access to. My husband is mostly Italian, but lots of European mixed up in there. So we were very intentional about you know, what stories we would tell, what stories we pass on and we needed the space, give ourselves some space and give them space and make space between okay, who you are really and, and what are the, what forces get to unpack that and tell you who you are. And then there's society and what society is trying to tell you who you are. So we needed to know, them to know that there were these, there were always going to be these narratives. But here at home, we needed to have an understanding about who we are as spiritual beings. And you know, made in the image of God, as you know, they're all girls, so as women, and also in, in connection to how society will try to racialize them. So with that, you know, we were very intentional and proactive, my husband and I, and coming up with, okay, this is this is our framework, and this is how we're going to move forward. There was never with us any possibility of, or thought of being complicit with the colorblind approach. That's just not possible in our house. That doesn't work. It wouldn't work so, or with anecdotes, you know, with our children like, well, you know, mommy is chocolate, and daddy is vanilla, and you're chocolate and vanilla swirl. And even though that's cute, it just doesn't give children substance, you know, to the, that they need to navigate identity development, things like that. So fast forward, our oldest, at four years old. She referred to us as hues of brown, and she did this on her own. She just brought it up at the dinner table. She talked about an activity she was doing in preschool. And she said, Well, we're all hues of brown. Daddy's light brown. Mommy is dark brown or deep brown. And I'm medium brown. I say, yes, you are. And so we continue the conversation about melanin and explain to her how melanin you know, gave us our skin color. And you know, Daddy has less of it, mommy has more of it. And you know, daddy's ancestors came from a place where they needed less melanin, and mommy's ancestors came from a place where they needed more melanin. And so, you know, early on, all of our children have access to this vocabulary and a framework and understanding just to simply describe what they see in the world and how people look. And then when that, we built on, you know, later on, maybe about age five or six, conversations on race. So the word brownicity comes from that conversation. Brown represents melanin, and inicity is from the word ethnicity and ethnicity is that which we have in common. And so

that's where we get this word, this funny word we use called brownicity and it just gives us that framework to acknowledge that we are many hues, yes, and one humanity. It allows us to have conversations about race, but not be confined to how race has tried to define us. So that's kind of, as friends and family began to ask us questions, they, they thought we like how you teach, we like you know, you're a valuable resource. And I will say, I mean, I let me back up. I do have a doctorate in curriculum and instruction. So I am a teacher. And I am an educator, and I do have an educator heart. My husband has a business and ministry back, background, and he has a minor in African American Studies. So we weren't just you know, kind of clueless people trying to figure this out, we have done, have studied in this, in these areas. So people said, you know, you should do this. You should do this publicly. And I would thought, well, who in the world wants to have these conversations? And then here we are. Here we are five years later.

D

Deana Thayer 08:42

Oh, Lucretia. So it's, it's so wonderful to kind of hear the background of that, and some of the things that, that you brought up, were just so resonating with me when you said that, you know, moving away from this colorblind idea, because kids will notice. I think we're kind of fooling ourselves, right? If we think they won't, and, and also, what you brought up about vocabulary touched me. Our listeners know, I'm a total word nerd. And so having the words to describe things, I think is just so important. And so get, handing them the vocabulary, like, let's use the actual word melanin and talk about that. And it just, I was just smiling because I thought, oh, yes, vocabulary is so important. And, and, and let's not kid ourselves that children notice this stuff. And so you mentioned this with your, with your four year old even. And so my first question is, is kind of around that. What is the right age to start the conversation? And then also with the initiation? I mean, do you? Do you think parents should go ahead and jump in and initiate and dive in and go for this? Or is it better to wait until maybe there's a question from our children, what's the how and when in your mind that works best?

L

Lucretia Berry 09:54

The how, and the when is if you want your children to be able to have healthy conversations, and healthy words about around describing people, their, you know, their human family members or their, you know, their friends, you want them to have healthy language, you should give it to them before society gives them the wrong language, or society inadvertently teaches them that some people's lives matter more than others, or you know that there's this hierarchy and some people, you know, get to have more privilege and power or respect and value and dignity and love, while others do not. And so I would say to parents get out ahead, I think, you know, my daughter said that at four,

but with our other children, I remember our conversations even earlier. And again, it you know, it's nothing, it doesn't have to be scary. We would do things like name our own skin tones, and we have to name them and there's not a racial category, not black or white, or not an ethnicity, like Asian, you know, or Indian. Like, we have to literally name our skin tone, just like you would say, Apple is red, you would say Lucretia is chocolate brown or something like that. And, and so, we would sing songs about our skin tone at the table, you know, while we're having dinner, so that it's normal. And, and, you know, I remember my two year old when it came time for her to sing a song about her skin tone. I thought, oh, she's gonna need some help, you know. Nope, she came right on in with her little song. I'm peanut butter brown, I'm peanut butter brown, I'm peanut butter brown. Okay, okay. So it's about you know, you know, it's the same with, you know, the conversations around sex, you know, you don't want to wait till your child is you know, already a young adult or whatever and is already engaged in those things, you want to equip them and get out ahead. Especially because our, because of the racializing that's happening, you want to get out in front of it. So I would say, you know, when you're reading you can, you know when they're toddlers, you can talk about how people look differently in the books or in name. Let them name skin tones and, and things like that. So, yeah, the sooner the better, I would say and then I know that like if you do that, because I always get this question like, what if they say something embarrassing out in public? But if you've given them the language, it'll probably be less embarrassing. So one question I get a lot is, or someone will say, my child said, like something derogatory out loud in public. And so I will, I could say to that, honestly, we haven't had that around people's skin tone, because I have, they will say, Mommy, the lady at McDonald's has way more melanin than you. Like it's a contest or something. But and I'm like, yes. Isn't it so beautiful? So that's not really embarrassing, but I haven't given them language around transgender identity. So they have said some things in public that were, you know, a little embarrassing for me or a little harsh. And so I'm like, okay, so I need to give them language. And so when they are in public, they have the right words, and they're not trying to figure it out in public, out loud in front of everybody.

D

Deana Thayer 13:43

So true. I'm glad you brought up the birds and the bees. That's what it was reminding me of like how we have to, we have to be brave enough to go first. So that we're equipping them, and then we're actually being preventative with that, because then they're less likely to say something that might be, maybe not appropriate. They don't even know.

L

Lucretia Berry 14:01

Yes, and I love how you said, you have to go first. And I see a lot of requests, you know,

from parents, how do I talk with my kids? And I, I think, yes, early, but if you can be on the learning journey before they are or at least on the learning journey with them, then you will feel more confident. And you won't be you know, embarrassed. So I think that the reason why, you know, my husband and I could just move in it and flow in it, and even come up with the framework that works for our family because, because we'd already been immersed in, you know, the vocabulary and the, the framework, the conversations and the education. So we are pretty, you know, we don't think that we know it all, but we know enough to have a conversation with a child.

K

Kira Dorrian 14:52

Yeah, well, and one of the things I think that's really challenging for our generation having been brought up in the colorblind generation is that you didn't talk about it? Well, so I know that at least in my own community, one of the things we all share is this feeling of like, I am going to lean into these conversations, I'm going to have them over and over again. But your instincts based on what you were taught when you were small, were like, you're not supposed to talk about this. And that you're like fighting that the whole way through the conversation, recognizing that, okay, that failed miserably. But at the same time, that's what was ingrained in us as children; don't talk about it, don't see it. So to lean into those conversations is, it's tricky, which is exactly why what you're saying is, if you can kind of be facing some of that first, and dealing with that discomfort, first, you're going to come to the conversation a lot more confident and less uncomfortable, as you're having it with your kids. So then once you start this conversation, and this is obviously a series of conversations, it's a lifestyle of conversations. What should parents be including? What, what do we need to make sure that we're talking about you talked about, you know, the different hues, and I love the songs and that kind of thing? What other suggestions do you have for parents about like, you know, making sure you're talking about this piece? Or that piece? How do we give them that vocabulary as they move into the world?

L

Lucretia Berry 16:09

Okay, so hues, that is very, you know, that's basic, because then ultimately, you're, you've built this foundation, where you do have to, you have to teach them about race and the race construct in racism. And I know, parents think, well, if I point it out, then that makes them racist, you know, act, no, actually, it's the opposite. When you teach them about what has happened in our country, it gives them you know, the ability, it gives them this credit this, like, what you're saying is, you know, I don't want to give my child a false and in, you know, interpretation of this world that that they live in. We have to, you know, treat them as intelligent, the intelligent beings that they are. So I'll just pull an example from my family. Because for us, it also will, I'll just say, as I was concerned, as an adult, I was

concerned that if I'm teaching about race, and let's just say, for example, civil rights or slavery, I don't want my child to internalize that, you know, white people are bad, and black people are victims. And I don't want to perpetuate that. However, you know, I came up with ways to help them understand what, what has happened, and a lot of books help. So it you know, history books, I think, for us, our first books that really kind of introduced them to slavery, and to kind of centuries of like injustice and exploitation and degradation came through like autobiographies, that series, the who is series or the who was series. So, you know, we let books do a lot of the work. And then we, you know, we'd have these conversations. And then we allow our children to feel the pain of the history. And I know a lot of parents, especially white parents want to, like, quote, unquote, protect their innocence. But really, you when you're not telling them the truth, or not giving them the full story or the whole story, you're really depriving them of this opportunity to kind of be, be change agents, or, you know, you're depriving them from this opportunity to connect with humanity in this way. So I noticed that yeah, and whenever we, like, read a book, and they maybe learn about Jim Crow, for example, they learned about Jim Crow, they learned about reconstruction, and they were very upset. But that was good, you know, so I let them be upset. Like that's a great response. I think that means you're not a sociopath. Way to go. Then to just develop that, the heart for people, I think. We don't do that when we're, when we think we're protecting them. We're really disconnecting them from other people's pain. No, even though you know, someone said this, you know, this happened in the past, but it is our present is a reflection of what happened in the past. Children are very justice oriented, and so they you know, very early in age, what is fair and justice is very important to kids. And so while they are young, we do want them to be able to develop and have a sense of what is just and what is fair and connect to that.

D

Deana Thayer 20:05

Yeah. And I think we've gotten to hear now some of what we should be doing. But I'm guessing there are also things that we as parents want to avoid. And you just kind of touched on one, which I think, probably comes from a really great place, it probably comes from a good motivation, which is this desire to protect, but how it can go wrong. So I'm wondering what other mistakes you see that parents maybe make when they're talking with their kids about race? Or maybe not talking about it?

L

Lucretia Berry 20:34

Okay, well, first, you know, parents and families, kind of think that they are in total control of what their kids say, and learn and know, there's this whole big world out there that they are kind of connected with and negotiating meaning with and so you can do your best, of course, to be interacting and engaging, but also know that they're picking up things from

other places, too. And you can't control all that. And that's okay. But the things that you can influence, you know, go for it. There's also this myth that parents think that kids are passive. So if they, if they do or say something that makes the parent uncomfortable, the parent thinks like, well, that's a reflection of me. No, not necessarily, like, there's a whole big world that is informing them or that is, that they're, again, negotiating meaning with, they're very active, and they're interacting with this world. And I can tell you so many stories about what happens when I go into a classroom. And I give kids language like it's a third grade, third grade classroom, they get this language and then suddenly, it's like, you could write a book, just with all the questions that they have. So they had these questions all this time. But no one ever gave them the words. So they didn't know how to ask the question. They didn't know how to frame the question. They didn't have permission for the question. So the questions didn't go away, just because there's this silence. The question's still there, they just sit there, you know, unanswered, and, you know, oftentimes can become a dangerous way of thinking about people, because no one has disrupted the thinking. And then another mistake is that families of color know how to do this. Now, we happen to be a family, yes, we are immersed in, you know, education, and, and so we are trying our best. But just because someone is, you know, a person of color or African American, or has a person of color in their family doesn't mean that they have this all figured out. So you don't want to use someone as a resource. Or you don't want to make someone your teacher or burden someone with teaching you just because, you know, they have more melanin than you. Okay? That's not a qualifier. And then, and parents do, you know, give anecdotal responses. So over simplistic and anecdotal responses, like this one person told me that she tells her grandchildren that God put us all in the oven together and left Black people in too long. And you know, she was so proud of her explanation. And I thought, well, you just, like messed up your grandkids.

K

Kira Dorrian 23:30

Yeah, my mouth is hanging open.

D

Deana Thayer 23:38

Oh, no, my eyes, I'm, I'm looking like deer in the headlights over here.

L

Lucretia Berry 23:41

Like so much of that, that grandmother's mind, what she has done is centered whiteness. So bread is, you know, the, the white bread is the norm. And we all got, you know, put in the oven together. And then the burnt part is, you know, Black people, which again, the anecdote is horrible anyway, but oftentimes parents make the mistake of centering

whiteness as what is this, as if whiteness is the starting point. And then we get either less human from there or more, you know, we get more abstract from there. And that's another reason why, you know, I love what my daughter said, we are all hues of brown. So right away with brownicity, we decenter white and you know, we start with a common human hue, and then we move from there in our conversation. So white is never the starting point or the default and again, so much of it is because of you know, the colorblind ideology, you know, which is a this kind of this unknowing and being satisfied with with unknowing. Also, when children you know, maybe ask a question, you know, we don't want to silence them, we don't want to tense up. That's why it's important that we become comfortable. And so that because of course, children read, you know, the body language and the nonverbal cues. And so if we're uncomfortable, then they're going to learn this is a conversation I should not be having and color is bad, right?

D Deana Thayer 25:20
Yep, they are dialed in, aren't they?

L Lucretia Berry 25:22
They are.

D Deana Thayer 25:23
Well, admittedly, this next question is selfish. But my kids also do not look like me. Since we are a, we are a multi ethnic family as well. And I have to admit, I have often been really caught off guard by comments from people about my children looking different from me, or he can't be your son. He's Brown, you're white. And I, I'm curious from someone who really teaches this, what you think a parent's response should be? I don't know, if I should just have a tidy little package response? Or is there another, is there a little responsibility in here as this opportunity to educate, and often it's kids, you know, bless their heart, because they don't have that same filter, they're going to just say what they think and what they notice. And, and I also, though, feel an awareness of, should my response to these kinds of comments and questions be different because I'm white? So I'm just curious your thoughts on that? And I will admit, it's completely selfish, because it's happened to me, and I don't know if I've always handled it very well.

L Lucretia Berry 26:21
Well, first, I'm going to say it's totally up to the parent. Because again, like we get to choose, if we want to be a teacher or not, you shouldn't be obligated to, like, raise

someone else's child who hasn't talked to them about this, skin tone and race. Okay, so there's that. What I do is when children say that, because yes, I've heard that and you know, my first child, our for, our first child, looks exactly like her dad. And before her hair grew out, you know, you, she just really looked just like him. And so I was often, you know, people just assumed that I was like, the nanny or the babysitter or something like that. But I would say, I would say, well, family members don't have to look alike. And so that's, you know, even if you are in a family of transracial adoption, that's an answer. Right? You really don't have to look alike. Did you know that? You know, and always you know, when it's a kid, you know, asking a question. You can do it with an adult too. But asking a question is always a good practice. Because it kind of helps people make space in their brains to to learn something versus a statement. And then the brain is like, no, that's new to me, I don't, I don't like it, you know. So no, family members don't have to look alike. Did you know that? No, lots of family, members of families have members that don't look alike. There's that. You also want to be mindful to model for your kids. So if your children are in earshot, if I get irritated, or aggravated, then that too, then, is a source of, I think shame that someone is asking this question about our family. And so there must be something wrong with our family, because my parent is irritated. And annoyed. So there's that, so you want to model for your kids. And yes, my husband, and I guess so, you know, I'm African American, he's white. So we, we kind of collaborate? And he probably does, you know, have a different answer. But you know, we have a different personality, and I have more of a teaching personality or teacher heart. Like, oh let me explain, you know, and he's more, you know, let me, he just kind of shuts down the ignorance. You know, that's, that's him. So I, you know, totally up to you, I think but yes, I, if I were you, I would have something canned. And, and it's really more about if your kids are in earshot. What, how do you want them to walk away feeling and, and how do you want them to kind of, you know, respond if people ever say something to them?

D

Deana Thayer 26:27

Thank you.

K

Kira Dorrian 26:41

Okay, so a lot of parents right now are asking themselves, what can I do? Like how do I raise my kids to be different, to be the change that the world needs? I think a lot of parents are recognizing that, aside from what they can personally do, we are in a unique position to raise the next generation. And I'm curious, your thoughts beyond having these conversations which are so crucial and essential to that. How else can parents help their kids be the change that's needed here? How else can, can parents really involve their children in their involvement in making change possible?



Lucretia Berry 29:55

Well, yeah, I think the answer is partly in the question is to this, that it's a collaboration or it's a co labor, with parents and kids, and especially because if you, if you're of the, you know, be colorblind generation, you are learning along with your kids, and I think that that can be an amazing opportunity and amazing bonding opportunity. Like, look, you know, look what we're learning and look what we're doing together and look how we're coming along. And growing as a family. And so I would say, you know, seek education, again, we, we have such a deficit in the institutions that, I would say, are mostly responsible for shaping our understanding. So schools and churches haven't really, haven't taught us. And we've had to, you know, rely on, we've had to kind of teach ourselves and fill in the holes and, and move beyond kind of the mythological history that we learned in school, where literally, you know, if you look at what we're, what we have learned in school, or I would just say what I learned in school, was that, okay, it was okay for some people to come over on a boat, and then violently take, you know, land and lives of the people that were already here. And we just think, you know, we just teach that to little kids, like, that's okay, you know, and then go get some other people on the boats from another continent and make them work for free and treat them horribly and we get wealthy and that's okay. So we are literally teaching them violence and exploitation. And, and then we try to have a conversation here in 2020, that doesn't have that context. And we ask all these, you know, why is it like this? And why are these people struggling at work? Or these people? Well, okay, so we have pretty much, you know, romanticized some history here. And again, taking our current what, how we live currently, and taking it out of context, or dismiss the context or, you know, separated it. Right. So, you know, so when my child says, well, why is, you know, Bobby the only brown boy in my class? Like, there are other brown girls, but there's just one brown boy. You know, and she's, you know, again, asking these questions, and so then I have an understanding of redlining, and in school resegregation, and school funding, so I have this understanding that I can explain to her. Well, this is currently, the school you go to is in this place, this place is, you know, this particular geographical location, you know, is mostly white, and here was why. And then if we move to another part of town, and we enroll Bobby in that school, he's, there's going to be so many more brown boys in the class. So oh, okay. So again, it's so important for us to understand the past, all of the dots, or all of the points of history, not just kind of our, you know, our elementary history that we learned in elementary school, and then, you know, you we move forward, so get, I would say, have this opportunity with your children to learn together. And a great way to start is, yeah, like fill in those history gaps, and we do that, I would say, growing up in an African American family, we, my parents did that on a regular basis. Like, I would come home and say, this is what I learned in school. And, and then my mom would say, you know, then she would amend it. She was like, and here's an amendment, you know, oh, okay, that that makes more sense, Mom. You know, so when I tried to say, Mom, I learned about meritocracy today. And if you work really hard, you can

have whatever you want. And she said, that's not true. She said, if that were the case, the slaves, the enslaved Africans worked really hard. They didn't get, they didn't get to earn anything. They didn't get what they wanted and that is, so right there. Boom. Amendment to my understanding. So it isn't based on just what, how hard you work. It isn't based on this rugged individualism that we like to profess, like, oh, there must be policies and laws and structures in place, that some people get to work hard and then they get to, you know, get lots of stuff. But some people work hard, and they don't. That make sense?

K

Kira Dorrian 34:41

Yeah, yeah. Well, and it puts the onus on us to get educated so that when those questions come up, we're not just saying, oh, yeah, that's exactly how that went. Right? That we're able to offer those amendments. What I would love to see happen is parents to begin to help the school decolonize their curriculums or you know, reach, let's reshape the curriculums. And I believe if parents do that, yes, schools will respond. You know, teachers always respond. I'm in my children's school, helping teachers as best I can. You need some more books or you need someone, me to find somebody to come in and help you teach on this or talk about that, okay? Yes, I'm, I'm there. So we have to be proactive in giving our kids what we didn't have. So that means we have to get it for ourselves. And then we have to, you know, kind of overhaul our, our curriculum and what we're learning. I don't think it's hard. Because if I can't, if I can come home as a kid and my mom amend what I learned, I could have just learned that at school that day. Okay. You could have learned that in school, right? It's not even that you could. Why didn't you? That's yeah, it actually speaks to the systemic issue we have that you didn't learn about that. Right?

L

Lucretia Berry 35:58

Yeah, exactly. And I teach, I teach a high school course, on its essentially, you know, it's like a basic anti racism literacy type course. And my high school students, now this is ninth through 12th grade, they are just in disbelief. And they go, how come we don't know this already? They're just set off. Because we don't, we don't in this course, we don't talk about Dr. Martin Luther King. We don't even talk about slavery. We talk about all of the things, the policies and the, the beliefs and the fake science and all of the things that went into creating this, the system, the structure, these institutions that work all by themselves. And I tell my students, like you don't even have to, there's no debate, because they wrote it all down. And I show them like, look, here, look, it's all written down. And because back then it was okay, because they literally believed that, you know, white is superior, Black is inferior. So there was no covering it up. Now, as we get more into the 60s, then, you know, things become a little more, a little bit more abstract, but the 60s was just yesterday. So all of this stuff is written down. And yeah. Okay, so that was, that was a long answer. And

it was I was, I was supposed to say, see, I wrote down stuff to say. Question everything, question everything. Teach your kids to be asking questions. Don't just, you know, drive through a neighborhood. And let your child think that well, this got this way by itself. You know, so you could talk about, again, redlining, or if you talk about, well, these are rentals. So the people who own these houses don't live here. And they're not taking care of them. It's not just on the people who are renting. So there's lots of things that you can do, lots of opportunities for education, we also have to be border crossers. And what I mean is like, we have to go outside of our bubbles, and our comfort zones. And, you know, my husband, he has always been really good at that, like, we were in college, I attended a Black church. And here he was like, okay, I'm going to be the white guy in the black church. And, and let's go in spaces that are not necessarily spaces that appeal to your comfort, and then get comfortable in those places, places and spaces. And then just overall reevaluate, reevaluate your life when you learn how race and racism has shaped us so intimately. And we don't, we don't really understand that when you learn how it has shaped you, then you want to start peeling back the layers and finding your true self amongst, you know, all of the ways you've been determined. You know about race, like, where you live and who you're friends with and where you work and where you go to church. Things like that. Okay, I'm, done, done now.

K

Kira Dorrian 38:58

No, everything you're saying's so important, because it's so multi layered. This is not a 45 minute conversation. This is a 45 year conversation. Oh, you know, I appreciate that. You just keep talking. I'm gonna keep rolling. We're good. I'm, so I have to ask you this question. I am just so deeply embarrassed to ask you this question. You should not have to answer this question. But here's the deal. You constantly run into I'm sure, Deana and I constantly run into people who are of the all lives matter ilk. And I was wondering, and it is certainly not your responsibility to break apart this nonsense, but I was wondering if you might have something to say that might help some of our listeners who maybe are truly just misunderstanding or not willfully ignorant to it, that maybe just need to better understand why that has really become a racial slur.

L

Lucretia Berry 39:59

Oh my goodness, oh, I like how you said that, a racial slur. Does kind of put a dagger, you know, in the heart? Thank you for calling that like, naming that. Okay, I will say, like, I am an educator, so I literally, you know, design or cultivate learning experiences. And what happens is, you know, when I'm invited into churches or schools, and you know, I said, we're going to follow this process, and I'm going to teach you these things. Inevitably, the very first day, people want to start the conversation with talking about, you know, the

Black Lives Matter hashtag because they want to know, you know, why can't we say, all lives matter? And I've, okay, so I then say, I want you to hold your questions to that, till we get to the end of this, this educational opportunity that we've designed. So in many cases, it's like five weeks, it just depends. Because I know that I know that I know, if, if instead of me taking 10 minutes of your time to explain the problem with the hashtag, if I could just have time to teach you, give you a framework, language and context, you will come to understand this on your own. And that is so important, then you don't have to go and say, well, I'm quoting, you know, what Dr. Berry said, or I'm quoting, what so and so said, you can derive that on your own. And so people say that, because they really don't have the, they really don't have the context for the hashtag blacklivesmatter has been decontextualized. And, again, it's just, it's not knowing the centuries of divesting and devaluing black spaces, and black bodies. And the hashtag is simply saying, okay, it's time to stop there. So now, all of these centuries, or the few centuries that we've been, existed as a nation, we have valued white spaces white lives, and there is policy after policy after act after a, you know, practice institutions to show that. And it doesn't mean that white people weren't working hard. It just means that they had support and help the way everyone should. And so that Black Lives Matter hashtag is simply saying, well, now let's offer that help and support to black lives and black spaces, because we have not done that in this country. And I know people will say, well, what about affirmative action? Oh, my gosh, y'all. Again, yeah, oh, I just want to say this, give me, let me teach you a few things. And, you know, so you, it just really is about do you really want to know? Or do you just want to be defiant? You know, do you want, if you really want to know you will, you know, sit down and learn. Again, I offer courses. So you don't have to figure it out by yourself, I offer courses that just guide you along, or you can do it by yourself. So if you really want to know, it's all there, like filled out for you to know, you just have to choose to know, otherwise, you just want to be defiant, you don't really want to know, and I don't have time for the people who don't want to know or who want to be defiant. I want to sow into the lives of and help people who really want to know and really want to do better and understand and cultivate and create the world that is possible and just and loving for everyone.

K

Kira Dorrian 43:50

I love that answer. And you know, this is ultimately a parenting podcast and Deana and I talk all the time about how the absence of a choice is a choice. So in parenting, if you choose not to correct a behavior or talk about a behavior, or you know, by doing nothing, you're still doing something. And I think what you've just said is, is exactly it, right? It's like if you don't want to do the research to understand why people are saying that this all lives matter stuff is wrong, then you really just don't want to know. And don't hide behind. No, no, no, I've got it figured out. And this is what it is, like you either want to know or you

don't. So I appreciate what you've said, immensely.

D

Deana Thayer 44:32

Well, this has been amazing. I think I'll be processing it still for a little bit, just chewing on it. And, and I think as, as Kira said, with us really wanting to help parents, I think this is so critical because we are really uniquely positioned here to raise up our children to be adults who do better, because they know better. And that stuff starts with us learning so that we can know better and do better. So thank you so much for just sharing with us today, Lucretia, I really appreciate it. I know we both appreciate it. And I'm sure our listeners do too. And if people want to find you or connect with you, or do what you were just talking about and learn more, or take a course, can you tell us how to find you? Social media hashtags, all of that?

L

Lucretia Berry 45:21

Sure. Well, on social media, like, like Instagram is where I hang out personally. So if you want to see cute pictures of me and my family, it's Lucretia Barry. But Brownicity is where I teach and where I have a team of people who are just committed parents, pastors, scholars. We have become friends to hold each other's hands, and be stronger together in terms of serving the world this way. So brownicity.com has now in the fall, we launched a membership site. So we call it our online learning community. It's like a little school, but it's all online. And we do live courses. And so if you are able to take the course live, that's awesome. If you can't, they're all recorded, and they're in the online learning community space for you to access when you have set aside time to learn because yes, you have to make time to learn, you have to make it a priority, things are not going to change just you know, just at our own pace, or when we get around to it, you know, okay, so that's my little little soapbox, like, okay, how many hours are you dedicated to learning weekly, but so it's brownicity.com. Currently, the membership is \$10 a month, people tell me that is way too cheap. But it's our first year, this is our founding year of our online learning community. So it's \$10 a month, or you can pay \$110 for the whole year. And what that does is give you, it gives you access to all of the courses that are there. We you know, we constantly update, you know, materials and resources and all that there. So that's just kind of where we house everything. And you can go in there currently, we have a Foundations course, that we recommend, and then there's a raising anti racist kids course that is already in there. So can you just, you just jump on in, jump on in there. And then again, we had a lot scheduled to already be in there by June. But because of some things that have happened, we've had to reprioritize. So we are getting our other courses in there. So I think right now there are about six courses. And probably by fall, there will be six more courses for you. And it's for the person who says I want to learn, I want to stay on this learning journey. And you

need support. So that's what brownicity.com the membership offers, and it allows you to support our work because we should pay our teachers, you know, so there's that.

K

Kira Dorrian 48:12

Well, this is exactly what I was about to say. So thank you for saying that. Because I recently heard, Monique Melton said something that blew my mind. And it was right now everybody's you know, in that listening mode, and they're absorbing and they're absorbing and they're absorbing from all these people of color for free. And how much can you absorb without paying someone for educating you. And so listeners, you have now absorbed 50 minutes of Dr. Berry's time, and amazing knowledge. And so I would encourage you to honor that 15 minutes by considering joining brownicity. Dave and I joined, we have set aside Wednesday nights to work our way through the program. It's really, it's really not that hard to make that commitment. So I would just encourage our listeners to think about that. How much are you willing to absorb without acknowledging the work and the effort that's been put in?

L

Lucretia Berry 49:09

And also think about this. When I first start first started doing the work I, you know, I was encouraged with the sowing and reaping analogy, right. So you, if you just absorb, absorb, absorb and never sow, sow, sow, you know what, then you can't, you won't cultivate, you won't harvest. So yeah, it's important to sow. It really is. Sow into the things are, that are important, sow into the gardens that you want to bloom.

D

Deana Thayer 49:39

I love that.

K

Kira Dorrian 49:40

Lucretia, thank you so much for being with us today and sharing all of this just amazing information for our listeners to absorb and to think about and hopefully choose to put into practice. We really appreciate you being with us today.

L

Lucretia Berry 49:52

Thank you for having me. Thank you for knowing, seeing the value in what, what I'm offering. So I appreciate that.

D

Deana Thayer 50:02

Oh, it was wonderful, wonderful. I mean, I think, I appreciated that she was accommodating with my selfish question in there too. But I do think that kind of captures it, is we often feel a little bit ill equipped for these conversations, even in a multi ethnic household, which I have. And so I really appreciated her willingness to break some of these things apart for us, and do that in a way that really is tangible and practical, which is what you and I are all about.

K

Kira Dorrian 50:39

Mm hmm. I agree. And I loved that she I mean, I, and I know she barely scratched the surface of this. But I think, you know, one of the things that has been, the approach for a lot of parents is like, we'll just raise them kind, like, I just want kind kids, I just want to raise kind kids. But not understanding the system that we live in and how it was built and how we kind of got to where we are, then you can't understand why. Even if you raise super kind kids, if they don't understand some of these details, they can be as kind as they want, but they can't make a difference. And that's the important part, right? We're just gonna keep fumbling along if people don't understand what got us here in the first place. And I thought she did such a lovely job of touching on that, and giving enough nuggets for people to go, oh, but still, they need to go and do their own work.

D

Deana Thayer 51:27

Well, it's so true. And knowing the past informs our present, and then helps us do better in the future. And I think she explained that really well. And some people miss that piece.

K

Kira Dorrian 51:34

Right? Well, and we talk about in parenting all the time. You know how you parent now is informed by how you were parented, like, this is not new information that the past informs the present. So I love that. I really hope that our listeners will consider joining brownicity.com and becoming a member. If you do and you start doing the program, email me because I'm going to be doing it myself so we can we can talk about it. So thank you so much for being with us today. We hope you found it as helpful as we did. And as always, you can write in info at Future Focused parenting.com. Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and Deana Thayer and recorded partially in my laundry room, partially in Deana's bonus room. And at Lucretia Berry's house today. Music by Seattle band Hannalee. Thanks so much for listening.



Future Focused Parenting 52:18

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