

Join the Conversation!

FATHERING/GRANDFATHERING/ CAREGIVING IN A HEIGHTENED RACIALIZED ENVIRONMENT

Tuesday August 18, 2020 | 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Panelists: Neethan Shan, Brandon Hay, Steve Didham,
Ken Leang | Moderator: Lance McCready

Well, let's get started, we are ready to begin.

Margaret: My name is Margaret Horvath and I will be your technical assistant today. This session is being recorded and will be available on the TDSB website at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Conversations-Series>. To ensure a smooth session for all attendees, we have enabled the Q & A. You have been muted and you are unable to share your screen. Everything in zoom is customizable based on your individual settings. So, your display may not be exactly as I described it, however, what should be similar is the black toolbar at the bottom of your screen. It should appear when you move your cursor. To view links posted in the **chat box**, press the "chat" icon that looks like a word bubble at the bottom of your screen on the black bar. If you want to open the Q&A, simply click on that Q&A icon. Everyone will have access to Q&A, so please ask your questions there. If you are calling into the session, please use *9, the Raise Hand function and the moderator will try to get to your question. Next step is audio and microphone. The audio quality of this session is based on your individual bandwidth. If you're worried about slow internet connection, you can call in by using the dial in information included in the invite. The invite is located at: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Conversations-Series>. If for some reason your speakers' bandwidth becomes unstable and things become choppy, please bear with us. We'll hear it too and we will work as quickly as possible to resolve the issue. We do have interpretation for this session. Please click on the Interpretation bubble found on the black tool bar at the bottom of the screen and select your language. There is a quick survey that we would like you to complete after listening/watching this Conversation. The link will be put into the chat. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/27T3P7S>. Lastly, you may exit or change the full screen speaker or gallery view by clicking the top right button or view options, drop

down menu. Now to get things started, I'm going to hand it over Jess Hungate to represent the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee, known as PIAC. Over to you Jess.

Jess Hungate: I will first give the land acknowledgment and then get to the program. So, we acknowledge that we are on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples. We want to greet everyone on with us and who may be listening to this afterwards. It's a pleasure on behalf of PIAC, Parent Involvement Advisory Committee; to welcome you to one of a series of discussions that we hold together to give parents as much information as we can on the whole series of topics that I am sure everyone is interested in. So, what I will do first is I am going to introduce you to the panel that will speak to you this evening and then I will just turn things over to our moderator and she will take it away. So our panel, Anthony Morgan, and he is a community advocate and human rights lawyer and public servant and thought leader and commentator on issues concerning race and racism, critical multicultural and critical race theory in Canada. And then, Ken Leang. He is Chinese and born in Canada and born to parents who immigrated to Canada from Canton, China. He is a father to two children and is an elementary school Vice Principal in the GTA. And then we have Neethan Shan and he is on UARR, Urban Alliance on Race Relations, and is a former Toronto City Councillor and Toronto District School Board Trustee in Rouge River. He served as a York Region District School Board Trustee and advocate at all levels of government and pushes for policy level change at levels of employment health and justice and led campaigns that fought back against cuts to health care and legal aid and leads a campaign to have all post covid-19 recovery centred around race equality. And then the fourth is Steve Didham. Steve has been a clinical social worker for 20 years. He has worked in child welfare throughout his career and has also been a researcher author part-time Professor at kings and clinical investigator for the Office of the Children's Lawyer. For the past two and a half years, equity co-facilitator for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and is on a journey to understand his own privilege and power and how they intersect while challenging and disrupting the status quo. His current role is supervisor of the youth response unit whereby leads a team of social workers that work with the most at risk youth who have not established a permanent connection. Steve is the loving father of 3 children whom he shares part time custody with his ex-spouse and living an authentic, rewarding life is his primary goal while instilling the wisdom of life experiences and morals in his children along the way. I am sure it's going to be a great conversation. And, I am now going to turn it over to Michelle who is the Central Coordinator of the Parent and Community Engagement Office, and I can say on behalf of PIAC she is a key player as we try to do what we do to keep parents engaged, and I know you are in good hands with Michelle and I will turn it over to you. I want to thank everyone, I will not be able to stay for the whole program. So thank you for being part of this very important discussion. Michelle.

Michelle Munroe: Thank you. Thank you so much for joining us and for getting this started. My thanks to Margaret as well, and I want to thank her all the time because

she gave up her summer to have these conversations happen and even her night and dinner with family and those that joined, thank you for connecting and to participate in this conversation. We have been having a series of conversation and they started in June. We gave ourselves and family a break in July and we are back to this series for the month of August. The first session started on the 13th, and where we had a return to school forum for family and there was staff and we heard from parents, and we have another 3 or 4 lined up. So we encourage the families to visit the conversations and the website and feel free to join us. To the panel, thank you. Thank you so much, Ken, Steve and Neethan for joining us, and I look forward to a free dialogue, that is what I want to happen. We have been having a lot of conversations about taking race within the district and moving around and finding out, are home and families having this conversation and this was before the death of Mr. Floyd that opened up the world in a way that many had not anticipated, and so I know we are going to have the conversation. We had one, which was a sort of technical researched based one where we had those doing work and talking race, talk about what we should be having conversations with children about and what we should be saying and one of the things we heard a lot and I keep hearing, since I have been in this role with fathers and caregivers and grandfathers and those that identify as such, a lot of these conversations are focussed on those that identify as mothers and grandmothers. And so I am going to put a couple of questions out and I ask that you respond as you see fit, and then I will leave the conversation a lot to each of you in terms of the free flow and if there is a break I will keep posing them. If you are on line, we want you to participate and the chat is live and questions and answers. If there is something you hear that you like, don't hesitate to drop a line so we can hear and respond. And so I will place this on the floor. So to the panel, has parenting been different during this heightened racialized period and, if so, how? Take it away.

Neethan Shan: okay. You are so polite.

(laughter)

So I think that the heightened racialized the situation around this and the kind of what has been put forward right now is also the backdrop of covid-19 and the pandemic and the mixed implications on this. One of the things, it's been different because a lot of us are at home with the kids and so still working from home and may not be able to entirely dedicate the time but having said that, the younger people, I have a 6 year old and 9 year old, and they operate gadgets and listen to a lot of basketball news and around the globe news, and so on, and they get a lot of information whether we like to have these conversations or not. It's been difficult for me, to explain a lot. For example, we tell the children, you know what the role of a police officer is, and when they are young they play with the toys and think that is someone that saves someone and they are good. We cannot tell them, there are bad ones as well. And I took my son to Queen's Park and I had to tell him, not all teachers are that great. There are teachers are not doing their job well and so that is why we are here and so to break it down and reverse engineer some of what you say from young and they learn from the shows or whatever they see as the TV show and things, that has been a challenge but

I think this is the best time to do it rather than wait around and they get a shock when they go to high school and start to see things differently from what they learn. So I will stop there. I want to hear from others as well. I used to be a teacher and Youth Worker, and I had a life before kids and advised parents how to co-parent and that was before I had kids and that was easy and now I am not able to follow most of what I told them. It's not a fun situation. I am held accountable because of my background, but I leave with a question. I have siblings and people that are avoiding this conversation and sometimes it looks like they are happy because they are not discussing this, and so I am divided in the consciousness as to how much is the right amount and the right way to educate. And there is not much out there. So I am glad this conversation is happening.

Anthony Morgan: Can you hear me okay? I want to thank the TDSB for this conversation. It's important and in my experience there is too few opportunities for fathers to have these kinds of conversations and grandfathers and caregivers and generally, I think it's important to have the conversation and when we think about racialized and the penetration of the public consciousness and as far as I can tell has not happened before and so I thank the TDSB for doing this. With respect to the immediate question of what has changed, for some context and background, I am still fairly -- I like to think early in my journey as a dad. My daughter is two and a half and is developing her early language skills, having more fulsome conversations to explain and myself and her mom, we co-parent, and I have had conversations but what has happened is being in the context of -- I do work that is deeply connected to racial justice and create space for the well-being and freedom and full sense of self in the community but now my daughter, she is a black girl and we have data and the experience of marginalized and disadvantage is higher and so even at this age, it's made me conscious of the images that she internalizes, like the books, how many black characters, and things like dolls and the ways in which we are involving that and people as the norm. You go into a toy store and they do not question the fact there is so few racialized dolls and now, thankfully because of the internet, you can offset that but by in large, so with this state we are in, it makes me think a bit more. I always thought about these questions but taking more actions about how I support my little girl as she develops and having the conversations with her mom when she is with her mom, what does that look like and how we will make sure that we equip her for a world that is often built against supporting this sense of self and development.

Ken Leang: Hi everyone. I want to thank everyone as well, and the panel, and Steve and the TDSB for hosting this. It's an important conversation and just from Anthony and Neethan, I have learned so much about both of you, just in that brief message about parenting. I really, with that question is what has been, you know, what has it been like, has it been different and it's been different but the biggest impact that I have had, it's the self-reflection piece of how I was brought up to see what a parent was and what it meant to be a parent and how I was going to parent my two boys with my wife and in a couple more years, I am a couple years further than you, and you Steve as well, my kids are 9 and 11 and go to the TDSB as well but the reflection piece is my experience is impacting the way I parent and I looked back and said, what were the --

what was the socialization that I had and what were my role models and the experiences that I had that molded my experience. That would mold my skills as a parent, and I had to look back at those and, you know, the big question was, how have I benefitted as a person growing up in Canada? What were the barriers that I had and how am I going to teach my kids about those types of privilege and barrier and what they will encounter, and even just reflecting right now and thinking, I need to have more direct conversations with them. Really I have been taking their lead on, you know, they are at the age where they ask the question and are in front of the computer and see the media or the conversations that me and my wife have in the house and I think I need to be more direct but I also want to provide rich experiences so they formulate their own experiences and their opinions.

Steve Didham: If I could add into that and I appreciate everyone's input. As I listen, I think of just how valuable it is to share all of our own lived experiences so when you talk about the self-reflection piece, I think back to as a white male person growing up in today's world in Canada, I check all of the boxes in terms of privilege and power and to a large extent social location and so I have benefitted from "the status quo" I have benefitted from that and for me, as I reflect on this heightened racialized period and I will talk about this perhaps later on throughout the discussion, but for me, it's been a real connection, coming together of ideas and thoughts around my own identity and my own social location and understanding that if the power and privilege I have by virtue of the identities that I have and the social locations that I have, that have really, you know, kind of brought about the lived experience that I had so far. So when I think about my children, and it started way before this, it was before covid-19 and certainly before this increased heightened racialized period that we find ourselves within Canada and the world, as I started to understand my power, my privilege and the sheltered life that my three kids have lived prior to me beginning my journey, and I will call it that, beginning my journey of understanding equity. and understanding identity and understanding social location and how that impacts lived experiences of everyone. What I have really tried to do is have those, and I used to call it courage conversations but it's not courage to talk about lived experiences of other identities, our neighbours, of children that my kids go to school with, colleagues that I work with, etcetera. To me, it's beginning to understand my role in that how I can begin to have deeper conversations with my kids about understanding their own power and privilege in the world that they live. One of the more current examples that I can share, so my kids are in my care around 50 percent of the time and so one of the more recent conversations I had, I have three kids. My oldest is 13 and he brought up a conversation about, why is it that there is more news media about George Floyd and he brought up this five old child cannon and I had to step back and say, Ryan, I need to educate myself about that and I did that and went back and had the conversation about what those differences are and what they are about is really understanding the racial disparity and the complete differences around one child's death, and one in this case in one man's death, George Floyd, and then there is Breonna Taylor and the differences and why we need to question the information that we receive through various news sites and social media to interrogate and question where it is that we get the information from and so from Ryan's perspective he heard there was little news coverage about this little boy's death

and all of this news media about George Floyd. And so to have the conversation about why they are different and one child killed and the suspect arrested and the justice and taking steps forward about bringing that person to accountability versus a murder like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and understanding the protests and demands for equity and understanding about how different identities are treated. And as a white male person, for me, especially during this heightened racial period, those have been the increased conversations I have had with my kids, and the girls in a different way to try to help them understand the realities of our world and that they are entering into a world that is not -- it's not equal. It does not treat everybody the same and to understand how that is and what their role is, should they chose to challenge that and the status quo and disrupt and question, question, question, and not just receive news or information and accept it just because it's coming from the internet or Facebook, or a news outlet, etc. to interrogate and to question the narrative all the time.

Michelle: Thank you for that. And as your conversations start, so will my questions deviate from the one I share with you, because the statements will go to different questions. So, we are learning a lot about children and the discussions and the understanding of race and social justice, and we know by 3 months children distinguish between race and 9 months they begin to group, choosing preferences and learning those preferences coming from socialization in terms of the space and how and where they move and that as the caregivers and the parents, we play a real essential role in that, right, and the messaging has to start early. If not, we will be surprised where the children's minds and thoughts will be by the time they start school at the age of four and demonstrate bias by the age of four. I ask you, and you started that Steve, about the conversations that you have had. I will begin with you Ken, because you spoke about your experiences in growing up. Did you ever have conversations with your parents about race, not racism or social justice, just a conversation about race and did that in any way prepare you to have or not have conversations with your own children about race?

Ken: So, if I think back, I don't think I had conversations about race with my parents. And, or if I did have conversations about race with my parents they are biased and that is coming from immigrant parents. Like I said, my dad came here in 1948 I was born in Mississauga, my parents had a Chinese restaurant in Streetsville, I had six brothers and sisters. We were the only Chinese family in that community and I had typical conversations around race at school where it was the, you know, everyone is equal, we are colour blind we see, we don't see colour and these are reflections when I think back and I think, what was I learning back then? And I have taken the conversation around race with my kids as I am not or we will not hide behind differences. We will learn about them because we are all different. So that's the way it was. So my children, they are biracial. I am Chinese and my wife, Armenian. We do a lot of learning about our backgrounds. We spend a lot of time with grandparents and with the generation before us, because we don't want them to lose their experience and their stories and so I look at my parents, my father has passed away now but he – his immigration story, we took them to Vancouver and I showed them the station where

they took the train from Vancouver to Toronto. I got my mom to write down stories of her experiences, during the Japanese occupation of China so to share those stories and understand poverty and what it looks like during the revolution and their experiences and then to hear the experiences of my in-law's. You know, how they moved from or fled to go to Iraq and then Europe and made their way to Canada and their experiences here. I don't want them to lose that because that adds to their story and helps them to understand what the differences are of their history and that everyone isn't growing up like they are in or where they live right now in this environment. So really, that is what my wife and I have tried to do around that. Highlight the differences and to put those differences up and say, embrace them, and that is something I didn't get as a child or through my upbringing and I am not blaming my parents for that because this is something that I have had to come to grips with, come to terms with.

Neethan: I can jump on to this. I came to Canada and a lot of families moved from Sri Lanka and many see this as a country to see this as a space to come and educate and so on and for a lot of them, racism and that they feel we need to tolerate and move on and try to find a way to get by with these challenges and as a way to do it. And I think, what I do with my sons is on the opposite side of things. Just relating with what that war meant and how much took place for us and what is happening to the black community here and Indigenous, and so when I talk about my past and make the connection here, and I think a lot of the kids, a lot of the kids unfortunately are growing up in a way they don't see, the first step is the colour blindness and the second is diversity and some do not get the history. So what I have been doing is try to focus a lot more about Indigenous and anti-black racism and who is Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and give the history and one of the things about covid-19 is that it brought the importance of not taking life for granted. People feel it's not every day to worry about what will happen and then tapping into the why black lives matter and why missing and indigenous murder of woman is critical and it's a bit more, I used to be a math and science teacher before but I feel like I want my son's to be students of history because that will make them better humans. So, it's not, the racialized environment has been but it's the awareness that has been brought up. It's not the current situation, it's the history and how do they receive that history when the schools are not doing it enough or doing enough and being a teacher, youth worker, I see how bad the school system is failing the children and informing of this history and me as the parent tries to fill that gap more on my own and talking to my kids about this. These online classes that happen, I just said, show up if you need to but I am taking this time and running my own classes. The e-learning was brutal for the young kids with what is asked of them and so on. And so, we kind of pulled back and did some of these learnings, and I think that I am happy that period that was available to do that and working in an environment with this work and it's made my son's appreciate my job better. They knew what I was when I was a counselor but then when I lost the election, they didn't understand and now they see what it's important as well. And so it's been a bit of a shifting but I think the generation of our parents that had to do it because that is the legacy and the white privilege and the showing that you are different from the rest of your people was always a constant way of them finding

access to power and to an extent we can be but it's what the structure demanded of them to make sure they isolate themselves from the rest of their people to say I am different from my own kind and I can better myself and this is the cycle of violence in the racialized young people that need to break.

Anthony: Interesting, my parents were race conscious and bringing myself and my sister and brother and were asking questions to us about race and black kids or and laugh about it, as a child, I will tell you the truth, there was a part of me that hated it and I remember say, why are you asking this, I am a kid. I just want to play and as I grow up I understand they were trying to prepare me about these dynamics and even as a kid and the socialization and pushing back and no, it's not polite or improper to talk about race but my parents, they were young, but for context, they were teenagers when they had my sister and early 20's when they had me and because they were so young, god bless my parents, but at that time think were, it was embarrassing for them to be so young to have young kids and they had to find a way for themselves and I think part of that experience of navigation of homelessness and poverty and trying to get their way through made them aware of the ways in which racism was overwhelming their experience. And so my mom being a young black woman with two children, and my dad working and so presumption, the father is not around and so the weight of that and playing into how service providers were receiving her, daycare, schools and so on and then from my dad, also him navigating and thinking, I want to be able to provide for my family and trying to find opportunities and being gainfully employed, and it's often hard for a black man to be properly employed and that is a context for the ways I think that informed them to say, it's important to ask these questions but at the same time allowing me to ask questions and think about race and how it's playing out. They also and I think this was a strategic, I want to ask them this but -- I grew up playing hockey, and I think this was socializing me for the realities of the world and understanding the ways in which white people operate and access power and conversations and being comfortable and then also thinking, well, what do or because hockey tends to be expensive and it was an elite level and my sister and brother and -- the broader point is the access to the social realities and standards and ways of thinking and talking and what matters for people that make a lot of the decisions that impact their life, and I am thankful for that and it created consciousness around what some may be familiar with, co-searching, it's folks from various backgrounds, and there is a particular way to speak in public. It's just different from how I would speak to friends within community and being able to navigate that and still having the different parts of myself and so I think, in this time and having these conversations, I am thankful in that upbringing and makes me think, okay, how will I bring up my daughter to feel comfortable when she speaks with my grandmother? And all the grandparents have a Caribbean accent or references or sayings and also thrive in Canadian culture and she's learning sign language for her age and to have access to this world and recognizing the limitations that are placed on black girls.

Steve: Just sitting here and listening to the perspectives of Ken and Anthony and I grew up in rural Newfoundland and to go to St. Johns was a big thing. My world up to moving to Ontario was completely white. Completely. Every relationship, every

interaction I had was white and I moved to Ontario when I was young and I was the youngest of three. I was ten when we moved to London, Ontario, and as I started to get older and so I started grade 6 in Ontario and I remember coming home, I think it was probably grade 7 or 8, and there was one of the neighbours that was over visiting the parents and I remember asking the neighbour what his race was and where he was from and I remember like how much trouble I got in for asking that question. You don't ask those questions and it really -- I remember at that age thinking, well, why not? Why isn't it okay to ask where someone is from and understand their background and history? And it kind of got -- that nature got stunted because it became clear it wasn't accepted and so when I hear white person's country and colour blindness and I hear the culture switching, I resonate with that because I step back into my mind and younger ages to understand how I used to see the world and it wasn't until -- as a white person, as a white male, it wasn't until 6'ish years ago when I took a course on anti-oppressive practice that I began to understand the identity, and understand lived experience by virtue of the lived experience that we live in and who I am is different from everybody else. No matter if you are white or black or indigenous, it doesn't matter. Everyone's lived experiences are different and then take it the next step further to really understand how the world, how society is structured to either grant access or not. Just by virtue of the various identities that we have and as I started to understand anti-oppressive practice and equity and what racism and what anti-black racism is and my role in that narrative. My role in that world, and how I have benefitted throughout my life because of my gender because of my colour and how I benefitted from that. It's really been quite a visceral experience around how wrong that is and what I mean is, I am a human being, we are all human beings and why is it that I get a pass or a bump to the front of the line treatment because I am male and white? Why is that okay? And so as I raise my three white kids who have friendships with black and indigenous friends and how do I have conversations with them around how the world treats people and the inequalities that exist and how they have a voice. They have eyes, they are ears and their minds and hearts, to challenge and question, to disrupt and use their power and privilege in this system that we have to speak out and challenge and that their voice matters and that it's not -- it's not just about being comfortable. It's about stepping into the discomfort. Stepping into the -- this feels uncomfortable but it feels right and to go with that and know that they have support. They have people in their corner to support them through that and to not just accept whatever narrative they are hearing without questioning, where is that information coming from? That has been a profound learning journey for me as I reflect on my childhood and my lived experiences, and how do I shift that for my kids? So as they grow up, they are not at age 38. I am 43 now, so 38 or whatever, before they really start to understand their own identity and their own social locations and how that impacts others and how their view and their treatment of others can potentially cause harm. Or, work toward the greater collective good. That's -- I don't know if I am answering the question but that is kind of where I am at with understanding discussions around race and racism with my own kids and, you know, with my youngest, Grace, she is six years old and I talk about this in the equity course that is taught, I talk about Grace at age 6 watching my little pony and she liked the pink one

and didn't like the orange one and not the purple and so I would pause and try to dissect about what it is that matters, what was it, was it the colour or the person?

Michelle: It's a question that has been formulating for me, and I am not sure it's going to be clear but I will put it out there. Are you raising children, Ken, Neethan, Anthony? Steve, are you raising children or are you raising white children?

Ken: Sorry, I will have to duck out now. But the conversation I am not avoiding it, I am raising racialized children. That is what I am doing. And I want them to understand that they are racialized and I want to know, I want them to know their experiences and I want them to know other racialized children's experiences, other people's experiences and I want them. I as a parent I need to be able to give them the skills to interrogate those experiences to understand what those experiences mean to make them a person. And I want them to ask questions, to learn from each other. That is what I want to instill this in them. That is some foundation pieces. My mom instilled in me and I look back, don't look bad on any person and my mom used to say that to me and drill it into me all the time and it has morphed into different things, what does that mean, don't look down on any person, don't see the negative. And it's, it's changed. but I am sorry, I wish I could have stayed longer. I think this is a great forum for having these conversations, I would love to have more conversations like this and be part of this, and I am glad TDSB puts this on and makes this resource available

Michelle: Thank you, Ken.

Neethan: I don't want my voice to be naive and to think as the white person and so it's important to have a context. I am not a firm believer of just that and they have to be knowing this and know that they are racial comes with some marginal and be prepared to navigate that in way that is are safe and I am not only raising racialized boys but anti-racist boys because brown people are in many ways comfortable with the colonialism and I don't want them to get comfortable with the fake sense of power and some of us are conscious of that and the intersectionality of sexism, and I have two boys and my partner and I try our best to make sure that they see the male privilege in everything they do, they can call it and find a way to, you know, locate it at least in situations around them and it's important. So you know, whenever there are examples of when in politics or talking about what that mean and they are a mixed record of question able and criminal justice things but she is also half black, or a black father and the mother and there is a celebration of the Tamil woman going into politics and my mother's name is Carmella as well and finding the time to celebrate and give them the space because despite all of the issues around criminal justice and think of how black woman were treat and continue to be treat and paid and to be able to have the possibility and have the an appreciation for mixed families, so those stories. I was in the election campaign and when he became leader, what does that mean to have someone practicing as a leader of a political party and to have those conversation and make sure you are not only raising racialized children, and knowing they are, but we want to be careful they are not the token people in power that often end up further with the people of colour that we find in positions of power. So it's been a challenging

process but it's something I think is the biggest investment to make other than the class and we have to spend the time thinking through, and that is the conscious decision.

Steve: Do you want to go or do you want me to go? I feel like there is a connection here and we have not even met but I would love to meet you all in person at some point. I am raising white children. I am, I have three children, and if you see me, I am as white as they come. But what I am really intentionally doing, trying to do, more so with my girls, because they are younger, one is 13 and the two girls are 9 and 6. My understanding of my true understanding, apart from anti-oppressive practices and what that entails and understanding equity and identities and social locations, and power and privilege, is really and it goes back to what Neethan said earlier around race being a social construct. And really instilling in all three of the kids as much as I can, that by virtue of the colour of their skin, they have different -- they will have different reactions within society. Whether it's at school, whether it's when they are navigating job opportunities, employment opportunities whether it's with their friends, whether it's within society in general. When they start driving and go to a red light and a cop pulls up beside them, by virtue of them being white, their experience in that situation will be different and understanding and helping them as a white male myself and helping them understand their role within that and their role within how they treat others and in really, helping them to challenge and not be silent. Not be silent. Actively choosing not to be silent and challenge and use their voice and power and privilege to challenge and disruption. One of the greatest role models I have and understanding racism and has been from a colleague and dear friend, Michelle Young, and it's been an eye opener for me around understanding power and privilege and I look at my kids, my hope, and my goal, and my mission really as a parent is to help them understand their own identity, their social location and the power and privilege that comes with it or don't come with it. So for Ryan, male, and the girls, female, there is that and helping them understand why that is and why that isn't, why that is not. Okay and to use their voice and challenge and speak out and if they see a friend, if they see someone on the street, if they see someone at the store, where there is any kind of racism or "ism" of any kind that they have a voice. They have a choice to be silent or disrupt and get comfortable and know they can use that voice and the colour of their skin does not define who they are and understand we are all human beings in a very, very inequity world where there is power and privilege bestowed upon identities not because of the person and character but the identities or social locations that they belong. And I don't use those words with my kids, I bring it down to an age appropriate language but to have the conversations and so my kids have grown when I pause the TV show or pause, and say time out. They are getting to the place they know there is a teaching moment or a talk that is coming and so I don't do it -- well, I kind of do it all the time but I try not to do it all the time. Once you see what you see, you cannot unsee it so for me, as a white male, truly, authentic, I didn't understand racism and power and privilege I didn't understand my role in it until I understood history and how our systems and how the various parts of society that come together, whether it's law enforcement, education, how it comes together and how it came together in a very, very white lens and so for raising white children, if I can help them do a little less harm,

do a lot less harm and have empathy and understanding about the greater good, then as a parent, then I feel I will take that.

Anthony: I appreciate the question and the answers have been rich and interesting. I would say I am raising a intersectional black feminist child. I really want her to -- I want to support and her mom and we are committed and we have her at different times to, of course, understand she is black and there will be implications for that and in the age appropriate way but understanding intersectionality so everything from gender and disability and language and nationality and the range of social identities that could have an impact and also within that a feminist lens and the images that she is exposed to and the people and the conversations that we have or are learning to have and aiming to affirm her values and how much she is loved and important as a girl and how you can act at the age of two and a half expose to things that disrupt status quo that says girls do this and not that so everything from the colours into the toys that we buy her, we have -- these gender notions and norms, disrupt that and she can be whatever she wants to be and can play with whatever she wants to and the activities and they are not boy and girl toys, the world will start to tell her that. We are not naive but we want to make sure that she is and feels comfortable and then the question, what do you mean, how and I want her to get to a point that how is blue for boys? Why and who made that up and building that into her. We have a structure but if you look at the outcomes, it's not working for most people and so we should be thinking of the notion that many of us and when I say us, I mean even myself, everything that the parents gave us and the norms that we were taught to internalize and learn to see and learn and now as a parent working to help as my child grows and learns the language and as she sees the association and tries to make sense to them and learning and trying to find a way to speak to her in a way that stimulates and it doesn't have to be that way.

Michelle: I just noted that. I will go to next question, the time is getting a way and when we have these rich conversations, that is how time quickly moves, and so how do you raise an anti-racist child in this time? How do you do that? Anyone can take that question. And you created that question anti.

Neethan: so you take the opportunity to use the lens. I will give an example, when someone is having difficulty speaking English, the children notice and sometimes you laugh and so on, so what I do at that point, I say, do you know that English was only spoken in one country and show that and how small it was and then how did this language become the international language and then break down. The language was forced on to, and it becomes a bit of context. Sometimes they may not remember everything but they know that your language is no less or the language that the person is speaking, so using that to take a way colonized in the mind that is important. Sometimes you think, it's too strong but look at the content in media and so on. It's so much and this is, we used to do this with money. Like, don't talk about loans and payments but now it's shifted to say, start early and talk about how much it costs to buy the shoe and they appreciate that. The same way, why leave the conversations and those conversations, and the next thing is also for men in particular, to be getting this masculinity of not wanting to seem vulnerable and wanting to be right or in control

and that is just not good for the relationship and so i make that and sometimes it's breaking down a bit or sometimes it's like so they know that the father can cry as well and when people say you shouldn't be doing this or whatever, i think it's important to show emotion and every time racism impacts me I talk about that, and how when i came and when I hear about anti refugees in media, I tell him, this is how I felt being called names in the school system and they see that vulnerable and do not feel like toxic masculinity is something they need to up hold. Talking to them and the age group and they consume so much internet on their and I worry about the kind of content they consume. Even more than what is in the school. I also think that reading is one of the best habits, the imaginations and the intersection feminist writers coming out and the transformation of the black lives movement as an intersection movement that is coming out strong and I read a lot and take that into context as well. Taking them to protests too. the two, one was the against do you think Ford's education cuts and they were there and there were few racialized and mostly white, and then I took them to the march for children and they started to notice. They know how many people show up and to take them to make sure they are part of these movements is important. And this is the last thing I will say is that being politically adverse is important, sometime community stays away and says, we have no control and there is no change happening and I don't think people need to feel conscious of the political things happening and need to know what is said at the press release and how does that impacts their classroom, and I want them to know and what and why I want to go and can the us get trump out. it's on me, not on Michelle or anybody else but I want to say that we need to raise the conscious children if they want to be antiracist and do not have the way to change then they would still be in the margin in the long run: those are some of the ways and I am reading and learning myself because one of the things that many of us, and the victims of the bad education system that didn't teach a lot of that and now we parent and want to do that but we are at a deficit community and generation of parent that came with this curriculum that not only made us feel or did not give us information about their struggles but made us feel like those and our communities were less and less and so on, and so we have to make up for that and that takes a toll and I want to say groups like this and sessions like this and curriculum moving through something like this is critical. We look for support. We are called expert speakers in the tweet but we are parenting and parents, as a racial father and racism and everything that was surrounded us and back through and do it well is a hard job, and I think we need to do that to support ourselves as well.

Anthony: I would say for myself, I think I have tried to explain so there are times where I will not answer the phone or be responsive but because of the role that i have and serve, supporting the black community and whether it's media or work, I do get calls and so I cannot always shut off. So what that has meant is when say the call is done and we are and I just starting talk and say, that is the kind of work dad does and just make general statements. Dad wants to make sure people like us, black people, can be okay and dad can help them and sometimes difficult things or bad things happen and sometimes people need help and so she started to understand that people call dad to help and what does dad help with, he talks about stuff related to us and black people. She has not come out and there is the point of language and us being

black people but I am also as a parent, I think that is what we don't always say, I am learning, I am learning to have these conversations and as a black man and in so many ways and having done this for so long, more than a decade but now to the point of having to find the language and why this works is even needed and what is it about this world that it's needed and not just the lens but disruption of the gender and again, back to an intersectional lens and different construction of family and what that means and learning to articulate that in a way that is meaningful for her and she has points of reference and the building blocks and the complex conversations and so it's a continual learning journey but ultimately to build and support her and to start where she is and where I am and being real about what she is seeing and trying to find ways and points of references that speak to that and why is it important to speak or help, so what I have noticed, and children have a sense of justice, like that is not fair. That is not right, that is not okay. So the child could be playing with a toy and someone comes and pulls it away or a child comes and has a disability or looks different and children move away. So using that as an opportunity where you see images of that and explaining, well, this could be what this is about or sometimes people treat people differently because of how they look or because of what their hands are like or feet or what their eyes look like and as she grows, I am trusting and getting a more complex understanding and enhancement and the points of reference with that.

Steve: I echo your comments completely. And to just share my own few thoughts about the question, I see there was another question on there in the chat around resilience and tips and suggestions and such. You know, apart from what Neethan and Anthony had said, you have hammered home key points that I think are important around understanding challenging and disruption and helping the kids understand that they have a voice, they have eyes and a mind. And a voice to speak out to challenge and disrupt, and for me the biggest, as I reflect back on this last several or these last several months, I reflect on so for any parents watching this, my ex-partner and I separated in January and then the pandemic was March and although it's been a somewhat amicable around developing a schedule around access, there were some issues and stressors around it and then you add in this and then you add in all, so, really forget about the separation, the pandemic was hard for them. It's been hard for all of us but the biggest piece has been understanding what does Black Lives Matter mean? Why is it that this person's death, murder, matters and what does that mean for me? What does that mean for my life right now and for me as a parent to lean into the vulnerable of not only a failed marriage, right, but their mom and dad not being able to succeed in a union where they have a mom and dad that live under the same roof for them. That was traumatic and then there is the pandemic on top of it and then you have all of this, and the significance piece has been helping my kids and engaging with my ex-spouse around what is happening within our world and why does it matter to us as white people? Why does it matter? Should it matter? Does it? Do we have a choice in this? We do. Everyone has a choice around, does this impact me? Do I care about this? So for me I come back to opening up and being vulnerable and humility for our kid and Neethan you talked about it when you answered the question around opening up and showing the kids that we are not perfect. Dear God, I am not perfect. We are not perfect and how do we provide opportunities for our kids to see

that we are not perfect. We are far from it in fact. In fact, the world is not perfect and the world is not kind in many, many ways. And so for myself it's been about looking and there, it hasn't been too hard for opportunities to engage with the kids at their age and stages of development around how are they doing, how are they coping, so resilience, how are they coping and not just asking but really trying to unpack it and then bringing it back to the greater world. Right, whether it's within or where I live, London, England versus Ontario, Canada and the world and why is it that one person's death in the United States, why is it getting all of this media attention and should it matter, should it matter and do you care and to unpack why it is that the black bodies that have been murdered within the United States and within Canada too, why is it that we should know about it? We should choose to care about it and then the next step, do something about it. Talk about it. Engage in conversations, go to protests, and why is it that that is important as white identities? For me, that has been a big -- not a shift because a shift for me happened a while ago in understanding my own identity and power and privilege but it's a journey for me. So anyone that is watching that is white bodies, I would say it's a journey and I go back to, I go back to -- one of my favorite books and it talks about challenging yourself to put your own ego aside and viewpoint and begin to consider, just consider, other people's viewpoint and their own lived experiences and to really work to unpack and dismantle why it is you feel a certain way about something. So for my kids it's really about building blocks and asking micro to macro questions as to why it is they feel a certain way. So any suggestions would be to talk to your kids. Talk to them. They are -- my six year old to my 13 year old and to your two and a half year old. They are developing minds, they want to talk and engage, they have questions, let's talk about it. When I go back to my childhood, even until my teenage years, those conversations were not welcomed. They were not table conversations. They just weren't. And that doesn't make it okay. That doesn't make it okay to be silent as a parent today and not plant those seeds, have those -- again, have those conversations about why. Why the world is the way it is and what kind of world do we want it to be moving forward. Do we want it to be a world by virtue of your gender, the colour of your skin that you get advantages, and others that do not. Is that the kind of world that we want. So for me, it's about having those conversations and really challenging the status quo.

Michelle: Thank you, there was a question on the chat and that will be the last question for the night. In with your kids as a young age is great parenting but the system starts to chip away at them when they start school. What do you do as fathers to keep your children -- I will put that to you because you are still on that journey unless your little one is in childcare or daycare. So what do you do to make your children resilient?

Neethan: Self-esteem is built into how they feel about themselves. I want to make sure that my kids are proud of their skin colour, their background, their accent, and their language and so it's a strong foundation and that is why I went into how language works and so they don't feel, I say English is a medium of communication and not a measure of knowledge it doesn't tell you how much you know, it's a way to talk to someone. And to put that into context and the stories of the ancestors and those and

that is self-confidence and self-esteem and feeling good and despite all of those things, if you can only do that to a certain extent and they go to school and feel their hair is bad or shake their hands that way or the parents so the school system does everything possible. What I try to do with the older son is also, this is, I don't know if this is, I don't know what will happen but I am actually making him question the education system. Go to school and learn these but don't take everything as the final thing. Find ways to learn, learn from going through trip and sitting with your grandparent and education happens in many ways and then take all of that and process it yourself and the same way i tell him, not all police officers are good. Not all teachers are great. They may have great intention but what they say or tell you or do may not be the reflection of what and so the best case is to always continue to have their back and the father/parent to come back and tell you when something doesn't feel right to them and that is a communication, and i have not got to that stage, i hope there is that conversation and right now we go on a walk for 30, 40 minute and have a conversation with the nine year old. so having that conversation, especially for racialized kids and having an adult figure, father, grandfather, someone to open up in the difficult years where they will be challenged and told not worth it and told to take and make choice and profiling in certain careers and criminal activity and we have to be as supportive as possible. I come from the community that because of the value of education, we also value educational authority and what the teacher and principal says and the children are sometimes not trusted as much. I am not going to do the same mistake I see as a youth worker because the children break down and the parents want the education because the education is a priority they make adjustments to how much they show their love to the kid and that is where i will leave it. I know we are running out of time. It's an important time. It's a challenging time when they get into the teenage years and so, Anthony, you have a long way to go. I dread the next 3 years.

(laughter)

Anthony: Can i offer something? She is in daycare and so it's what i think about, and those spaces and i think about the challenges that could be ahead of her and I remember how dumb i was made to feel and put in classes and at a young age I felt like school was not for me and then I acted out in different ways and trying to find ways, being a class clown and finding ways to get attention and so in this age to build that resilience, me and her mom are committed to continuing with affirmations and modelling and then seeing what she will do in class and do them at home and we will say, good, you are smart or you are beautiful. That was so good. That is excellent. So if we -- and we hope to do this, and part of the curriculum and find ways to replicate activities to get the sense that these institutions may not say this but I did this with mom and dad and this was fine. So i am not the issue, there is something else happening here. Maybe I am too hopeful but I think or our thinking, we have decided if we create those spaces, it will create a better chance of her starting to question these institutions so she will get different responses but it's just the context. So she would still get that when she needs to be able to function in society and also start to recognize, sometimes within institutions and schools, what they say and I should also

note some of the things that they will not say. There are studies that are told not to affirm a black child is smart unless in the sports but if it comes to black intelligence and there is the other things, those will not always be forthcoming and so making sure and following what she is learning and giving those so that she knows and she can build on that and when she does that, she will know it can be done, even if she doesn't hear it in a different space.

Steve: I echo what you said. I really literally echo what you both said and the only thing I add and i don't know if it's much to add but helping our kids understand that they have a voice matters, and to me, or in my view, whichever of the three kids come to me with an issue or challenge, the two older, 13 and 9 are on IEP because of reading issues and understanding and just reading. They understand hearing thing and follow directions but reading has been a challenge for them. And the education system it just with IEP and so individual education plans, it's just, it's all, it doesn't always line up ideally and they are still are challenges that come about and for myself as a parent, what I would say is, in terms of resilience, to ensure and in still within the kids, within our children, within our youth, that they have a voice and whether their narrative is fact or true, or complete truth or if it's their version or their lived experience about a truth, that doesn't matter, in my view. Overall, if their experience is a certain narrative to understand that that is their narrative and lived experience and whether or not you get the apology or acknowledgment from the school or learning sport support teacher, that doesn't matter as much for me as much as my child feels validate and heard and that their issue is being addressed and whatever format that needs to be because if their voices fall on deaf ears, my worry about that is that if that is happening, that their voice and by essence their resilience may lessen around trusting within themselves to speak out when they feel there is a problem. To me, in my lived experience as a parent, instilling that in my kids that they have a voice and that it doesn't matter if it's the Principal, the vice principal, that is challenging them that they still have a voice and their mom or dad, both mom and dad will be there and support them. It's an ongoing thing because as our kids continue to go through school, even though they hear that they need to hear it repeated all the time that we are here for you we are here for you if there is something going on. If they don't hear that, even if they heard it if they don't hear it repeated, and there is things happening in school that less that voice within them, that resilience if they don't know they have that base at home and I am just kind of surmising here but my worry would be that the resilience and that light within them may start to diminish. Little by little. So for me it's about reminding my kids all the time that they have a voice.

Michelle: Thank you so much for that and we are going to wrap up. I want to extend my appreciation and thanks for this thoughtful, honest conversation and your willingness to open up about your parenting journey as fathers, and caregivers to your children in this time and so, you know, as I listen to your final statements I think and something tame came to mind. When I decided i was ready for children, I am a reader and researcher and to attend workshops on effective parenting and in all of the things that I did, one thing that struck and stayed with me, i now have an 11 year old and a 13 year old, and it was a psychologist said this, children do not do what you say that they

do. So it scared me in a way that I thought why on earth would i enter this because to know they their eyes are constantly watching you, measuring you, assessing you, in the good, the bad and the ugly and so on this journey, what I learned is, the most important role modelling in my children's life is me and it's not what I say, it's about what I do and the ways in which I do it and where and with whom I chose to do it and a lot of those that is what is going to stay with them. They will forget a lot of what I say to them, I say so many things to them as they grow up and your last comment triggered that for me. This journey on parenting, people do not recognize what a difficult journey it is, and I thank you for being open and sharing that with us. As we continue these discussions into the fall and I may come back and knock on your door because I want to start to break down the conversations in more individual ways to talk about things to engage our fathers and caregiver and those that identify as fathers and provide a forum to have that because we rarely provide that for those to do that so thank you so much for spending your evening with us.

Michelle: Have a great evening and thank you for spending the evening with us. Take care.