

E3: Talking to Young Kids About the Uprising Following George Floyd's Murder - Part 3 of 3

Co-hosts: SooJin Pate and Hannah Carney

Guest: Kate Towle and Lena Francis

Intro (music by Mike Myth Productions):

SooJin: Welcome to the Antiracist Parenting Podcast, where we're working to create an antiracist world for ourselves, our children, and future generations to come.

Hannah: We are Hannah Carney and SooJin Pate, and we're coming to you not as experts but as parents who want to share our missteps and successes on raising antiracist children. Thank you for being on this journey with us, as we work together to build a community of antiracist parents who are raising a generation of antiracist kids.

SooJin: Welcome to the final part of our three part series on how to talk to your children about the uprising and racial reckoning taking place that was fueled by George Floyd's murder. In part one, we spoke to Daniel Shannon of Daniel Shannon Speaks about the counter-conditioning he's been doing to create a foundation of self-love and self-pride among his children. In part two, we spoke to Karla Benson Rutten of Benson Rutten innovations about the counternarratives she's been instilling in her children to provide history and context around systemic racism so that they can better understand their present world. And today, we round out our three part series by discussing how to talk with high schoolers about our current state of affairs. But before we get into that, we have a few updates to share.

Hannah: So we have some exciting updates. Yesterday, we launched our very first newsletter. This will be a monthly newsletter that will go out to all of our listeners, just giving links to our most recent episodes and talking about what's coming up. And last night SooJin and I joined our friends Tamu and Mallory on their podcast, which is called Bad at Love. And so once that episode is live, we will share that on our website and let you know that it's there. And then we also are working on transcripts for all of the episodes. That is in progress. And we are very sorry for the delay. And please know we're working on it and as soon as those are up, we will let you know. And we thank you for your patience in advance for that. And then we wanted to just put out a kind of a general invitation to our listeners to be in touch with us. We are, as SooJin said, rounding out our three-part series and we want to hear from you. And we've gotten great feedback so far, which we are using to incorporate and make changes. You can reach us at our website antiracistparentingpodcast.com. We have a contact page, but we would love to know what's resonating. What questions do you have? What's confusing? What has been clarifying? Anything and everything, we just would love to hear from you. So please be in touch with us. And we also thank you again for being on this journey with us and engaging in this way. It really gives us a lot of hope. So thank you so much.

SooJin: Yes, it really does give us a lot of hope. We love the feedback that we've already been getting, and we want to hear more from you. And hearing from you all will also help motivate us to continue keeping ourselves accountable. So yep, it is that time again, where we check in with each other. It's time for our accountability check in. Hannah, can you remind our listeners what your commitments were and update us on how that's going?

Hannah: Yeah, yeah. So again, I'm Hannah Carney. I use the pronouns she/her and hers and I identify as a white woman and married to a white man raising two white boys ages five and six. Our six year old is almost seven as he reminds us often. So the commitments I had made from last episode. One was ordering a book called *Something Happened In Our Town*, which I have ordered from a Black-owned bookstore, but I have not received it yet.

SooJin: Which Black-owned bookstore?

Hannah: Black Garnet Books.

SooJin: Oh great, yes.

Hannah: Which is a new local bookstore in the Twin Cities area. So very excited to engage with that book once it arrives. My other commitment was about learning more about multiracial families and interracial relationships and parenting with those family dynamics. And I have reached out to a friend who is in an interracial marriage and are raising multiracial children, and so hoping to have her and her partner on a future episode. And in the meantime, I ordered and I'm reading a book called *Raising Multiracial Children: Tools for Nurturing Identity in a Racialized World* by Farzana Nayani. And I just wanted to pull out a quote that resonates with me, and it's on page 64 and the author is quoting Dr. Sarah Gather, who says "There is a lot of work looking at how parents within racial and ethnic minority families socialize and prepare their own children for bias since those parents growing up as Black or Latino (as examples) know what type of experiences their children may face. However, there is far less work examining how parents of multiracial children socialize their kids. What makes this so unique is a monoracial parent, even if a racial minority, does not necessarily know what types of questions or identity denial experiences their child may face. U.S. society also essentializes race, meaning we think very fixed about belonging to just one racial group, but multiracial children defy that default categorical view. That is what makes raising a multiracial child so difficult at times, is the variation that comes with which racial or ethnic identity is most salient." And so I think that really, Karla brought this up in our last episode about the importance of us engaging around topics around multiracial families. And so I just felt like that quote really highlighted that importance and why it's important. And the author does go on to provide guidance and ideas around how to engage in these conversations. So I'm excited to keep reading, but I just wanted to highlight that quote. And I think the last thing I will share for my accountability check in is when we were talking to Tamu and Mallory last night, on the Bad at Love podcast, Tamu shared a very beautiful piece that she had written about Chadwick Boseman, who has recently passed away. And while I don't identify as a talented writer, I do write letters to my

children each week, which I store in a purple three-ring binder. And I would just like to share my most recent entry. So it goes, "Dear Tony and Matteo, racism is a problem. People are dying every single day. We need to listen, speak up and act. We need to build relationships with all people. We need to learn and talk about racism. We need to heal and use our privilege to undo racism. We need to include everyone who wants to participate in this lifelong exhausting work. We must resist the urge to fall back into old and current patterns of white supremacy. We must promote peace and stand up for justice. We must take care of ourselves and extend love to all. We must share our stories and believe the stories that others tell. We must be brave until all people are free. Love, Mama. P.S. just keep being awesome."

SooJin: Wow, Hannah, that is so beautiful. What do you do with these letters?

Hannah: Yeah so, I keep them in a binder and so every week I have literally a task on my calendar that says write a letter to your children. And so every week I sit down and I just reflect on the week. And I reflect on the conversations we've had and things that are on the top of my mind and things that, for example, when they get older, I want them to look back at these letters and just know who I am know what I am thinking about when, you know, they're at these young ages in life. And so just as a way to share myself and to, you know, build something that they can refer to as they grow.

SooJin: Oh, Hannah, I love that. So beautiful. Thank you so much for sharing that. So, as a reminder to listeners, my name SooJin and I am an Asian American woman, raising a mixed-Black daughter who is 12 years old. And in terms of what I had committed to, I had mentioned that the first thing I was going to do was to ask my daughter what brings her joy. So, as a reminder, in episode two, Karla had mentioned about incorporating radical black joy into her life. And that inspired me to do the same. So when I asked my daughter what brought her joy, she mentioned three things: finishing a drawing, playing with our cats Prima and Jack, and connecting with friends. And the thing is, is that these are things that she's doing on a daily basis already. And it made me realize, wow, she's already doing it! She's already implementing joy into her own life on her own. And that made me really proud of her and also reminded me of how when she was little, she had no hesitation to ask for what she needed. No hesitation whatsoever. Do you know how radical that was for me to witness a three year old, a five year old, a seven year old freely asking for what she needed. As women and especially as women of color, we're socialized to put the needs of others ahead of our own, to not ask for help, to not ask for what we need for fear of being seen as a complainer, as being needy or dependent, or worse being codependent. So it was radical for me when I witnessed my own daughter operating in such a way that was untethered to all these social expectations. And now to see her filling her life all on her own, with things that bring her joy, not only did my heart good but was a good reminder for me to meet my own needs around integrating joy daily into my own life. I've always said this. And it continues to be true from the moment that my daughter was born, that my daughter is the real teacher in our relationship. I learn so much from her. And here, I thought that initiating this conversation with her was about me teaching her about integrating joy. But nope, that is not how it went down at all. As she's done with me so many times during our relationship together, this conversation led to her teaching me.

So following her lead and example, I reached out to my former students who I haven't spoken to in years. And that's probably another thing that our listeners don't know. I am a professor of race and ethnic studies. So I reached out to my former students, and we caught up on our lives over this past week. And it has been amazing. It's been medicine for my soul. Truly. To connect deeply with someone that you have shared history with is like an elixir for me I realized after having those conversations. And after the heaviness of what happened to Jacob Blake, Chadwick Boseman, and the killing of protesters, etc. Those conversations, also known as elixirs, could not have come at a better time for me. So I'm so glad that we're making these commitments, Hannah. And having each other to hold ourselves accountable because it's making my life better. I'm doing things that I wouldn't necessarily think about or have forgotten about altogether. So I'm so grateful for our guests for teaching us because, you know, both Hannah and I, we've been garnering some incredible lessons from them. So on that note, Hannah, can you set the intention for this episode?

Hannah: Yes, I totally agree about our guests and about working on this podcast is really making a huge difference in such a short period of time already. So yeah, that's resonating. So our intention today is to be honest, vulnerable, and to share our respective truth and to remain hopeful about our collective future. Okay, so I am very excited to introduce Kate Toll and Lena Francis. I know Kate and Lena through Sweet Potato Comfort Pie. However, today is the first time I'm officially meeting Lena. So I'm going to have them introduce themselves. And Sweet Potato Comfort Pie, just for some background, is a local nonprofit that is doing work in the space of racial equity. And likely we'll talk more about that as we go on. So let's get started. Lena would you like to tell us about who you are, where you're from, and maybe what your intention is for today and some things that you're engaged with here locally?

Lena: Yeah, so hi, thank you for having me. My name is Lena. I use she/her pronouns. I'm 17, and I'm going to be a senior at South High School in South Minneapolis this year. A lot of the work I do at Sweet Potato Comfort Pie is helping Rose with outreach and reaching out to people, but I also do a lot of work at South with racial and social justice. And I've been helping a lot with the protesting happening in Minneapolis. So that's what I've been up to.

Hannah: Wonderful, would you like to share an intention for today's conversation?

Lena: So I think my intention for today being a mixed woman of color and having more than one identity, my intention would be to just share all of the different sides of my truth because I have a lot of different perspectives and identities within myself. And so hopefully I can learn from you guys and your identities, and you guys can learn from my different stories.

Hannah: Great, thank you so much. Kate, would you like to give us a little background about you?

Kate: Yes, well, I'm, I came to St. Paul to go to college at Hamline University. And I grew up with, I think a key part of my story here is that I grew up with a father who was

actively doing antiracist work in his time, which he was ahead of his time. I mean, he was a Social Security administrator, but he was bringing Social Security cards to people who were incarcerated. And he was making sure that all the social security documents were translated into Spanish. And so imprinting from him is a big part of who I am. And I'm about to publish a novel about interracial friendship that is a large part about his story and what he's taught me about race. And also in 2011, a model for a dialogue about race between youth and elders. One that my daughter and I created one, the St. Paul Foundation Facing Race Idea Challenge. And what was unique about that is, it wasn't just St. Paul Foundation picking the best idea with the team of people, it was actually a community vote. So the community had to vote that our work was important. And so that's what we implemented itself and all of these connections have come together for me to have the honor of working with Lena through Sweet Potato Comfort Pie. And I've been on that team since the very, very beginning, you know, first as Rose's cheerleader and saying you can do this, and I've evolved to more of a strategist and facilitator role.

Hannah: Thank you. So Lena, what conversations have you been having with your parents and friends about racism and the current racial reckoning?

Lena: So I think I'm lucky because most of my friends, a lot of times, we just kind of sit in a circle and they're like, "This is so stupid," but I think that with different sides of my family, I've been having different conversations. So my dad is Jamaican, so the conversations I've been having with him are very different. And so those conversations usually are just "When are we going to go to protest?" And they're very simple and there's just a type of mutual understanding. And it's, you know, we don't even really need to sit down and have a conversation about it because we're both just like, "Okay, what's your plan today?" You know, "Where are you going?" "What part of Minneapolis?" "Can I come with you?" "Are you going to go to the [George Floyd] memorial?" But I think on my mom's side, it's a lot of having conversations about what's really happening and what it really means and same with more of my mom's side of the family and her parents and my aunts and uncles. It's a lot of them learning from me and being like, "Okay, so you're doing a lot of this work. What does that mean for you? What type of labor is that for you? And what how have you learned? And what's your experience?"

SooJin: Your mother's side of the family: how receptive are they to the conversations that you're having with them?

Lena: Yeah, so I think more so some than others. And my mom, obviously, raising two Black children, has kind of been forced to learn a lot already. So she is very open to everything. And she's always been open to everything. She grew up in South Chicago, like that type of area. And so she's very familiar with being forced to be comfortable with race and having conversations about that. And so she's very receptive. I would say other parts of my family are less receptive, and they tend to need a little bit more help. And so I think the way that I do that is just instead of being like, "Well, this is what's happening." It's like, "What do you think is happening?" And ask some questions and specifically about -- I had a grandpa, who was not really understanding what happened

with Elijah McLain. And I was like, "Well, do you think he should have been killed?" "Why do you think he was killed?" "What did he do?" "Was what he did, deserving of him dying?" "Do you think that people of color and specifically BIPOC are treated unfairly?" He said, yes. And I said, "So do you think that they deserve more attention right now?" And he said, yes. And I said, "Well, that's it. That's what's happening right now." It's not white people are being shot more. It's why Black people are being shot disproportionately. And we need to work on getting Black people to where white people are before we have a conversation about that.

SooJin: Thanks for sharing that.

Hannah: Do you think as you talk to your friends, Lena, that high school aged children or high school students are more often educating parents? Or do you think parents are involved with educating kids also? What have you found with that dynamic?

Lena: I think it's my belief that as we age as a society, the younger generation continues to be more radical. And so I feel that it's always the younger generation working on bettering their parents and their grandparents and their aunts and their uncles and their great grandmas and great grandpas. And I think that's [a function] of growing up, and learning from the people that are of the same age as you. And so I think that most families, especially families of color, grow up having conversations about race but obviously, a parent who's 45-50 years old is going to have a very different experience from someone like me who's living in it and who's experiencing it. So I think that every generation from the beginning of time, the younger generation really is teaching older people what's going on.

Hannah: So what message do you have for parents who have high school aged children right now?

Lena: I would say just listen and be receptive because I think that any student, regardless of their identity, is really experiencing this. And I would say, especially to white parents, check in with your kids, not about how they're doing or how they're feeling but maybe have a conversation with them about what you think is happening. And you can see what they're learning from their peers and their students of color in their communities and at their schools. Because I know, South is, I think it's the only school in Minnesota where there's more people of color than white people and more Black students than white students. And so, all of these white kids going to an inner city school are really learning from their five USC counterparts. And so white families checking in and being like, "So I know that you're probably not having as hard of a time as your Black best friend, but like, what are you learning from him? And how are you choosing to participate to help your friends and to help people that you're directly communicating with? So that's what I would say. But mostly, just listen. Just listen to what they have to say because I'm sure that every high schooler has something to say, regardless of what their standing is on what's happening. They all have a lot to say.

Hannah: So Kate, what conversations are you having with high school students currently, or what conversations have you had with your children when they were in high school? Give us a little bit of insight into that experience.

Kate: Well, first of all, it's always sacred time when we're able to talk with each other about these issues, and I think we have to treat it with a sense of discovery and also a sense of reverence. Because me identifying as a white woman and a white parent, like you, Hannah, my life partner is white, my children are white, and my son is about to turn 24, my daughter, 29. But they've been living this experience on the ground. So I'm grateful to not only be able to talk to high school students, and even younger children, but children their age. And that gives me a range of the perspectives that Lena was talking about, and how very, very important that is, you know, for that, what Paulo Freire calls that dialogical action. We can make a much better, much richer, much more informed decision when we've taken into account many different perspectives. So one of the approaches that I've always had is that I'm, like SooJin, learning from my children. And they're my teachers as much as I'm their teacher, and also that I'm their first teacher and their lifelong teacher. And I also have an internal discipline that I need to set an example. So I need to be the kind of person that I want to see. I need to be that person. And that means also modeling what it looks like to make mistakes, modeling what it looks like to be radical, to be brave, to take huge risks, and to be able and curate space, the way y'all are doing with this podcast to talk about that. Because we have to remember one of the tools of white supremacy is perfectionism. Right? So you know, we have to understand that there's no perfect antiracist, right? And we're all carrying the burden of white supremacy from having been conditioned in this culture. We're all carrying that burden. If you look at us on a spectrum and a slide, for instance, some of us are farther along on that slide. Some of us are farther behind. If you look at it as a math lesson, there are people who get the addition and subtraction of racism, right? People who get the multiplication and division, people who get the algebra, and then you've got people like SooJin, who are professors who get the calculus of it, right. So we have to, especially with our young people, I'm right with Lena, that we need to understand they're teaching us and they're pushing us. They're pushing us on that spectrum so that we can become more aware of their experience. And so one of the things that I've always done and I really want to do this with Lena, as well, is understand that Lena is our teacher here and she and her generation. And so one of the things I've always done is to work with getting young leaders like Lena published. One of the books that I've worked on is talking about race, alleviating the fear. And this has three submissions from South students in it. It has also *our* work as adults, but it also includes youth voice. And so one of the things that I like is to have leaders like Lena who are passionate about this work and really inspiring peers to do this work. Be teachers out in community and leaders and see us with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie. We're not just baking a beautiful pie; we're also having important and rich discussions about cultural identity and inner racial bridging and community action. And so, one of the things that I've done with youth, high school youth, is to create pie identity circles. So while people are coming off their baking shift, we talked together about our pie identity. How all those different parts of us are ingredients to make us a stronger actor in community.

Hannah: Yeah. Are there any other stories or messages that you'd like to share? Right now we're talking specifically to our parents who have high school age students. Is there anything else you'd like to share anything you'd like to bring up that we didn't necessarily ask about?

Kate: Well, it's funny because this just came to my mind when Lena was talking about how when I encountered South [High] with my daughter, there were all these different identity groups. There was UMOJA, and an Asian American group and, and all these different groups. There wasn't a group for our Somali students. And one of the things that we did was realize we needed a group that could bring us all together, but in an enlightened way, because if you study Beverly Tatum at all, you know that there's a good reason why students are sitting apart in the cafeteria because they need to have sanctuary from race fatigue, right? So we wanted to create a space that did not create race fatigue but created a sense of solidarity, understanding that that fatigue might be there as white students raised their consciousness but also having opportunities for white students to do that as a group in and of themselves. And one of the first groups that we bridged to were our Somali students, our Somali and Oromo students, our Ethiopian students, because we saw that they didn't have the space. And so it was a great collaboration that we had. And I guess my biggest lesson is to approach this work never from a place of arrogance or righteousness or shame but from a place of discovery. I am learning right along with you. I'm getting hit in the face. I'm getting punched in the gut. I'm on this journey learning with you. It's a difficult journey, but there's a lot of great things we can do. I remember bringing South students out to the suburbs, you know, we did collaborations. We took a book about the Little Rock Nine and turned it into a play. But it was a flexible play, like theater of the oppressed, where students could take different roles and do the same play, but take different roles of that scenario. So they could be Governor Faubus. They could be the principal of the school, or they could be a parent or one of the Little Rock Nine so that students could feel that out. But in our case, we saw students brought that out to Lakeville and Farmington and we laughed at each other, but we also threw up our hands and say, could you believe this even happened? So I also learned that when you're dealing with difficult, difficult material that can re-traumatize our youth, it's very important to let them be the ones to bring it up. And, you know, I don't want to unless Lena talks to me about Rubin Stacy being lynched in Fort Lauderdale in 1935 and the little white girl smiling up at him. I don't want to, I mean, and here I am bringing it up. And I'm doing this to illustrate a point that, that our history is gruesome. And the other thing is to make sure that when we bring this work out into the community, our youth are the teachers. We need to flip that script. The elder to youth bridging is a cultural bridging process all of its own and so I think that as older people, you know, and I'm not quite an elder yet, but one day I'll get my elder feather. But we need to learn, like Lena said, we need to be quiet and listen. We need to defer to them. We need to have cultural humility and step back and really understand, just like a white person would do with a Black person, right? We need to look at them and say, you teach me here, what you're going through, I want to learn from you. And what I've also learned as the results of doing that with my children and South children and children in our community, and not just children, but youth leaders, genuine leaders and teachers. You know, finding that innate potential together has led our youth from South and people like Lena to take really important roles in society.

They've gone on to get their masters and doctorates and become key critical workers in public health to teach about racial disparities. So this work is not for the faint of heart, but it's really important, and we have to approach it from a place of discovery.

SooJin: Lena, I wanted to follow up with you. First of all, how are you doing? What have you been thinking about? And then secondly, what conversations have you been having with your friends about what's been going on?

Lena: You know, I'm fine. I think that any person of color is having way more of a difficult time than anyone's able to really understand. And, you know, that's what generational trauma looks like. Being able to watch all the videos of the multiple people that have been killed recently: that's trauma for any person of color. And it would, you know, awake any type of really bad feelings within yourself, and it's really difficult. If I'm being honest, it's like, it's really hard. You know, and especially, I think that a lot of people go around and reposting videos of people being shot, or people being kned in the back of their neck, you know, and I think that's something that people need to keep in mind: that is trauma. And I think what I've learned about trauma-- I read an article and it was talking about how as a child of two parents, you are carrying the trauma of both of those parents. And so trauma runs in three generations. And so I'm carrying the trauma of my grandparents, and then my children are going to begin a new cycle. And so not only am I carrying the trauma of my dad who's experienced firsthand racism and experience growing up in a different country, and what being a black immigrant looks like in America, but I'm carrying the trauma from his parents, as well. And so that's what I think people need to keep in mind is that it's not just what you experienced in your lifetime, but it's generations upon generations of trauma that you're carrying from you and the experience of all of your family members, and especially people of color who have been in the U.S. for generations and are slave descent. What does that look like for them? And what do all of these things-- and incarceration and black people being lynched and shot even currently today, what kind of trauma does that evoke in them? So that's something that I think people really don't take into account when it comes to everything going on is that it's trauma, there's no other way to put it. It's traumatizing. And so I think what those conversations look like with my friends: they tend to be different because I have friends of different identities, ranging identities, when it comes to gender or race. And so I think that it would depend on who I'm talking to, but I'm very lucky that anybody that I surround myself with is really willing to learn. And so I think that if I'm talking to one of my closest friends, who is black. He's Nigerian. And so I think having conversation with them, we can just sit and be like, "Yo, so like, how are you feeling?" "How's your family doing?" And we'll go to a protest together, and I think a lot of conversations with people of color, it's just, you know, like, "How are you feeling?" This is a lot, and it's just kind of solidarity. Like we're able to sit with each other and be like, "Yeah, this is a lot," and you're able to feel vulnerable with someone who has a mutual understanding with you and has like, a shared experience. But I think that with friends that are different from me, and friends that are different people of color, that are from a different background or that are white, I think that it's just having conversations about what they understand. And I think that you don't always need to teach someone. Not every moment has to be a teaching experience. But I think that there's a lot of ways that teaching goes unnoticed. And so even just having a conversation and just sharing

your opinion, regardless of whether or not you're trying to intentionally share information with someone and someone who doesn't understand, just having a conversation about race, even if you're on the same opinion, and you're both like, "Oh, abolish the police." Having conversations about what is abolishing police look like? What's your opinion on that? What's my opinion on that? You know, that's teaching in itself.

SooJin: I really appreciate you lifting up how traumatizing all of this is, and the the re-tweeting of videos and photos and all that stuff-- how it's just another added layer of trauma, like after the first initial event of trauma, and the generational trauma that we carry in our bodies. Thank you for all those wonderful reminders.

Hannah: Anything else before we move into the next portion of our agenda?

Kate: Well, I just want to say how excited I am for Lena to have this understanding of intergenerational trauma and the neuroscience is showing us such profound things because it takes a while for the prefrontal cortex to develop. And even when our prefrontal cortexes are still in the process of development, the thing about racism is it is trauma upon trauma upon trauma upon trauma. And unlike the atomic bomb, or Nazi Germany, it never stops, right, it's never stopped in our country. So, one of the things I just learned yesterday from reading Bessel Van der Kolk in *The Body Keeps the Score* is that when we experience a significant trauma, as our youth are experiencing every day, it's like having a stroke in the brain. It's like having a stroke! And that part of the brain shuts down and disassociates and can't learn. And so we need to stop the bleeding. And we need to create. We used to talk in S.T.A.R.T. about how you can't have safe spaces anymore; you can only have brave spaces, but we do need to have some safety for our children to be able to learn. So I think that this kind of conversation does set the space and tone for that.

SooJin: Lena, is there anything else that you'd like to add before we move on?

Lena: Yeah, I think adding on to what Kate said, racism does show itself. It's very consistent for any person of color's entire lifetime. I think also something that I've learned - and something that I've been trying to understand better, but also communicate to other people and to my white friends and my family - is that it shows itself in like hundreds of different ways. And so, you have trauma and racism on a very individualized level, like someone experiencing some type of racism directly towards them, or a microaggression, or something that made them uncomfortable based on their race. And then you have institutionalized racism and systemic racism. And so that carries for generations, and that's where that generational trauma comes from is lack of access and lack of resources, and then continuing for hundreds of years. And then beyond that we have how generational trauma will affect any individual on an individualized basis. So that's three different levels. There's more, but that's three different levels of how racism could affect one person. And so you're experiencing generational trauma. And then on top of that you're experiencing institutionalized trauma, and you have kind of that underlying feeling of what that feels like. But then also if you apply for a job and you have a Black sounding name, and you don't get a job because of the way your name sounds, or you don't get a job because you go to the

interview, and they weren't expecting a Black person, that's on a very individual level, you know. And so not only is it individualized, but it's systemic on an individual level. So I think that's something that I've been trying to think and associate with other people.

SooJin: And we are now full circle where it's the students teaching us, right? It's the young ones that are teaching us. Thanks for dropping all that knowledge, Lena. Thank you for that. And also, our intention, Hannah and I, we shared that one of our intentions was about bringing hope into this - about our collective future. And oh my goodness, Lena, I have so much hope for our future because of you, because you're a leader. I mean, you're the next generation after us and you're leading us, so thank you so much. Wow, you're already like a mover and shaker in your world right now. And can you imagine what she's going to be like, 10 years from now? 20 years from now? Like, I can't wait. Our future is in good hands because of you, Lena. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Lena: Thank you. I appreciate that.

SooJin: Before we go into kind of our fun part, which is the "Lightning Round" series of questions, I wanted to see if there was anything that either of you wanted to promote, lift up? Regarding any projects or issues or things that you're working on?

Kate: Well, we're all working with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie, which is doing some profound work with the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Humanities Center. And so that's www.sweetpotatocomfortpie.org. And one of the things that I'm also doing because I got into work through some of my own anxiety about things that are happening, I started to fold the little origami birds. So I created with some friends on a website called www.birdsofpeace.org, with the idea that we should lift up each other's cultural gifts, to liberate one another's cultural gifts such as origami or sweet potato pie, or learning about painting the Sankofa bird, right. And lift up these gifts, and use this as a way to re-humanize humanity. Because our little ones are being brought into all this trauma. And they need activity-based therapy, including baking pie, or folding origami birds, or whatever we can do. Sidewalk chalk, random acts of kindness-- things that we can do to still lift up humanity and remind one another that our fate is intricately interwoven.

Lena: Yeah, I think same. I think Sweet Potato Comfort Pie. I think something else to promote: I know a lot of young people and high schoolers that are starting their own organizations and their own movements. And there's a lot of them, so I can't just promote one. But I would say for parents and white parents who are looking to learn from young people, if you don't have children that are in high school or college or middle school and aren't necessarily ready to do that work, go look at South students. Find South students and see what they're doing. Because you know, I can't speak for every high school in my district, but specifically South there's so much. We have a racial justice day every year and we have different speakers and activists in our community come in and just talk about their experience and do interactive workshops with students. And I have a friend who's doing a pop-up thrift store and all of the money is going

towards the bailout fund. So you know, everybody's doing something different. And I would just say to go and look for it because you can find it anywhere.

SooJin: Thank you. Okay, so I'm going to ask a series of questions, very short, and just answer whatever comes to the top of your head. So anti-racist parenting is...Lena, we'll start with you. If you just want to fill in the blank.

Lena: Learning.

SooJin: Antiracist parenting is learning. Great. What about you, Kate?

Kate: I believe it's sacred work. I believe it's the most important work that we could do because I believe that if we can liberate ourselves in solidarity with one another and stop the harm from racist practices and white supremacy, we can really move humanity forward.

SooJin: Thanks. Okay. Second question. What's the last thing that made you smile?

Lena: So one of my closest friends is Isra Hirsi. She's Ilhan Omar's daughter and she has her own activists and has her own platform. She's one of my best friends. And she recently did an Instagram post where she came out about her internalized colorism, and she was talking about how she's becoming way more comfortable having very, very, very dark skin and what that looked like for her throughout her lifetime. And so she wrote an entire piece on it. And then she just ended with being like, I'm at a place where I love myself. And so that made me smile because it wasn't really something that I knew about her, but I'm really glad that she's been able to do that work for herself. So, that made me smile.

SooJin: Kate?

Kate: Honestly, we have a friend from Sweet Potato Comfort Pie, Celeste, who just lost her husband. And I sent her a gift in the mail and something about the gift that I sent her made her laugh and that made me laugh. And I felt so grateful that even amidst our loss, we could be silly.

SooJin: Wonderful. Okay, what are you reading right now?

Lena: I'm reading *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. I just started it.

SooJin: Oh wonderful.

Kate: I'm reading *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love and Liberation*. It's so good.

SooJin: Who's it by?

Kate: It's by Reverend Angel Kyodo Williams and two other Lamas who work through the intersection of race liberation and Buddhism.

SooJin: Cool. Okay, what are you doing to take care of yourself?

Lena: For me, what taking care of myself looks like right now is a lot of just self-care. A lot of sleep. Sleep is self-care for me. Something I've learned is that taking care of yourself and being in the best state of yourself and feeling your best and getting enough sleep, eating your best, you're able to give more to everyone else. So self-care is community care. So I'm just trying even though, you know, you might not be in the best space, you're like, "Ugh, like I don't want to take a shower. I just don't have the energy." "I don't want to like, go eat, I'm in bed, and I'm comfortable." Like making sure that you do for yourself because then you're able to go out and help other people.

Kate: So one of the things that I do is lift weights and it's become a metaphor for me because as I lift that physical weight, I think I'm also lifting my anti-racism weight. I'm lifting my emotional weight, spiritual. And building muscles for humanity. So it's always hard to get started, but I've developed a practice where I really require myself to do that as the discipline. And yeah, it feels great afterwards, and maybe I won't get osteoporosis.

SooJin: So what is one thing you're committed to doing in your antiracist parenting journey?

Lena: So I'm not a parent, but I would say that I'm still just trying to help other people and like younger people. Like my brother who's three years younger and checking in on him and checking in on people that are younger for me. And then also still trying to learn from people that are younger than me because even someone who's three years younger than me and my brother being like an African American man, like what does he have to teach me?

Kate: Since I have always encouraged my children to develop strong interracial friendships, it's likely that I will have mixed grandchildren. And I just want to remain really open, similar to Lena. Check in, check in with them. Let them ask me questions. They always know that they can tell me if they see something that I'm doing. One of the biggest things my daughter's done for me is, she's in higher ed. So she keeps me up on all the latest language with gender equity and racial equity. And that's really helpful.

SooJin: So what question would you like Antiracist Parenting Podcast to answer in a future episode?

Kate: It would be great to unpack this trauma and work with Resmaa Menakem's book, *My Grandmother's Hands* and, you know, maybe some other books like Bessel Van Der Kolk. And look at the real impact that this is having, not only on our children, but us. Our self-care as parents is critical so that we transform it and not transmit it.

Lena: I think what I would say specifically to white people that are trying to be more antiracist, where are you going to get first-hand knowledge about what this uprising and what most types of racialized trauma look like? And not just reading a book or reading an article, but who are you going to? And what youth are you reaching out to learn from them?

SooJin: And I love how you, in that question, you're already building in accountability. Love that. Okay, anything else? Anything else in terms of what you'd like to share before we say goodbye?

Kate: Well, I just want to say that, um, and I think I've talked to Lena and Hannah about this, that we have to also always have that talk about reparations. And we have to always understand that we're on Dakota land. And one of the things that Dakota people have taught us is *Mitakuye Oyasin* which means "all my relations." And so it's not about just showing up side by side in a protest with one another, although that's a good thing to do. It's also how do we stand with each other through all these trials? And, and also, successes, right? How do we do this for the long haul? How do we stick with one another and stay in a sense of discovery and humility? And how do we do this work without shame, which is a tool of the oppressor?

SooJin: Thank you all so much for your time, for sharing all of your experiences, insights and observations with us. And Lena, like *thank you*. It's extraordinary to have your voice, and we are so grateful and honored that you decided to spend part of your day with us. Thank you for that.

Lena: Thank you for having me. It means a lot that I get to be here.

Hannah: I'm so excited to continue our work with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie. And again, just thank you so much for your time today and for sharing your stories with us.

SooJin: Wow, that was really great.

Hannah: Yeah, yeah. So interesting to hear from both Kate and Lena. Two really different perspectives in the same room and just thinking through, especially for me, as someone with elementary school kids to think about like what's coming and what seeds I need to plant in order to kind of be a better listener and to continue to be in conversation with my kids as they get older and as they become more involved in the work.

SooJin: So would you say that's the commitment that you're making?

Hannah: Yeah, yeah, I would definitely say that. I think that Lena really brought to my attention this idea of where am I getting my first-hand knowledge and which youth am I going to so I want to actually commit to looking at that and making a list of actual youth that I am paying attention to, in addition to all the books and articles, what she also mentioned. And I will continue to do that, too. But definitely, I'm making a commitment to coming up with a literal list of names.

SooJin: Great. I think for me - I can't get over the part where Lena talked about generational trauma and all the different layers of trauma that we're holding at one time. And I would say that one of the primary objectives of my life is to ensure that I don't pass on my generational trauma on to Sxela, my daughter. It's work that I've been very intentional about as an adult, but I realize that I haven't been paying as close attention to it. Probably the past six months, for sure, I haven't. And so that's what I'm going to

commit to is make a list like you, but instead of a list of names, I'm going to reflect on where I'm at currently, what is the generational trauma that I need to abolish, root out in my life. Early, like I said, I've started that work. And a lot of it was around motherloss. A lot of it was around the issues that come from adoption, since I was adopted from Korea and into a white family. But I was adopted at five. So I remember everything. And so that is another layer of trauma for me, just the fact that I was conscious of everything that was happening to me at the time. And so I've done a lot of work around processing that and learning from it and being very intentional to not pass off all the dysfunction and the dysfunctional ways in which trauma can play out in your life when it's unresolved, right. So I've done a lot of work around that piece. And I haven't thought to think about well, what other layers of trauma exist in my life? So that's what I'm going to do and make that list of what those other layers are and yikes, I say that now and like, okay, now fear is bubbling up. I'm starting to fear, yeah, to sense fear bubbling up in me because I'm not sure where that's gonna take me. You know, and then I'm already thinking about, like, our accountability check in and then me sharing that, and oh, no, I'm starting to tear up already. Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. But the fact that I'm having this response tells me that this is the work that I need to be doing.

Hannah: Yeah, and, as Kate said, that when we approach it with a sense of discovery, I can tell that you are on the track that you need to be on.

SooJin: Yeah. Am I looking forward to it? No. But I know it's necessary. And this is what commitment looks like, right? Doing stuff that is difficult and hard and stuff that we don't want to like, you know, is this territory that I really want to explore? Well, actually, if I'm honest, yes, I do because I'm committed to not passing on generational trauma. So if this is what's needed, then I gotta do it.

Hannah: Yeah, and I feel the same way about my intention around listening to youth and that's really, I mean, that was very explicit in terms of white parents need to be doing this and so that I can relate to that feeling of like knowing this is what is needed.

Outro (music by Mike Myth Productions):

SooJin: Yeah. So we just want to say thank you for joining us today. You can find more information about us and past episodes on our website, antiracistparentingpodcast.com. A big shout out out to Mike Smith productions for the intro and outro music.

Hannah: This work requires us to challenge ourselves and take care of ourselves. Be well.

SooJin: Be antiracist.