



Our discussion was based on Frank Staropoli's October 2019, blog, "In Their Own Words: What It's Like..." which featured videos by Barunde Thurston and B.K. Irons, in which they presented their very different perspectives on the Black Experience in our country. Participants watched both videos and then engaged in small and large group discussions guided by the following questions:

- How did you respond to each of these accounts?
- What most surprised you in these testimonies?
- What differences did you notice in your response between the two? And to what do you attribute that difference?
- How do these inform your own involvement in a racist society?
- What changes do they evoke in you – toward action, toward changes in your own complicity?
- A sampling of the comments from the group discussions follows:
- We always think it's other people who won't be accepting
- I don't want to talk about the films right now. I just want to sit with them.
- There's both an emotional and an intellectual response
- Baratunde would be accepted in corporate America. B.K. Irons would not.
- How do I put this message across without people shutting down?
- Baratunde's video warmed us up. B.K. Irons set us on fire.
- If we reversed the order of the videos, our reactions would be different.
- Baratunde gives us a way to look at solutions.
- Nothing they said surprised me
- The first was funny, the second made me want to cry
- I want my kids to watch both.
- The second was angry and hard to digest. It offered no solutions going forward.
- The first was appealing to the oppressing class.
- The second was real life – a punch in the gut. This is what happens in our world.
- How do you change the action? I felt it was incomplete.
- Solutions are complicated & multilayered.
- I think the burden is on the people in power – white males.
- We all own this.
- Diverse presentations reach people in different ways.
- The first video is what happens a lot of time in the workplace
- The first video is not as memorable as the second
- We have to start with more punches in the gut and less inspiration
- People struggle with accountability

2019
December



WDN Regional Council
Meeting Summary

Host: NCBI/Starbridge
Topic Discussion: Barunde Thurston / B.K. Irons

- BK – sad but a power behind the voice
- Both were powerful but unsettling.
- BK is telling it like it is, but who would hire him? How do you be authentic?
- We want to jump to fixing before we really understand.
- The second video is about what it is like to be oppressed
- Helplessness shifts to anger
- You can't unhear me.
- Both videos are necessary
- We don't need allies. We need accomplices.

Following are the links to the videos used in the meeting:
How to deconstruct racism, one headline at a time | Baratunde
Thurston <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZgkjEdMbSw>

"NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION" BK Irons
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SZM9ZLUiiM>