

E5: Talking to Children about Peacebuilding in Divisive Times

Co-hosts: SooJin Pate and Hannah Carney

Guest: Crixell Shell

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 Episode Five. It's been a minute since we've put out a podcast, so I hope that this episode finds you, our listeners, safe and healthy. Before we get started, I just wanted to share that the transcripts for Episodes One and Two are up on the website. And we're working on transcribing Episodes Three and Four. So we'll let you know when they're ready. So a lot has happened since our last podcast episode aired in October that featured our special guest Emilia Gonzalez Avalos, who moved us with her very powerful story of migration and the life's work that she has devoted to ensuring a free world for all people - especially those who are undocumented in this country. Both Hannah and I, we were inspired to mobilize people to vote on behalf of those who aren't able to vote, yet whose lives have been devastated and destroyed by the policies enacted by the current administration. So before we launch into our conversation about peacebuilding during divisive times with our special guest today, we'd like to fill you in what we've been up to the last month through our "Accountability Check-In." So Hannah, can you remind our listeners what commitments you made from the last episode and update us on how that's going?

Hannah: Yeah, thank you. So SooJin and I had made the same commitment from last month, which was to mobilize people to go out and vote. And before I talk about that, I want to revisit one unfinished accountability goal from Episode Three. If you remember with Lena Francis and Kate Towle, during that episode, I had made a commitment to making a list of high school-aged leaders or young leaders that I'm following. And in Episode Four, I had shared that this goal was harder than I thought it would be. And I stayed with it. And I can report today that I'm now following three young people from the Twin Cities on social media. The first is Lena Francis, who we had as a guest on Episode Three, who also is an intern with Sweet Potato Comfort Pie, which was one connection point that we share. The second is Ilhan Omar's daughter, Isra Hirsi, whom Lena had mentioned during our conversation. And the third young person that I'm following is Jerome Treadwell, who is both a musician and an activist. And I learned about him through a series called "How Can We Breathe," through the Minnesota Humanities Center. Jerome was one of the youth leaders who was featured in the Elders and Youth session this past month. So I definitely recommend that our listeners check out what Lena, Isra, and Jerome are doing. And I would, of course, love to hear from our listeners on additional suggestions on

that. So now back to my goal around getting the vote out. So I had started this work back in September, hosting a meet and greet, donating money and distributing literature for local candidates. In Episode Four, I had made the commitment to take my efforts further. However, several days after making that commitment, my sister Bridgette found out that her cancer had returned. And at that point, I kind of froze. And that's kind of the best way I can describe it. Processing that news was a struggle for me - still is. Not only because of the news itself, but also because I knew that being frozen was preventing me from getting out the vote. And that led to a lot of different emotions, but mostly feelings of guilt and depression. So I was a mess. And fortunately, I had SooJin, my family and my amazing accountability partners to help me grapple and cope with the situation. I have deep feelings of gratitude right now and despite missing the mark with the getting out the vote efforts, I am able to mobilize voters in Georgia in the runoff election. So that's my update. And I'm feeling, generally, I'm running a bit behind schedule. And I'm also doing the best that I can.

SooJin: Hannah, thanks so much for sharing that because I think you are probably expressing a lot of the feelings and a lot of what other people are feeling in this moment - just exhaustion. But not only that, on top of that with your sister's health - that news just being heartbreaking since she was doing so well. So thank you for being vulnerable and being honest with how you're feeling and where you're at in this moment. And despite it all, you still were able to keep your commitments. So that's amazing! That's extraordinary.

Hannah: Thank you. And obviously, I have a lot of feelings about it, but yeah, just how it is right now. I have to accept and embrace.

SooJin: Yeah, as Hannah just said, we also had the same commitment around mobilizing people to go out and vote and I also made a personal commitment to donate to Navigate Minnesota and Unidos Minnesota - that was Emilia's organization that she talked about in Episode Four. So I made a larger one-time donation and set up a smaller recurring monthly donation to that organization. And I also volunteered to phone bank and text bank with Frontline and WFP, the Working Families Party, to mitigate voter suppression and inform people on where to vote. So I want to share this really fun story. When I phone banked for Pennsylvania, Wanda Sykes was on the call. Yes! It was amazing to see a celebrity of her stature taking time to phone bank with us. And I also phone banked and text banked for the state of Georgia. And it was so inspiring and energizing to have 500 to 600 people from all over the country and the world. There were people from Germany, Luxembourg, Dubai, London, just to name a few, who came together for one objective: to encourage people to vote regardless of their party affiliation, and to educate them on where to go, as well as to check in with folks to see if they needed rides or Uber fare or whatever else they needed to remove any obstacle to voting on election day. It was so amazing, so inspiring, so energizing. And so I highly encourage people to sign up and volunteer. It's not scary at all. I thought it was gonna be scary, which is why I was so hesitant. But you know, once you do it the first time, it's not scary at all. Yes, you'll get really rude people in response sometimes, but you also get people who are really thankful to receive information on where their nearest polling station is or how to request a mail-in ballot because every vote counts. And I'm currently spending every Tuesday night text banking and Wednesday night phone

banking for the Georgia runoff elections. And I'll be doing that right up until the election takes place on January 5th, with early voting beginning on December 14th. So with that, Hannah, can you set the intention for this episode?

Hannah: Yeah. First, I just have to say: you rock! Awesome. Way to go. It matters and makes a difference. So thank you.

SooJin: Thank you.

Hannah: Yes, our intention today is around peacebuilding: focusing on building peaceful pathways within ourselves, within our communities, and within our world. It is my pleasure to introduce our special guest for today, Crixell Shell from the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute. And I'm going to welcome you now. Please can you tell us a little bit about yourself, who you are, where you're from, and what you do?

Crixell: Sure. Thank you so much, Hannah and SooJin, for having me on today. I'm just delighted to be with you and your listeners. As you said, my name is Chrixell Shell. I am the Assistant Executive Director of the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute. Our organization began about 10 years ago. Our Executive Director, Donna Minter, started the organization because she really wanted to focus on helping Minnesotans discover how they can turn their unhealed psychological trauma into non-violent power. We do that in many ways at our organization. We have trainings that are various lengths that the public is more than welcome to come to. So any of your listeners are invited. We have two-hour trainings. We have trainings that are full days. We have contract trainings. We also have other events, such as every month, I facilitate three racial reconciliation healing circles. And we also have a monthly film series where we show a social justice film. So what all of that work does is centers peace in my life and peacebuilding especially because we know that peace is not something that is not the end of the journey, right? Peacebuilding is something that happens all the time. So that is my work. And like I said, I'm just delighted to be here. So, thank you.

Hannah: Awesome. And would you like to set an intention for today?

Crixell: I've been thinking a lot about that. And I think the intention that I am setting for 2021 can be started now. So that intention for me really is to continue to lean in and create spaces where we can have conversations around racial reconciliation. Where we can have conversations where people are invited in and not pushed out because of their opinions. Because maybe they don't know how to word things correctly. And so really, it's about building spaces where people can connect. So that is the intention that I have and I will carry through 2021.

Hannah: Our first question that we would like to focus on today with you is what conversations have you been having with your child or children about the election? Or peacebuilding during times of division?

Crixell: That's a big question, right? How do we do this work in the midst of with children - in the midst of all that's going on? Well, as a result of COVID-19, my husband, son - and my son is 13 - and I are all working and going to school from home full time. So although this pandemic has created an unimaginable level of stress, it also has given us the gift of time. Since we don't have to leave our homes and separate during the day, we've had the opportunity to really have lots of conversations about the election, pre-election during that week of the election and then post-election. And those conversations, we just had to start it out by listening to our son. So maybe we'd be in the kitchen grabbing a snack or lunch and we just kind of lean into him and say, "Hey, what are you thinking about this? Have you heard about the election?" And those smaller conversations and really listening to him helped us to learn where to start the conversations this year. Because he's 13, he's a teenager, his brain is developing differently than when he was a smaller child and he also has the opportunity to take in a lot more information that we have no control over. And so it was really important for us to learn where he was. After we began exploring sort of his thoughts, feelings, what his teachers or his classmates and friends were talking about, then my husband and I were able to identify some places where he didn't have knowledge. So, specifically talking about like the Electoral College, for instance. Like he didn't quite understand why if you get the most votes, why he didn't win the election. And so we watched a documentary about that. We watched both of Stacey Abrams' documentaries: *All In the Fight for Democracy* and *Suppressed the Right to Vote* so those are a little bit longer. We've watched other shorter documentaries around the Jim Crow era. We watch smaller documentaries around the transition earlier in this country's history when people were gaining the right to vote and why that was important - so women and Black people. And so a lot of our conversations we frame it around learning, so that we can understand where he is, where his gaps of knowledge are. And then we can give him not only the information that we sure would want him to know, but also allow him to have resources to form his own opinions as well. It feels like that something that we aren't doing a great job of right now is helping people to develop their own opinions about something. To do the research to look into it. To think about it and consider what they're learning and how it fits them. And so we're trying to model that with our son. So that we want him to have the values and morals that we share. And we also want him to be his own person. And so giving him that information, having conversations and then also giving him other resources, is how we have raised him. And so that model has worked well for us, especially during the election. We also watched the debates, I'm not sure if your daughter was into that. We watch the debates and it was really interesting to hear his critique of the debates of all the candidates. And in school, they actually talked about it in one of his classes. And so it was also interesting to listen in on, which I can do because his class is at my dining room table. I could listen in on what the other kids were saying and how the teacher was encouraging people with differing opinions, to speak up and be respectful and have a dialogue that many adults, in my experience, struggle with sometimes.

SooJin: Yeah, we started watching the debates. The first debate, I ended up watching the whole thing. But with my daughter, she ended up watching maybe the first five minutes and then bounced because it was just so toxic. And I wanted to bounce as well. I mean to me, it was just a lot of bullying and verbal abuse taking place. And I did not want to subject that to her. I didn't want to subject it to myself, but I felt like to be an informed citizen; I should hang out and try to

stick it to the end. But then after that, I didn't watch any of the other debates. I did watch the vice president debates but yeah.

Crixell: I agree. They are very hard to watch, and it feels like they're coming into your home and sort of spreading all of those messages, right?

SooJin: Oh absolutely! And just the toxic energy.

Crixell: And our son, he's very practical about things. And so watching him absorb this and then talking about, "Why are they speaking to each other that way?" And "Those aren't appropriate words to use for people in those positions." And so the levels of respect that we try to teach him and ask him to follow, he saw on a national level they aren't being followed. And as a parent, it was like, I'm so glad that he's able to identify that. Because what that's telling me is that when he goes out into the world as an adult, he'll treat people differently. And to me, that's important. He can identify the disrespect. He can identify, "Oh, that's not language that's appropriate in a professional setting."

SooJin: Yes, and the reason why he knows that is because he has a foundation of values and principles that you instilled in him! This is what respect looks like. This is what treating each other with humanity looks like.

Crixell: Exactly. And as a young man, he already looks me in my eye. So I'm about 5'7 and so is my 13-year-old. So to the average person, my 13-year-old looks like an adult. And sometimes he gets treated that way as well. Even though he has a very sweet baby face, sometimes he's treated like that. And it's important for him to be able to identify when he's experiencing that and their strategies to deal with it.

SooJin: We were talking about your son and how he has access to all this social media. I'm going to share kind of what I consider perhaps an epic fail on my part as a parent. So I had assumed that my daughter didn't know kind of all the stuff that was taking place post-election. All the conversations on social media, like TikTok and Instagram, where people were talking about how they're gonna kidnap people. Actually, I'm sorry, this was pre-election - how they were going to kidnap people. And like, "We know where you live," like all these threatening messages to suppress the vote. And because my daughter, I know, isn't on Instagram or Twitter or on TikTok or anything like that, I did not talk to her about that this kind of discourse is taking place right now to suppress the vote. And so after the election took place, she heard about all this from her friends. And so she had shared with her dad and I that she was really scared to go out, and that we should stay home, and that we shouldn't leave. And I'm asking her, "Where are you getting this?" "Why are you so afraid, sweetie?" And then she tells me that her friends told her about all of this stuff that's been going on on social media. And I just looked at her. And I just said "I'm so sorry that I didn't talk to you about this ahead of time because if I would have told you that these were tactics of voter suppression," - which she knows, you know what that is - "If I would have talked to you ahead of time about that, would that have made you less scared? And instead of believing your friends, you would believe your parents to let you know that you're absolutely safe, and you're fine." And she's like, "Yes!" But because we ended up dealing

with it after her friends told her, it took her about like two or three days for her to actually come to believe us when we said that you're safe because her friends' messages were in her head. And so, it just made me so angry. Her dad and I were talking about this. It made me so angry that we have a president who has instilled this kind of fear in our children during a process that should be exemplifying how beautiful the democratic system is, right? This is what distinguishes us - or is supposed to distinguish us from a lot of countries in the world. And for her to be so scared because of all these tactics to suppress the vote, it just made me so angry as a parent for how irresponsible he is.

Crixell: Absolutely. And let me just say - it's hard for our kids. They are receiving so many negative messages. I'm not sure if you all have talked about social media and sort of what that does to kids brains. However, maybe at some point, we can have a discussion offline and I can share some of the resources that I've used to help my son understand about social media and its impacts. Because that's one of the ways that we've kind of gotten in front of some of these issues. So I'd be happy to share that you can share with your listeners as well.

SooJin: Yeah, great. Thank you.

Hannah: My kids are a little bit younger. I have two boys. They both identify as white. And they're five and seven. And we have talked with them about the election and voting and they didn't really watch the debates, but the thing you had mentioned Crixell about forming their own opinion, that was something we really tried to have as a center point of our conversations. We would talk about who we're voting for and we showed the sample ballot and kind of explained the different races and seats. And why we were picking the people we were picking. And then we also said but there are people who have very different views from us and voted for other people on the ballot. And so we encourage you to ask those questions. If you want to ask your cousins or your friends or whatever about what they're thinking about. Or your aunts and uncles, grandparents, all of that, or just different connections. We encourage them to sort of figure out who other people were supporting to help them inform their own opinions. It didn't get too far. I mean, they're generally gonna rather talk about Legos or something else, rather than this, but there were some interactions that happened. I remember one of my kids Tony, who is seven, asked his cousin who just turned six about the election and found out that he was supporting a different candidate than my husband and I. And so he was like, "Oh how do you feel? Are you sad that they lost the election?" And so kind of tuned in about the feelings and I thought that was just an interesting interaction about recognizing that we all have different opinions and that we have feelings. And so, anyway, we'll build on that, of course, but those are just some of the things that in terms of the election and a five and a seven-year-old that we're talking about. I will also mention that, you brought up the reality of the school being in the dining room and overhearing conversations that are happening in the classroom. And I really haven't heard anything from either of the kids. Whether they're in music or art or their homeroom or whatever. I haven't heard really any conversation about racism, current events, even COVID. I mean, there's like a hand washing video, but I feel like there's really no discussion or even opportunity to talk about what's going on with the kids right now. We're doing that in

our family, but just having that school - I don't know if that's something I'm really kind of concerned about, frankly.

Crixell: SooJin, what about you? Has your kiddos been talking about this stuff in school?

SooJin: Yeah, so I just have the one daughter and yeah she has been having conversations. She's part of some student groups. It's called COVE. It's a student group for girls who identify as Black at the school. So they've had some conversations, as well as she's also part of an antiracism leadership group called Dare to Be Real. And they've also had some conversations around the election, as well. I think in history class, they talked a little bit about it but not a lot. So she's in seventh grade, but I know eighth grade on up, they're definitely talking about it. But yeah, not formal conversations in the classroom, it doesn't seem like that's taking place as much as in these student groups that she's involved in.

Crixell: Okay. I asked because I wonder, Hannah, since they're so young, if the teachers aren't sure how to frame these conversations for the younger kids.

Hannah: Oh, yeah, I'm sure that is part of it. I also have my mother-in-law who is a kindergarten teacher. So my kids are kindergarten and first grade and she's been teaching young kids for her whole career. And she has developed an antiracism curriculum that is specifically geared towards kindergarten age students, and which I have been implementing just on my own. And in collaboration, but not with the school. So and even just from the conversations I have with my kids, they know a lot. And they have questions, and they are interested in understanding various aspects about race, racism, even just language that we use, and why is something offensive, and different ways of interpreting what happens at the park. And we'll debrief on whatever - or in shows. And they're really good at picking up on now. If we're watching any movie or show, they'll be like, "I noticed that there are no people with brown skin in this." And so they're really aware of not only noticing, but also being able to say something about that, and having that be sort of welcomed and a point of like, yeah why do you think that is? Or how does that make you feel? I'm sorry, I got a little bit away from the question, but anyways what I'm learning is that kids of this age and even younger, are very capable of having these conversations and should be in my opinion. And I think that it would be great if schools and families could kind of partner on that. And what that might look like? But yeah, it would be new. And, you know, we'll we'll start to transition into next week and the truth of Thanksgiving. And even the activities I see coming home with turkeys and cranberry sauce and stuff, and I'm just like, "Oh, my goodness, there's no conversation about this."

Crixell: I'll go out on a limb and say that many parents of color experience this - that when their children are young, they have to begin to have these conversations because there is a certain level of privilege of not having the conversations that BIPOC folks just typically don't get. I'm speaking as the mother of a Black child, specifically a Black boy, his safety is dependent on me having these conversations with him at a very young age because if he's not aware of them, as he's growing up, he can stumble into situations or be targeted and not really understand what's happening. And that could put his life in danger. So I think that if Black children, and Indigenous children and Latinx children and Asian children and immigrant children can have these

conversations, I think that white children can have the conversations too. And it might feel risky, and it might feel difficult, and these are feelings that mothers of color have been dealing with since this country was founded.

SooJin: Thanks for saying that. Crixell. I was also curious, given your expertise around peacebuilding, how do you create peacebuilding? How does reconciliation take place when we are living in such divisive times? When we think about division within a political context, it would be debating policies, but I feel like this moment because of the current administration that we've had for the past four years, I feel like the division isn't so much more about policies, but more about values, morality. I've had conversations with folks who are like, "To me, there is no debate because a lot of the things when it comes down to it, it's about humanity and our values and the soul of our nation." And it is clear that one side of the ticket is actually anti-humanity for people who look like us. For nonwhite people, it is an anti-humanity kind of campaign that Trump has been running. And so when it gets to that core, where it's not about hating policy, but actually hating human beings - how do you reconcile parties that are on both ends when it cuts to the core of our values and our morals?

Crixell: That is something that I take a lot of steps back and try to take that 35,000 foot view of. Okay, so we are all a part of this system. No matter what your skin looks like, if you live in this country, you are part of the system. And you receive the messages that are meant for you that the system wants you to have. So let's hold that for a moment. Let's also consider that most people are good people, I really believe that. I believe that they're very few not good people. And so let's hold that piece. And then let's also hold that one individual that has power can influence lots of people to do things that they would normally not do because of the power difference. And so what that looks like is that we have a leader that is not only upholding a system in this country that's discriminatory and harmful for so many people around the world not just here, and takes in sort of removes our humanity, right? So like, we have this person with power in the system that is powerful, but the system is made up of good people overall. I do believe that. And because they're a part of the system that we all live in, maybe they have not had the opportunity to explore the messages that they are receiving. That doesn't mean that they can't change. That doesn't mean that every decision they make is trying to personally hurt any of us. Many of them just don't understand the system. It's something as simple as if you've never seen a green apple and every apple that you've ever seen is red, then if someone brings you a green apple, do you really believe that that's an apple? Or are you questioning? Are you going to push back? Are you going to just refuse to even consider tasting this apple? Because it's green. Because your whole life you've only known red. Like for some people, they don't understand how oppressive the system is that we live in because they've never had to live it. They're literally people because of the way that this country is designed, there are people who never interact with the person of color outside of that person doing a service for them. And even the media that they take in manipulates them and tells them the stories about people who are different from them. And because they have no personal experience, they take that as truth. I've facilitated racial reconciliation conversations for almost four years now. And in the beginning, I had a hard time believing that white people just grew up in this bubble. But over the last four years, I've listened to so many people say the same things over and over again.

And at one point I even joke like okay, so is there some class that you all take to like answer this question, so that it seems like a uniform answer? I mean, I was kidding obviously with some dear friends, but it's like no this is just the reality when you don't have the experience, you just don't know and you believe the rhetoric that's out there. But I still believe that most people are good. And when people come to the table to have conversations with me about race, they're authentic and sincere, and they are vulnerable, and they open up and they listen. And they do a lot more listening than they do speaking. And then when they do share, there are vulnerabilities that come out. There are light bulb moments that they just can't believe that they never had turned on before. The change happens by having conversations like these. Your listeners are part of this change because I hope that some folks after listening to this conversation, they go out and start conversations of their own with other people in their spheres of influence. And as that's happening, we become more connected, not disconnected. We invite people in who wants to have the conversation. And yeah, we're coming from different places and that's okay because we all have value and our experiences matter. And so that's the work. I tell my son all the time - it's not the fact that you made a mistake, is what you do after the mistake that's important. So if you've lived your life with the curtains closed, once you open them, don't close them back. Open them wider, throw open the windows and invite people in. And that's how I do the work. And it's not always easy, but it's important. And so I continue to engage in it. Was that helpful?

SooJin: Yeah, thanks for that.

Crixell: You both kind of mentioned Thanksgiving, right? So one of the things that's really interesting, as a Black woman growing up in an urban environment outside of the state of Minnesota, when I was taught about Native Americans - and I am almost 40, so we called them Indians when I was growing up. And so when I learned about them, I thought they were something of the past. That's how we always learned about them as if they didn't exist anymore. And as an adult, I began to realize that's not true. And so part of the work that I do is also truth telling around the land that we live on, indigenous culture, the genocide that indigenous people on Turtle Island experience. And how they've had to fight so hard to no longer be invisible. And that's what I would say is as parents, some of our job is to share with our kids other people's stories who are invisible. So one of the things that we do in my house is we talk about indigenous folks, indigenous practices and culture. And in fact, the circle process that I use to facilitate the racial healing circles, is a process that comes from an ancient indigenous process. And indigenous people have been practicing talking circles for millennia. And they may look a little different depending on where you are, but the actual circle itself is so powerful. And I think there's a lot of indigenous wisdom that we don't acknowledge or share or even know about. And so that's one of the things that I do with my son is we talk about that stuff. Because this earth, I really believe that the earth will not continue to sustain us if we keep going at this pace. And so I think we have a lot to learn from our indigenous brothers, sisters, and Two-Spirited folks. And if we go back to some of those ways of being in community with nature, every living breathing thing, plants and our Earth, we will heal some of the harms that have happened. So again, we're going back to yeah we made a mistake, we aren't doing things right. But once we know that, how can we move forward and stick with it?

Hannah: I was just actually listening to a podcast today called "Remembering Resilience" and it's created through the University of Minnesota Extension, I believe, and their episodes are on their website. But what you're saying is just exactly what I was listening to today about how there is so much wisdom and knowledge and these healing processes that have existed for so long, and kind of tapping into that, obviously, for indigenous people to reconnect with their roots and the creator and Mother Nature. But also listening to those stories, and as you had mentioned leveraging those processes in healing spaces is really important. And also I'm always thinking about how do you do that in a way that also honors and not just taking processes, you know what I'm saying? But I think about that, too.

SooJin: Yeah not appropriating is what you're getting at.

Crixell: Honoring and uplifting - so not just creating the space to practice it, but also sharing where it comes from - is one way to really honor and share stories, too.

SooJin: Thank you. So anything that you'd like to promote? An organization, a project and issue that you'd like to lift up?

Crixell: As I shared in the beginning, my organization, the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute, provides opportunities for people to learn about trauma. All the different types of psychological trauma we experience as humans and how that trauma affects the way that we think, feel and behave towards ourselves and others. And then ways to break free from that trauma, acknowledge what we've experienced and then reconnect with ourselves and others. So if any of your listeners would like to take any of our trainings, they can visit our website at www.mnpeace.org. Our upcoming trainings are right on our front page. And anyone can reach out to me as well.

SooJin: Great, thank you. So now we have a set of what we call lightning round questions. These are a bit lighter in nature. And so if you could just answer the first thing that pops up in your mind that would be great.

Crixell: Okay.

SooJin: So yeah, don't think too hard. So antiracist parenting is? Fill in the blank.

Crixell: Antiracist parenting is a journey.

SooJin: What's the last thing your child did to make you smile?

Crixell: The last thing my son did to make me smile was he caught up on all of his work and showed it to me, and it was brilliant.

SooJin: Oh, yay!

Crixell: He took responsibility for his own mistakes and fixed them. So very proud of him.

SooJin: Oh, and so meaningful at 13. That's a huge milestone.

Crixell: Yes, it is!

SooJin: What are you reading right now?

Crixell: I am reading *Cast* by Wilkerson.

SooJin: How is that going?

Crixell: She's a brilliant writer. I would love to meet her one day.

SooJin: And what are you doing to take care of yourself?

Crixell: Since COVID-19, I've developed a daily meditation practice. I also have really created a space of community accountability for myself and a few other folks in my life where we check in on one another. And at the beginning of COVID-19, I went out and bought a bunch of paint supplies. And I'm not a painter, but I've been learning to paint online.

SooJin: Oh, that is fantastic. Oh, I love that! Can you share what your daily meditation practice is? What does that involve?

Crixell: Sure. So in the morning, that means about 20 minutes, I used to do guided meditation, but now I just put on music. I put on music and I just sit in quiet and just breathe and try to allow my body to really be present. And then if I have a particular day that's had a lot of high energy and high emotion, as my way to transition from work to my home life because I'm at home, right? I spend another 20 minutes just by myself, allowing my energy to just come down so that I'm not spreading that across my household. And I can be fully present for my family.

SooJin: That is beautiful. Thanks for sharing that. What's one thing you're committed to doing in your antiracist parenting journey?

Crixell: Inviting anyone in that wants to have these conversations. So I talked to my son's friends, their parents, and only if they ask and I try not to be defensive and just really lean into the conversation because we all don't know what we don't know.

SooJin: What question would you like Antiracist Parenting Podcast to answer in the future episode?

Crixell: I am curious since you all have not explored how social media is impacting racism in this country.

SooJin: Great question. Is this something that you could speak on in a future episode?

Crixell: We could probably work something out.

SooJin: Okay. Cool! Very cool. Okay, anything else you'd like to say or share before we say goodbye?

Crixell: I just like to thank both of you for having me on. Thank each and every listener that's willing to engage in not only this episode, but other episodes as well. Because this work is not easy. It is a journey. And we all need each other to do what I think.

SooJin: Beautiful last words. Thank you so much.

Crixell: Thank you.

SooJin: Yeah, bye. So Hannah, where are you at? How are you feeling?

Hannah: Well, Crixell is awesome. And I feel like I talked too much and I literally drew a light bulb on my notebook as Crixell was talking because she had mentioned that people come into these spaces that she normally is facilitating and having light bulbs go off. And so I'm having light bulbs go off right now. And I feel like I am grappling a lot with whiteness and white privilege leading up to this episode, but I feel like it's highlighted in this moment. And so yeah, I'm just really struggling, grappling, wrestling all of these things right now. And as Crixell is talking, I'm like scribbling a lot. Like, oh yeah, I need to do that. Or, "Oh, I didn't think about that like that before." And so it's really helpful for me. That's where I'm at.

SooJin: Could you share like a light bulb, and then a thing that you're grappling with?

Hannah: Yeah. So for example, I facilitate the social justice book club at the Golden Valley library, and we do a land acknowledgement at the beginning of each session. And so I know the reason we're doing, the purpose we're doing that, but Crixell is really saying to kind of take it further of honoring and uplifting. Like, how are we sharing stories? And how are we calling attention to indigenous processes and practices if and when we use those methods. And so, that's something that was a light bulb for me. Also, you had asked the question about when we're coming into the moral and these core values and when the two sides in this particular election is kind of an example of really not agreeing and are pushing against each other. And so kind of taking that big step back in terms of looking at the view, kind of analyzing the complexity that we're all part of the system, most people are good people. One person can actually influence behavior and also this knowledge that as we're in this system, we may not necessarily have awareness of what's happening around us. But something I'm grappling with is like, okay, so Crixell has said several times talking with people who are open or interested in talking. And so then I'm like, what if someone isn't interested in talking about it? And what if a person who's not interested in talking about this is a family member? And then, as I'm thinking about how do I talk to my kids about this person who doesn't want to talk about it. And what does that then mean for my future relationship with this particular person? And so then it's I'm just going down this what if, what if, what if - but it's also part of it is true. And I'm like, I don't know! I mean, I kind of feel like I try to have these discussions and I maybe push to have them. And so I don't know, maybe that's not the right approach. Maybe I need to be more like, "Are you open to this?" And if the person says no - I don't know, what do I do? Do I just say, "Well,

then we're not in a relationship." I don't know. Like, maybe that's the answer. I just have to deal with it and do it.

SooJin: Yeah, I think there's like a balance when it comes to addressing specifically race in white circles, right? If we wait for every white person to be like, "Okay, I'm ready to have this conversation." There's not going to be any movement and history has born that out, right? There's been very little movement in terms of real, tangible, concrete changes within this system of racism that we're living in. So, yeah, I have mixed feelings about that approach. And I think you're right; I think it just depends on the context. It depends on the person and the relationship. Yeah, I don't think there's a one size fits all approach to this particular dilemma. But what I do know is, is that white people need to be having more and more of these conversations. These conversations need to be normalized, in the same ways that these conversations are normalized in communities of color and families of color like Crixell said. We have to have these conversations with our children because it's about survival. And I would argue, it's also about survival for white people, you know? Right? So given what you shared, have you kind of formulated a commitment that you'd like to take with you into the next week? Next month?

Hannah: I don't know. I mean, I feel like I'm doing work on this currently and ongoing of being I mean - I've made a commitment to normalizing conversations around race within my sphere of influence almost two years ago. And so I've been working on this. And I feel like it's happening. I mean on some levels is really happening. I'm having conversations. I do feel like though, it has strained some relationships. And I feel like maybe I'm at a point where I need to really think about do I need to end certain relationships or - so I don't know. I don't know if I have a commitment around that, but it's an ongoing process that like we have been talking about is super complex. I think maybe immediately a commitment I can make is to talk to my kids about the truth around Thanksgiving. To have a really deliberate conversation about the history and how this even came to be. So that's something I can commit to, and I would be open like if you're listening to me go on right now. And you're like, "Hannah, this is what you need to do." I'm so open to that.

SooJin: Well, no. I think you're all good. I think the only thing that I would talk about how indigenous communities celebrate or not celebrate - what they do around this particular holiday that our country has designated as a holiday. Some native communities, they're actually fasting to pay homage to their ancestors who were killed, right? So what if we ended up doing that? Adopting that practice instead of overconsumption and kind of the gluttony of this particular holiday? What if, instead, we had a national day of fasting in remembrance of all the native people that have been killed because of settler colonialism? I don't know. It's something that I've been thinking about, and that I'm going to be sharing with my family as like what if we start incorporating this practice? And being deliberate, right? Being deliberate about what this day actually means, not just for non-native folks, but really what does this mean for indigenous peoples of this land? Because if we took on that perspective, I think that would lead to a different kind of practice and different kinds of rituals created on this day. I also know many indigenous folks who have Thanksgiving kind of in a "traditional way" where they come

together and have food and do a gathering where they talk about what they're thankful for, which is a very positive thing to do, right? So I guess what I'm saying - it's not an either or, but I do think that non-native people like us need to bring in the native perspective more into this holiday.

Hannah: Yes, agreed.

SooJin: So that's what I'm committing to is having that conversation with my family. Another thing that I'm going to commit to based on what Crixell had shared is she had talked about she's kind of schooling her son around social media and the effects on the brain, and how social media is being wielded as a tool of racism and white supremacy. So having that conversation with my daughter. And then also I loved how she frames conversations in such a way and educates in such a way where there's always room for "This is what I've come to believe, but I also want you to be able to make your own decisions." Right? And so having that balance of instilling certain foundations that allows her son to be able to recognize disrespect when he sees it. To recognize abuse and bullying when he sees it, but also, at the same time, be able to instill in our children the skill set to be able to formulate their own opinions and make their own decisions based on rigorous research, right? Not just taking things in at face value.

Hannah: Yeah, I feel like my kids are too young at this moment for social media. I'm very interested in what you find out and we'll use that eventually. But yeah, that will be really good for us to be able to share out to our listeners to those resources. Really important to understand that.

SooJin: Okay, well, I guess on that note, thank you to our listeners for joining us on this episode.

Hannah: Yes. And we will be putting out our next newsletter in early December. I think this is going to be a hard time of year. I mean, it's been a hard year in general, but the holiday "time of year" tends to be hard in general. And so we're thinking of you all, and we're sending love and peace and positive energy.

Outro (music by Mike Myth Productions):

SooJin: 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 to Mike Myth 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.