

4.10 The Memory That I Can't Shake: The Why Behind Ally Elem...

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SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00

You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Four, Episode 10 "The Memory That I Can't Shake: The Why Behind Ally Elementary"

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Teaching our children to be inclusive and anti-racist starts with us within the sacred walls of our home. First Name Basis is designed to empower you with the confidence you need to be a leader in your family and a change maker in your community. Together, we will wrestle with hard questions and use the answers to create the world we want: a world that reflects our values of inclusion, compassion, and courage. I'm your host, Jasmine Bradshaw, and I am so excited to be on this journey with you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:53

Hello, First Name Basis fam. Guess what: Ally Elementary is live. It is officially live. It's officially out into the world. And I feel like I am like...okay. You know on those commercials when you see the person, and they're really sad, and they're walking under their own personal rain cloud? Well, I feel like the opposite of that, where I have like my own personal confetti cloud. And I am just so excited. I'm just bursting with happiness and excitement that we are going to get to experience Ally Elementary together. So of course in this episode, I'm going to tell you all about Ally Elementary, I'm going to tell you the "why" behind Ally Elementary. I think you're actually going to be really surprised about why I created this program. I mean, there's like an obvious reason, but then there's another reason that I really didn't think I would ever say out loud or tell anybody. Whew. Anyway, so I'm going to tell you the "why," and then I'm going to give you a sneak peek. I'm so excited. I took the audio from one of the video lessons, and I am going to stick it into this episode. So after I share the "why," stay tuned for this sneak peek.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 02:12

But before we start I really have to tell you a little trigger warning just especially for my Black brothers and sisters

but before we start, I really have to tell you a little trigger warning just especially for my Black brothers and sisters, Black biracial brothers and sisters, Indigenous brothers and sisters. The "why" behind Ally Elementary is heavy. It's hard. And I totally understand if you're in a place where you can't hold that today or ever. Okay, I love you all, and I can't wait to share this with you. So first, if you're like me, and you have to see it right this minute, you're like, "I need to get to this website so I can see Ally Elementary and check it out," just go to firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary and you'll be able to see all of the features and the cute kiddos who did some of the activities. You are going to freak out. You're gonna freak out. You're gonna love it. I just know it. So firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary or, of course, I will put this link in the show notes.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 03:10

So Ally Elementary is a brand new anti-racist education program that I created just for families. And of course, this is the obvious "why." The obvious "why" is that I've heard from so many of you that you need this in your life. You have said that you love listening to the show, and you learn so much, and somebody actually said to me, "I wish you were sitting on the couch next to me when I was having this conversation with my children." And I thought, "Oh, what would that look like?" So what I did was, I broke down this roadmap to allyship for our kiddos. And I thought about what would it take to transform our children into anti-racist allies: what would they need to know? What would they need to practice? What would they need to consider and think about? So what I did was, I broke it down into 12 lessons. 12 different video lessons, and I recorded myself teaching them, just like I would teach my own family. So all you'll do is you'll sit down with your kiddos on the couch, you'll press play on the video lessons, and you will learn about melanin. You'll learn about differences. You'll learn about privilege and power, racism and where race came from, and how to be anti-racist, and what it looks like to respond to racism in your life. And then I created activities that go along with each of the video lessons. So each video lesson has an activity so that you can really take what they learn and just snuggle it into their heart and into their mind. So that you know that they're really soaking everything in and figuring out what it looks like for them to be an ally, an anti-racist ally, in their own life.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 04:56

So that is the obvious "why." The obvious "why" is because we need, we all really need, this anti-racist education in our homes, especially because of what we've seen going on with our schools, our school boards in the news. People are taking diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist education out of schools left and right. And we really can't rely on the education system to teach our children these values. We have to teach them ourselves. And if you're a teacher and you're listening, and you teach anti-racism in your classroom...oh, my goodness, you are an angel sent from heaven, because I can only imagine what that is like right now. So thank you for being that type of teacher that our kiddos need. And we need this education in the home from parents, from caregivers, from guardians, from everyone who loves kids and loves their community. So like I said, that is the obvious reason behind Ally Elementary, but I wanted to share with you another reason that's really personal to me.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 06:04

Man, of course, I'm gonna get emotional. So I'm sure you remember what it was like in the summer of 2020, when we all saw George Floyd being murdered by Derrick Chauvin, that police officer. And one of the things that I think about all the time, like, it almost haunts me—it's when I'm in the shower, and when I'm driving in the car, and when I'm playing with my kids—I think about how when he was dying, when he was taking some of his last breaths, he called out for his mom. He said, "Mama, Mama, I'm through."

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 06:48

So sorry. Just thinking about it makes me so emotional. Because I'm a mama. And as soon as I heard him saying that, I remember thinking, "He's not just calling out for his mom, he is calling out to moms everywhere." And what does it look like for us as moms to answer that call. So of course, like you, I tried to be as involved as I could be as a pregnant mother of a toddler in the middle of a global pandemic. But it just felt like no matter how many podcast episodes I made, no matter how many resources I shared, it just didn't feel like I was answering that call. It just didn't feel like I was answering that Mama call, you know? And then one night when I was sitting there thinking about this again and again, I had the thought that we needed to be talking directly to the kiddos. And of course, you know that is what my whole podcast is about. It's about teaching you how to be anti-racist, so that you can bring it to your family. But I just thought we need something that is absolutely 100% clear and concrete, a specific formula and path that families can follow together so that they feel like they are truly becoming anti-racist allies. I felt like I was reading so many things and listening to so many things and wondering, "Okay, where are the concrete action steps here? Where is the part where you tell me how to say this to children?" Because the things that we're dealing with in the realm of anti-racism are really mature topics—race, racism, white supremacy—all of these things are hard to get our brains around, even as adults. So how do we take these big, complicated, gnarly topics, and break them down into bite-sized pieces so that our babies can understand what it really looks like for them to be an anti-racist ally? So here we are with Ally Elementary. Ally Elementary is my response to that memory that I can't shake. And it's what we can do as mamas together to answer that call. And I hope you know that if you are a grandparent or an auntie and uncle, someone else who is a caregiver to a sweet child, that of course I'm talking to you too. And Dads—anyone who truly cares about children and wants to create a better community together. I am talking to you.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 06:56

Okay, now that you know the obvious "why" and the not so obvious one, I want to share with you a sneak peek a sample of Ally Elementary. So I told you that there are 12 video lessons, and they are split up into five modules. So the program is actually five weeks long with a couple of video lessons during each week. And let me tell you, all the video lessons are 15 minutes or less, because I know children. I used to be a second grade teacher. I know that attention span is not that long, so we've got to keep them engaged. Anyway, so each of the modules builds on each other. So we start off pretty tame by talking about melanin. And then by the end, we are making an anti-racist pledge for our families. Right. So the sample that I'm giving you today is from Module Four, and Module Four is towards the end, because I told you, there are five of them. Module Four is called "Privilege and Fairness," and this lesson is called "Equality Versus Equity." Now, this is a topic that I've never actually talked about on the podcast. I have always wanted to make this episode, but I've never had a chance to. So I thought this would be a cool one to share with you. Because I want you to be able to hear this concept. It's almost like new information, but I want you to be able to hear it in the way that we would be explaining it to our children. Okay, so here comes the sample of Ally Elementary, and I will see you on the other side.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 11:17

Hello, my friends, welcome back. Okay, today, we are breaking down one of my favorite topics, and that is equality versus equity. Now, equity and equality are two words that sound really similar, but mean really different things. Equality means that everybody gets the same. So everybody is equal, and everybody gets the same thing. Equity means that everyone gets just what they need so that they can succeed. Equity is how we are going to make our communities more fair. Have you ever heard someone say that fair isn't always equal? I think that sometimes we think that we want everything to be equal, when in reality, what we really want is for things to be fair. Let me give you an example to help you understand. So let's say that someone decided to set your neighbor's house on fire. I know that's a little bananas, but let's just go with it. So someone sets your neighbor's house on fire, and they call 911. What should happen is the fire department should send a firetruck to their house to help them put it out, right?

Equity is everyone getting what they need. So the fire department is sending one firetruck to their house to help them, because they're in need. Equality means that everybody gets the same thing. So that would be like if your neighbor's house is on fire, and the fire department decided to come to your house, send one truck to your house and a truck to your neighbor's house, because, well, everything has to be equal. Everybody has to have the same. That's so silly. That doesn't make any sense! Your house is not on fire. You don't need a fire truck. Your neighbor needs a firetruck. So equity is when everyone has what they need, not necessarily equality, which is when everyone has the same thing.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 13:10

There are a lot of unfair and racist patterns in our society. Do you remember what that's called when there's a pattern of unfairness and racism? Do you remember? It's called systemic racism. Systemic racism shows up in lots of different places in our lives, and I want to give you an example of one of those racist patterns, one of those examples of systemic racism, that we are still feeling the effects of today, even though it happened a long time ago. After veterans came home from World War II, they needed some support so that they could keep going with their lives. So the government came up with this plan. It's called the GI Bill. Now GI is just another word for veteran. So this was a plan where the government would give money to veterans to help them in their lives. So one of the things that they would use this money for was to go to school so that they could get a new job, or one of the most important things that they used the money for was to buy a home for their family. The lawmakers all had to agree that it was a good idea that they take this money and give it to veterans, but there were some lawmakers who weren't on board. So President Roosevelt, who really wanted to get this money to the veterans, was like, "Okay, okay. If you agree to this bill, then I will let you choose who gets money and who doesn't." So they passed the GI Bill. And then from there, there were a lot of white lawmakers who were in power, white men who decided that they thought that only white veterans should have access to the money from the GI Bill. So a lot of these white veterans were getting lots of money from the government to help them support themselves and support their families. And there are a lot of Black veterans who had just fought in a war, side by side with these white veterans, but didn't have any access to that money at all. One of the most common ways to build wealth, which are the things that make your life livable and comfortable, one of the most common ways to build wealth here in the United States is by owning a home, because you can take your home, and you can pass it down to your children and your grandchildren. And that's how they benefit from your wealth. You take your wealth, and you give it to them, and then they give it to their children. Well, because Black veterans were not allowed to have access to the money from the GI Bill, they didn't have opportunities to build wealth in the same way that white veterans did. They didn't have opportunities to purchase homes and pass them down from themselves to their kids and to their grandkids.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 15:58

So now I want to help you see how something that happened way back at the end of World War II, like the GI Bill, is still affecting our lives today. Obviously, it wasn't fair, that those Black veterans were left out of the opportunity to build wealth by owning a home or by getting a good education and getting a job. That was not fair, and that was clearly racist, but we can still see it in our lives. Have you ever noticed that a lot of the people who are experiencing homelessness are Black and brown people? Well, it's not because Black and brown people are lazy. It's not because they're irresponsible. It's because Black and brown people did not have opportunities to build wealth. They didn't have opportunities to buy homes in the same way that white people did. And I'm not saying it's a bad thing that the government gave white veterans money to help them purchase homes so that they could build wealth. I'm saying that the way that they did it was racist, because they left a whole group of people out. And now that group of people is suffering still. They suffered then and they're suffering now. That was racist, and that is an example of systemic racism. Because this pattern of racism, this pattern of leaving Black people out, keeping Black people away from that money and not allowing them to build wealth by purchasing a home, is racist. And it's systemic racism. So what are we going to do to fix this? Because obviously, this is a big problem.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 17:37

Now, there are a lot of people who have a lot of different ideas about how we can fix this. But if we're looking at it through our equity lens, if we're looking at giving everybody what they need to succeed, I'm thinking that we should probably give people who are experiencing homelessness the money and the support that they need so that they can find a safe place to live. If we're looking at it through a lens of equality, that means giving everybody the same thing, giving everybody the same amount of money and support. But the thing is, not everybody needs the same thing. Those of us who aren't experiencing homelessness, we don't need that. We don't need that money in support, because we already have a safe place to live. It's just like when you call the fire department for your neighbor, and the fire department went to your neighbor's house because your neighbor's house was the one that was on fire. You didn't need the fire truck to come because your house was doing just fine. So equity means we're giving everybody what they need to succeed. And in this situation, to me, it looks like we should be supporting the people who are experiencing homelessness and giving them a safe place to live. So when we see an unfair situation, we need to look around and ask ourselves, what can we do to make this more fair so that everyone has what they need to succeed?

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Jasmine Bradshaw 18:56

Now in our activity today, you're going to be looking at issues of systemic racism. And you're going to be thinking about how we can make our society more equitable. Now, I have to tell you right now, these are big issues. These are big problems that we've been dealing with for a long time, but I think it's important that you think about them, because you are never too young to have really innovative ideas. You're never too young to make a difference. So I left you a lot of blank space so that you can draw or write, or whatever you need to do, to get your ideas out of your head and onto the paper. I hope that you'll take this opportunity to truly think about what it would look like to make our world more fair for everybody.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 19:41

I can't wait to see you in the next lesson.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 19:44

All right, what did you think? I feel like I'm like debuting a new piece of art or something, my heart is beating so fast. I really hope you enjoyed that. I feel like it is just a perfect snapshot of what it looks like to have a really important conversation about how history still affects us today, and then looking into the future of what we need to start doing about it. So, like I told you, this is just the audio. And it's even more exciting with the video, because obviously, I'm teaching the lesson. We've got pictures, we got videos, it's just so wonderfully exciting.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 20:24

Okay, so let me give you more of the logistics of Ally Elementary. I want to answer some of your questions, because I feel like there are a few things that I know you're going to ask me. The first thing that I always get asked when I share something new is what age group is this appropriate for. And you know that we've talked a lot about talking to our children about race and racism in a developmentally appropriate way. So I have to tell you that Ally Elementary is perfect for kiddos who are third graders all the way up through eighth graders. The content that we're covering are for more mature little minds, but I know that you have younger ones at home, too. So one of the bonuses that we're

offering, along with Ally Elementary, is an activity book called Little Allies. Our Little Allies Activity Book was created for all of your kiddos who are below third grade, because I'm imagining you're pressing play during dinner, and you're watching these videos together or you're snuggled up on the couch, or you're watching them on your TV. And then you have your little ones who are there too. And you want to have these really deep, meaningful, connective conversations. But your little ones are running around because they're a little distracted. Right? So the Little Allies Activity Book is perfect for them, so that that will keep them engaged and excited while you're working with your older kiddos on this deep, important learning. And in that activity book, we have dot-to-dots, we have an eye spy, a protest eye spy page. It is so cool. We have color-by-number and word searches and word unscrambles. And everything in it has to do with anti-racism, becoming an ally, black history, Indigenous rights. Like, it's just so exciting. So we've got something for your older kiddos. We've got Ally Elementary for those third through eighth graders, and then we have the Little Allies Activity Book as a bonus for your little ones while you're working through Ally Elementary together.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 22:26

The other thing that I can imagine you're thinking or worrying about right now is, "oh my goodness, what if my child asks a question that I don't know the answer to?" Or, "What if I feel like I'm saying the wrong thing?" Well, one of the amazing features of Ally Elementary is that we have three live question and answer sessions with me throughout the course of the program. So we've got one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end where you can come on, you can ask me any question, you can tell me, "Oh, my goodness, my kid said this, how should I respond? What should I do?" And not only that, we also have an Ally Elementary community. So on the same website where you're watching the videos and you're downloading the worksheets, you'll also have access to a community of parents and caregivers who are on this journey with you. So if you have a child who's asking a question that you're not sure what to say to, or you think of something while you're watching the videos, you can literally go to the community, post the question to the group, and other parents can say, "Oh, my goodness, I had that too. Here's how I responded." Or, "I'm not sure. What do you think about this? Let's try this out." I'm so excited for the parents, guardians, and caregivers who are going through Ally Elementary with these kiddos to connect with one another, because one of the key pieces of anti-racism is that we need to be doing this in community with each other.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 23:56

So you've got your 12 video lessons where you're learning about anti-racism together, you've got your activities that you're doing along with each of the lessons, and then you have the expert guidance from me through the live Q & As, and this parent community to support you on your journey. And of course, we couldn't forget those little ones. And we have them working on the Little Allies Activity Book while we're doing everything else with our bigger kiddos. So if you are ready to invest in your family, invest in your anti racist journey and join ally Elementary, just go to firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary. Of course I will put this in the show notes.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 24:39

And if you feel like you need a little bit more time and space and guidance before you're ready to invest, make sure that you sign up for one of our free anti-racist parenting classes. It's called Ally ABCs: Three Simple Ways to Embed Anti-Racism Into Your Family Culture. So in that class, I will give you an A, a B, and a C to making anti-racism a big part of your family culture, and then I will share more about Ally Elementary. I'll answer any of your questions. So if you feel like you need a little bit more information before you're ready to dive in, just sign up for that at firstnamebasis.org/freeclass. The very first one is tonight. I'm teaching three different classes. The first one is tonight, October 26, at 7 p.m. Pacific Time. The second one is tomorrow, October 27, at 5:30 p.m. Pacific Time. And the last one is on November 2 at 7 p.m. Pacific Time. The other thing, my dear friends, is that we are running a special. So

we're doing early bird pricing from today, October 26, until Friday, October 29, at 11:59 p.m. So as soon as it hits Saturday morning, early bird pricing is going to go away and the price will go up. So if you are thinking about investing in Ally Elementary for your family, definitely make sure that you get in before the end of the day on Friday, because we want you to get that amazing early bird price.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 26:14

The last thing I want to share with you before we go are the modules and the lessons that are included in Ally Elementary. So this is for people who are like, "I need to know all the details." Module One is called "Melanin," and in Module One, we talk about what is melanin. Where did it come from? How do we get our own melanin? And we do a super fun activity, it might be my favorite activity from the whole program, where we mix together the color of paint that matches our unique skin tone. And then we give it a special name. So in module one, we're talking about melanin. And then we talk about differences and how differences are really important and a super normal part of life, even if they might cause friction sometimes. Module Two is called "Race," and in Module Two, we talked about what is race. What are the racial categories? And where did race come from? Who created race? Because we all know this is not a scientific concept, this is a human created concept. So who came up with it? And what does it look like in our country? And in Module Three, we break down racism and we start with bias and prejudice. Those are some definitions that I shared with you last week. We talked about power, who makes the decisions in our communities and why? And then we talk about what is racism? Module Four is called "Privilege and Fairness," and this is when we do the lesson, "Equality versus Equity" that you just heard. And then we talk about what is privilege? We talked about what are the different types of privilege and what do we do with the privileges that we hold? And the very last module, Module Five, is called "Solidarity and Action," and this is when we talk about what do we do when we hear something racist or see something racist? How do we respond? What does that look like? And of course, the very, very last lesson is called "I Will be Anti-Racist." And that's when we work together to create an anti-racist pledge for your family.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 28:26

I hope you can tell how excited I am for all of us to go on this journey together. Ally Elementary is magical. It's special, and it is what I wanted for my own family. I cannot wait until my kids are old enough to go through Ally Elementary and have these really important, deep, meaningful conversations about our family values. And what it looks like for them to live out those values when they walk out the door, when they go to school, when they go to church, when they're thriving in our communities and including everyone and being an anti-racist ally. Okay, my friends. Get your tushes over to Ally Elementary, firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary, and enroll today. Remember, early bird pricing ends on Friday the 20th, and then enrollment closes on November 4th. So after November 4th, we will not be taking any more enrollments to Ally Elementary, because then we're going to start. We're going to do this together as a group, as a team, as parents, caregivers, educators who really want to make a difference in the lives of the children that we love, and in our community. [Firstname basis.org/allyelementary](https://firstnamebasis.org/allyelementary). And if you're signed up for the free class tonight, I can't wait to see you. I can't wait to see your actual face, like your real life face, on Zoom. Oh, it's the best. Okay, I'll see you soon.

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Jasmine Bradshaw 29:53

My friends, thank you for being here. I hope you can feel how much I believe in you, and how deeply I know that when we work together, we can make real change in our communities. Any of the books, podcasts, or articles that I reference will be linked in the show notes. If you are looking for more detailed notes, be sure to head over to our Patreon community. On our Patreon site. I provide all of the outlines that I use to make the episodes and everything is linked there. So you don't have to take furious notes while you are listening. And don't forget to join us over on

Instagram at [firstname.basis](https://www.instagram.com/firstname.basis). If you're interested in partnering with First Name Basis or doing some kind of collaboration, please email us at hello@firstnamebasis.org. All right, have a great week my friends, and I will talk to you again soon.