

## Transcript

### First Name Basis podcast, Season 3, Episode 29--Critical Race Theory in Schools

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You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, season three episode 29--Critical Race Theory in Schools.

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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.

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Hello, First Name Basis fam. I am so glad you are here. Guess what? Today is the season finale of season three of First Name Basis. Can you believe that? I can't believe that we are almost to season four. So I wanted to tell you that we are going to be taking a little break to get ready for season four. And we will be back on August 24 2021. Our release day is Tuesday. So it'll be Tuesday, August 24. You can look for a new First Name Basis episode, it'll be season four episode one.

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But you know what? I think that because of the nature of this episode, because we are talking about Critical Race Theory, I think there might be a lot of new listeners out there. So I wanted to introduce myself really fast for those of you who might be new to me and new to my work. My name is Jasmine Bradshaw. I am Black, biracial. My mom is white and my dad is Black. I am an anti-racist educator for parents, families and teachers. I love to help you figure out how to talk to the little ones in your life about race. I think it's so important that we take the scary out of these conversations with our children and teach them our true values. So I have two little ones myself, one who is almost four and one who will be one next month--I'm in total denial that my kids are getting so big. And we live on the land of the X. So if you're new around here, I just wanted to say welcome. I'm so excited that you're here, I'm so excited that we get to do this together. This is such important work. And I would encourage you to I mean, you can start with season one, episode one, we hit the ground running with talking to young kids about race, then talking to older kids about race. And throughout this whole episode, you will hear me introducing a ton of different episodes that we have talked about to give you background knowledge for this really important conversation. I have been studying anti racism for over five years now. And it has completely transformed my life and my perspective. And I've heard from so many of you that it has transformed your families as well. And so I'm just really excited that we're going to dig into this topic together.

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I want you to first take a really deep breath in and out, make sure you release that tension in your shoulders. These conversations about race can be very emotional. And I just want you to know that what we're really talking about right now are our values, we are talking about our values of loving one another, including one another, and seeking justice for each other. So with that, let's jump in.

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I really do before we start I have to give a trigger warning for all of my Black, indigenous, people of color. Anyone who falls into that category, I just want you to know that we are going to be talking about systemic oppression that includes enslavement, that includes genocide against indigenous people. If you need to take a break, if you need to press pause and step away and come back ,or press pause and never come back, that is 100% okay. Please take care of yourself. I'm doing this for us. I'm doing this for those of us who hold marginalized identities and I would hate for something that I'm intending to help to actually cause you pain and strife. So just know that I always want you to take care of yourself.

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One other thing that I will say before we start is that we have a First Name Basis Patreon community. And this is a community of parents and teachers and caregivers who love kiddos who want to help them understand how to make our communities inclusive and just and need a community of other people to help them do that. So I want to mention this because I have a feeling after this episode I'm going to get a lot of questions. And the amazing thing is every single month in our Patreon community we do a live Q&A where I answer all of your questions. So our live Q&A for July, it's kind of tricky because it's actually going to be on August 1. It's going to be August 1 at 7:30pm Pacific Time in our Patreon community, and that is [patreon.com/firstnamebasis](https://patreon.com/firstnamebasis). I will put the link in the show notes. But if you are thinking of a question or you've run into something really difficult, especially when it comes to Critical Race Theory, in your community, in your family, or talking to your kids, that is the place to ask questions. So if you find yourself in that situation where you want a community of parents to talk to this stuff about, or you want an opportunity to ask me your question directly, you can do that on August 1 at 7:30pm Pacific Time during our live Q&A on [patreon.com/firstnamebasis](https://patreon.com/firstnamebasis).

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Okay, let's talk about Critical Race Theory in schools. I know, I know, there's been so much going on, there's been so much flying around, and you're probably feeling a little bit confused, and a little bit overwhelmed. So today, we're going to talk about what is Critical Race Theory, then we will move into talking about the laws in our country in the United States and how they affect different groups of people, then we will break down common myths about Critical Race Theory. And of course, we need to end with what is going on in our state, local and federal legislatures when it comes to Critical Race Theory in schools. Okay, jumping right into what is Critical Race Theory.

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Now I'm starting this episode with the assumption that if you're listening, you believe that systemic racism is real. That is kind of one of the tenants of the First Name Basis community. We believe that systemic racism is real. We believe that it's a problem. And we believe that we have a responsibility to do something about it. If you feel like, Oh, I'm not sure about that, or wait a minute, what systemic racism, I have a whole episode for you, you can press pause right now and go listen to it. It's called Racism 101, it's season three, episode nine. And I will be sure to leave that link in the show notes. But I'm starting with this assumption that everybody believes systemic racism is a real thing, and we have a responsibility to try to eradicate it.

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The other thing I want to mention is that this episode is not a comprehensive look at critical race theory, I am going to give you the nuts and bolts, I'm just going to give you what you need, so that you can have productive conversations about the topic, and so that you can get involved in your local community or in your school or with your school board. Okay, because Critical Race Theory is a college concept. It's a law school concept. It's something that you could have an entire course on, I could make a whole season of First Name Basis just on Critical Race Theory and what it is and breaking down each and every point of it. So I'm going to give you the 10,000 foot view so that you feel like you can make an informed decision for you and your family and for what's best for your community.

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Okay, so, Critical Race Theory has been around for quite some time. It's actually been around since the 1970s. So it's not a new concept. And anti racist scholars and educators, they've been using Critical Race Theory to analyze the laws and policies in our country for years and years. I want to start by giving you three different definitions of Critical Race Theory. Now I'm giving you these definitions so you feel like you have the complete picture of what we are talking about.

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So the first definition of Critical Race Theory comes from a book that's titled Critical Race Theory: an Introduction. It's by Richard Delgado. Now Richard Delgado is a lawyer, who was one of the original creators of Critical Race Theory. So there was a group of lawyers who got together and sat down and created this theory. And Richard Delgado is one of those people. So I thought it was good to go right to the source. And in his book, he says, quote, "the Critical Race Theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power." End quote. So if you remember from our Racism 101 episode, one of the most important things I talk about is the fact that racism is not just about hating someone or treating someone badly because of the color of their skin. Racism is prejudice plus power. It's the systems that we have in place that give individuals the power to carry out their prejudice in a harmful way against people of color. So Richard Delgado's definition really focuses on race, racism, and power.

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The next definition I want to share with you I actually saw on Sylvia Duckworth's social media on her Instagram. And she worked with two critical race theory scholars, Dr. Angel Jones and Dr.

Kate Slater to put together these resources that explain Critical Race Theory. And she has a whole Google Doc of resources where it explains it and breaks it down and talks about common misconceptions and lots of things. So I will be sure to link that in the show notes. And in this Google Doc, she explains, quote, "CRT is an academic framework or practice that examines how systems policies and the law perpetuate systemic racism. It is called Critical Race Theory because it asks you to look critically at systems to better understand the origins of racial inequities. This knowledge can be used to mitigate and stem the inequities at the root cause." End quote. So I feel like this gives a really good clear picture of what Critical Race Theory is. It is a way of looking at the world. It's a way of looking at our laws and policies, and saying, Okay, how does this affect different racial groups? Does it affect different racial groups in a negative way? And if it does, then that means that we are looking at systemic racism, and we need to do something about it.

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The third definition of Critical Race Theory that I want to share with you comes from Kimberle Crenshaw. Now you've probably heard her name before, because she is amazing. She's a professor of law at UCLA and at Columbia Law School, and she is the woman who coined the term "intersectionality". So if you've thought about the way that sexism and racism work together to affect black women or brown women, you have probably heard of Kimberle Crenshaw. And along with Richard Delgado, she is one of the original pioneers of Critical Race Theory. So she was there when it was being invented. And she spoke on Brittany Packnett Cunningham's podcast, it's called Undistracted. The episode that they did together is called "The Truth About Critical Race Theory". And of course, I will link that in the show notes. So Kimberle Crenshaw says that Critical Race Theory is, quote, "a way of analyzing or looking at law's role in creating both race and racism. It was a product of second generation Civil Rights activists, students, and professors who came into the academy and came into law school, right at the moment, when the forward momentum of the Civil Rights Movement was starting to recede." She says our goal was to understand the ways that law makes racial discrimination appear to be inevitable, that makes racial disparities appear to be there, rather than a product of policies of practices of structures that are all legally permissible, and in some ways, actually insulated by the law. She goes on to say the easiest way to put it is this, "We believe that race is not essential. We believe that race is a fiction. But law has helped turn that fiction into reality. It has helped turn what it means to be Black, and what it means to be white into concrete realities that stretch all the way back to 1619. And all the way to this present moment." She says, "people weren't born slaves, law created slaves out of them." End quote. So basically, what she's saying, and we've talked about this in previous episodes, is that race is a social construct. Race was made up by human beings. It's not a biological concept. But it has been used to oppress people. Race has been used to justify racism. And there are laws that have been put in place that continue to perpetuate racism. I know that if you're new to this concept, that might sound a little bit confusing, but I have a whole episode that you can listen to where I break this down, and give you the history of how race was created. It's season two, Episode 12. And it's called "How to Talk to your children about Racism." So race is a social construct that was created to justify slavery and to justify the genocide of indigenous peoples. And to me, one of the best quotes that illustrates this point is from Ta-Nehisi Coates, and he says, "race is the child of racism, not

the father." So basically, what he's saying is that racism existed, we were already treating people poorly or treating people differently or oppressing people because of the color of their skin. And then we decided to create a racial hierarchy to justify what we were doing, to justify the treatment of those people, to justify dispossessing indigenous people of their land, to justify enslaving Africans.

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Okay, take a deep breath, unclench your jaw. I know, hearing these things for the first time might be difficult. Heck, hearing these things for the 15th time might be difficult. But I'm so glad you're

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Okay, let's keep going. So Critical Race Theory is this understanding that we have to look at the laws and policies that are going on in the United States, and see how they are affecting different racialized groups of people. And I like to think of it this way: I feel like Critical Race Theory and understanding how it works is like putting on glasses for the first time. Now, I have to tell you a story, of course. So when I was little, I pretended like I failed an eye test, I think I was probably seven or eight. And I pretended like I failed an eye test. Because I really, really, really, really wanted to wear glasses. And I got in the car after school, and my mom said, you know, how was your day and I was like, "Oh, Mom, the nurse told me that I need glasses. I failed my eye test." I'm, I'm so excited that I get to go and get some glasses. And my mom turned around. She looked at me right in the eyes. And she said, "you know, the eye doctor is going to tell me if you're lying." And of course, right then I broke and I was like, "Okay, fine. I don't need glasses. I just made it all up." And we always laugh about that story to this day. Because now if you follow me on Instagram, you know that now I do wear glasses, but I didn't actually need them until after my first daughter Violet was born. So I found out that I needed glasses kind of by accident. I remember when I was watching TV after Violet was born, I was thinking, "Wow, it's kind of kind of blurry." But I was really tired. So I was like, "You know what, it's probably just having a newborn, I'm exhausted." But then I was driving around and I was like, "Oh, it's kind of hard to see those signs. Man. That's, that's difficult." So I was like, "okay, maybe I should start thinking about getting glasses." Then one day, my sister was over for dinner. And she was like, "just try mine on and see what happens." I put her glasses on. I kid you not I said to her, "I feel like I'm seeing the world in Technicolor for the first time!" Everything was so clear. It was so crisp. It felt like I was looking at the world in HD. I couldn't believe how much better I could see. And I realized that I immediately needed to go get glasses, right? So I feel like that is what Critical Race Theory does for us. We put on our CRT glasses, and we can see the world through this lens. And we just gain more information, we gain a better understanding of how the world works, and how it's affecting different populations of people. And then we can decide, based on that information, how do we want to react? What kind of community do we want to live in.

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So this is where we're going to move into the part of the conversation where we're talking about the laws in our country and in our communities. And this understanding that laws are not neutral. Before we even started this whole conversation about Critical Race Theory, I wanted to

make an episode called Laws are Not Neutral. Because I wanted people to understand that just because a law doesn't say anything about race, it doesn't have to mention Black, white, Latinx. It doesn't have to say race at all in the law. It can affect people completely differently, depending on what racialized group they belong to.

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Now, let's start with the really obvious ones. And these laws did talk about race, right? Slavery was legal. Obviously, that was a super racist law. But it was legal, and it definitely was not neutral. Jim Crow segregation, also legal, super racist law, super obvious that it's a racist law. That's something that we all agree on. They said separate but equal, but we know it wasn't in any way equal. It was also legal to rip indigenous children from their parents' arms and forced them into residential schools. In the schools, they would experience emotional, physical and sexual abuse. And obviously, the effect of those laws was not neutral. These laws tore apart families. I mean, you've probably heard about the hundreds of bodies of Indigenous children that are being uncovered at the sites of these residential schools, both in Canada and in the US. And here in the United States. The Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, she is launching a federal investigation into the US residential schools to uncover the truth about what happened in those schools and the harm that was done to those children. And people are truly bracing themselves about what they're going to find. So we understand that there are some laws that explicitly talk about race, and that are very obviously racist, but there are other laws that don't mention race at all. And that's where we have to think about Critical Race Theory, so that we can examine the outcomes of the law instead of just what the law says on its surface.

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Now, I explained a lot of this in our episode about voter suppression, the one about how you can help stop voter suppression. And I will link that in the show notes. I explained different voting laws, systemically racist outcomes, and how people can be prevented from voting based on the color of their skin because of the laws that we have in place.

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So I want to give you an example of a voting law that was upheld just last week here in Arizona by the Supreme Court that has racist outcomes. So there are two voting laws in Arizona that went to the Supreme Court recently, and were decided on just last week, the first is the law that you cannot pick up people's ballot from them, and turn it in for them. So there are people who are elderly who can't leave their home, or there are people who live on Indigenous land on Native American reservations, where ballot boxes are really, really far away. And there would be people who would go around and pick up those ballots and turn them in for other people. And there's a law in Arizona that says you cannot do that. You may not pick up anyone else's ballot and turn it in for them. The second law that went before the Supreme Court is the idea that if you vote in the wrong precinct, then your vote doesn't count. I mean, this one is like so dumb to me. And like, why does it matter? I don't even know what my precinct is. So how would I know if I voted in the wrong precinct? It's all just feels like red tape. So some lawyers went to the Supreme Court to say, wait a minute, this is not fair. These laws are negatively affecting Black and Indigenous people of color more than they're affecting white people.

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Now, do these laws say one single word about race in them? Nope. But the outcome is what we have to look at. The effect is that white people are affected by these laws at a rate of .5%, while Black and Indigenous people of color are affected by these laws at a rate of 1%. Now that might sound like oh my goodness, .5% to 1%. But if you look at it in a different way, you'll see that that's actually double. People of color are being negatively affected at a higher rate than white people because of these voting laws in Arizona. 1% is double the amount of .5%. So we can see if we are putting on our Critical Race Theory glasses, we can see that these laws have a systemically racist outcome. Because the way that the law is set up, it will negatively affect people of color at a higher rate than it negatively affects white people. Now, I wish that people in general, were not negatively affected, I wish that we would be able to count everyone's votes and pick up people's ballots for them and turn them in if they need assistance. But the Supreme Court said no, when we're looking at the laws, we are just looking at the intention, we're not looking at the outcome, we're not looking at the impact, the intention was not to hurt people of color. So we think that law is fine. And if you've been here for a while, you know that I always, always, always say your impact is greater than your intent—even if your intention was pure, even if you didn't mean to be racist, or do something that was racist. Even if the law doesn't say anything about race in it, we have to look at the impact. And the impact is that Black and Indigenous people of color are being affected, negatively affected, at double the rate that white people are being negatively affected by this law.

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So I hope by breaking that down that gives you a really good understanding of what it looks like to take Critical Race Theory, look through that Critical Race Theory lens, and then understand what's going on in our community. And now you can take that information and decide, "what do I need to do as a community member to combat the systemic racism that I'm seeing around me."

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Now, let me give you a few more examples. So here's an example that relates to the criminal justice system. And I want to tell you that I found this example through an article that was written by a man named Michael Harriot and he works for The Root. I have read so many of his articles, and they're all amazing, but I do have to tell you that he is a hard hitter, he does not hold back. So just know that if you're going to go read Michael Harriot's articles. So he talks in his article about how there is a huge disparity when it comes to criminal sentencing. And I've shared this example on Patreon before, so you've probably heard of the War on Drugs. And during the War on Drugs, they were targeting crack cocaine and powder cocaine. And there was a law that said if you had five grams of crack cocaine, that carried a five year sentence, while 500 grams of powder cocaine also carried a five year sentence. So someone could have like a gajillion times more powder cocaine than crack cocaine and get the same sentence. Now on its surface that doesn't look like it has anything to do with race, you're like, "Okay, it's both cocaine, why would they change the amount of sentencing based on the type of cocaine you have." But here is where we have to put on our Critical Race Theory glasses. When you look at the sentencing, it becomes blatantly clear that Black people were the ones who were using and selling crack

cocaine, while white people were the ones who were using and selling powder cocaine. So now can you see the racial disparity? Black people were being sentenced way longer than white people were for having less cocaine than white people did. So even though this law does not look racist on its surface, the impact is that it is racist. Now, I'm not talking about the people who created the law or the intention behind the law of whether or not they wanted to put more Black people in jail. I'm not even going to go there. I'm sure you probably already know what I think about that. All I'm saying is the impact on the Black community is that Black people were going to jail at higher rates and longer rates than white people because of the amount of cocaine that they had because they had crack instead of having powder. There is an entire report about this law. It's called "Cracks in the System: 20 Years of the Unjust Federal Crack Cocaine Law." It is by the ACLU. And I will link that in the show notes. I read through that to get a better understanding of what went on. In the article by Michael Harriot, he goes on to highlight the fact that statistics from the United States Sentencing Commission have shown that Black men received sentences that are 19.1% longer than white men when they have committed the same crime. And I want to read you a quote from the article it says, quote, "white people use illegal drugs, possess illegal narcotics and sell illegal substances at higher rates than Black people. But Black people are six and a half times more likely to be arrested and convicted for drugs. The Stanford open policing project, the largest police stop project that ever existed, found that Black people are 2.5 times more likely to be stopped, and four times more likely to be searched than white drivers, even though white drivers were more likely to have contraband." End quote. Now I first came into contact with this idea from Dr. Tricia Rose. She has a lecture series called "How Structural Racism Works." She is from Brown University. And she also has a podcast. She's amazing. She's like my number one, I would love to have her on the podcast. But her podcast is called The Tightrope. And she explains in her lecture series that the reason why Black people go to jail more for drugs than white people is because they are asked to turn out their pockets more because they are stopped more. And they're searched more. She said that if white people were asked to turn out their pockets, as much as Black people were asked to turn out their pockets, they would actually find that white people use drugs at a higher rate than Black people do. And I am not saying this to pass judgment on anyone who uses drugs or to say anything about white people as a whole. Please do not hear that as what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that the way that policing works in our communities, and the way that the laws are implemented and upheld in our communities, are contributing to systemic racism. And Critical Race Theory is what helps me understand that fact.

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So I hope you feel like you have a better understanding of the fact that laws are not neutral, even if they appear to be neutral. Their outcome and their impact isn't always neutral. And the thing is, I want you to see that neutrality isn't even what we're going for. Equity is what we're going for. We are going for fairness, we are going for justice, our laws need to be just and they need to be treating people in a way that supports them and gives them what they need. So neutrality isn't necessarily the goal. Fairness, equity, and justice are the goal. And the other thing I want to point out is that if you have been listening to the First Name Basis podcast, so many of the discussions that we have been having are using the framework of Critical Race Theory, because Critical Race Theory is a big part of anti racism. We have talked on this



podcast about how the policies surrounding COVID have affected communities of color disproportionately, right? That was through a lens of CRT. We have talked on this podcast about the importance of representation in our schools and in the bookshelves in our libraries. That was done through the lens of CRT. We've talked about privilege. I've told you countless Untold Story episodes. And those episodes always have policies and laws that we break down and discuss in them. And all of that has been done wearing our CRT glasses.

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Now, I want you to think if you are a regular listener of First Name Basis, don't you feel like you have a better understanding of how our world works? And how you as a person can make a difference? That is the goal of Critical Race Theory. It's to help us see what do we need to do in response to these laws to make things more fair and more equitable. I really hope you can see that I wasn't trying to be sneaky. I wasn't trying to pull the wool over your eyes. It's just that if we are going to be anti racist and create the community we want, we have to have this understanding of how people are being affected.

31:06

Okay, so let's move into discussing how to respond when people are against Critical Race Theory. And these are the biggest questions that I get from all of you. The first thing that I want you to do when you run into someone who is anti CRT, is to start by asking them, what is Critical Race Theory? Because here's the thing, most people don't actually understand what it is. A lot of people have heard a lot of different ideas, but they're not quite sure what it is that they're coming up against and what it is that they're talking about. So first, ask them, "Wait, what is Critical Race Theory? What have you heard?" Then, once they have explained to you what they think it is, you can help them make corrections.

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Ask them, "what makes you nervous? Why are you so anxious about Critical Race Theory," and then you can help them understand that if they want to align themselves with their values, they need to allow our curriculum in our schools to be more historically accurate, and more equitable. It always, always, always comes back to our values. Do we want our children to be learning about what really happened in our history, and about what they can do to create the community that we want moving forward? If that is the case, if that is one of your values, then Critical Race Theory should make you feel empowered. Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about so it can sink in a little better.

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So I was reading this story about a school district in Virginia. At this school board meeting, they were talking about diversity and inclusion and equity and teaching this to the children in their school district. In the article it says quote, "two days later, at a raucus meeting in Cherokee County attended by hundreds, with hundreds outside after the meeting room filled, parents booed when the superintendent Brian V. Hightower explained equity means recognizing that all students are equal and deserve equal access to opportunities for educational success, and to feel welcome and valued. The crowd hissed when he reaffirmed Cherokee's commitment to

social and emotional learning, which was born out of concerns over rising rates of depression, self harm and suicide. The crowd also shouted down parents who defended equity and social and emotional learning." End quote. Did you hear that? Did you hear what those parents were booing? The parents booed when the superintendent explained that we should make all students feel equal, valued, welcomed and recognized. Why would you do those things? Who doesn't want that for their child? Who doesn't want that for other people's children? And that's when you know that people are not acting from their place of values, if their values are that every child should go to school and be able to learn about who they are, where they come from, how they fit into this community, and how they can be a productive member of society. Shouldn't that child feel welcome and valued at school? Why would anyone ever boo something like that when we are thinking about our values, and when we are leaning into our values? We are not booing this idea that children need to feel welcome. That is bananas. Please. I hope we agree. That's bananas. We should not be booing the idea that children should feel welcome in their classroom and in their school. So when parents are starting to act and react like this, you can very clearly see that they are not acting out of a place that represents their values. So I want you to think about when you're talking to someone who is anti Critical Race Theory, help them see, "what are your values, and then you can analyze, okay? Does Critical Race Theory fit into your values? Does making the systems more fair and equitable for everyone in our community--including our children--does that fit into your values? Because if it does, then Critical Race Theory is something that you should support.

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Okay, so the first thing we are doing when we come up against someone who has anti Critical Race Theory is we are asking them, what does Critical Race Theory mean? What have you heard? Then we're asking them what makes you nervous about it? Why are you so anxious, and then we are helping them see what their values are, and how Critical Race Theory can be aligned with their values.

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The next thing I want you to do when you are talking to someone who is anti Critical Race Theory, is take time to familiarize yourself with a common myths about Critical Race Theory and then practice responding to those myths so that when they come up, you know what to say. Now, I'm going to give you a few examples, because I have heard from so many of you on Instagram. And these are the most common myths that I have heard from you.

36:07

The first myth that I've heard from you and from a ton of other people, is that talking about race is divisive. I've heard a lot of people say this, "Well, it's just divisive to talk about race. That's a divisive topic." Well, I'm here to tell you that talking about race is not what's divisive. Racism is divisive. Racism, systemic racism, is what's dividing us. And if we really want to solve the problem, we have to talk about it. I had someone that I really love say to me one time, "well, don't you think that talking about race is just making it worse? Don't you think that if we stopped talking about the problem, it would just go away?" And I had to respond and say, "what other problem do we have in this world that will just go away if we stop talking about it? Would we

take this approach with any other problem that's really important to us in our community? I don't think so." And I like to think of this analogy of a polluted lake. So let's say you live in this beautiful town in the pines. And it's the fresh air is so wonderful. And in your little town, there is a beautiful lake that you want to swim in. You want to fish in, you want to kayak in, if you're like us, and you love kayaking. You have this lake, but it's polluted. What if you were at a town council meeting, and somebody brought up this polluted lake? And everybody said, "Oh, you know what, I think what we should do is not talk about the pollution. I think that if we don't talk about the pollution, we won't have to worry about it. And then we'll just go away." That is not going to work. And I bet a lot of you at the meeting would be like, "What are you saying? That would never work! The pollution is just going to get worse if we don't talk about it not better." And that's exactly the case with racism. If we don't talk about racism, it perpetuates over and over again, and just gets worse and worse and worse. So talking about racism is not divisive. Racism itself, the systems that are in place that continue to perpetuate racism, that is extremely divisive, but talking about it and trying to find solutions, that's not the divisive part of it.

38:23

Another common myth that I've heard about Critical Race Theory is that it leaves no room for autonomy. It says it takes the autonomy away from our children. I've heard a lot of people say that children who are learning about Critical Race Theory are forced into one of two roles. If they're a white child, they are forced to believe that they're an oppressor. And if they are a Black or Indigenous child of color, they are forced to believe that they are a victim. This is actually the opposite of the truth. Critical Race Theory presents us with information, and then you get to decide what you do with that information. So if you're white, it means that you have a choice to make. If you're a white child, and you're hearing about systems in our country, or history in our country, that is racist and has perpetuated racism, you have a choice. You can choose--am I going to be a white person who upholds the system and who perpetuates unfairness? Or am I going to be a white person who--as Tiffany Jewel says in her book, *This Book is Anti Racism*--spends my privilege? Am I going to be a white person who looks at the system and figures out how can we make this more fair? How can we make this more equitable for my Black and Indigenous brothers and sisters. White children are not placed in this oppressor role. They choose whether or not they're going to step into that role, or whether they are going to fight against that role. And when you look into that history, you will always see that there are white people who are working in solidarity with communities of color, to fight back against racism. Those stories are always out there. So we need to be sharing those stories with all of the children, with white children especially, so that they can see, "I have a choice to make here, I can choose to fight back against racism."

40:20

Now on the other side of the picture, when we're talking about Black and Indigenous children of color and we're saying that it teaches them to be a victim, oh, that could not be further from the truth. Critical Race Theory, and anti racism in general, helps us as marginalized communities to see what's going on, and then gives us the tools to do something about it. I can't even explain how empowering it was for me to begin learning about anti racism. I felt like I finally had words to describe what has been happening to me my entire life. There were these

experiences that I had that I was like, "Man, this is so hard, and it feels like racism but I don't know how to say this." I didn't know the term tone-policing. I didn't know the term gaslighting, I didn't know what white fragility was, and now I understand all of those things and it helps me navigate my world much better. It gives me the tools to help break these systems down and make them more fair and more equitable for me, for my children, for my community. So it is absolutely the opposite. I do not feel like a victim when I read these things. I literally feel like I struck gold. I wrote that in my journal. When I first found anti racism I remember writing in my journal, "I feel like I've struggled. I feel like I finally understand what is going on in my life and how I fit into this community and what I need to do about it." So it is so frustrating to me when I hear people say that children of color are victimized by "Critical Race Theory," by equity and inclusion, or by anti racism, because it is the exact opposite of that.

41:94

And I want you, if you are a Black and Indigenous person of color, and you're listening, I want you to remember that your existence alone is resistance. We have been oppressed by this system, there has been so much taken from us and so much withheld from us, yet we find ways to resist, we find ways to reclaim our dignity, and we find ways to experience joy. These systems were created to try to obliterate us, and every step we take is an actual miracle. Every step we take is an act of resistance. So, do not let other people pretend or tell you that by learning about your history, by learning about your ancestry, by learning about the resisters who came before us, that you are being made out to be a victim.

42:45

Obviously you can tell that I'm pretty passionate about this. So, I need to take a deep breath now, because I just I'm so invested in this idea that if we truly want to live our values, we have to be anti racist. And it's so hard for me to see people who I know are loving people, who I know want to be inclusive, say these things. You're just, no, no. If you sit down and you think about your values, you will see that anti racism, Critical Race Theory, are in alignment with your values, and they can help us make change in our communities.

Okay. Another myth that I've been seeing about Critical Race Theory is that it's teaching children to hate America. Dun dun dun. What? Okay, let's take a minute here and write this down. The reason why you're uncomfortable with Critical Race Theory, if you feel like it's teaching children to hate America, is because it exposes the fact that we aren't living up to our values as a country right now. We are not living up to our values of liberty and justice for all. It's so frustrating when you so strongly believe in those values, I can see how it might seem that way, but because you believe so strongly in those values it really hurts to come face to face with the fact that these values are not a reality for everyone, liberty and justice for all is not a reality for everyone in our country.

45:92

So like I said, we all have a choice to make. We can choose to embrace the values that we have set forth as a country, of liberty and justice for all, that everyone is created equal and should be treated with fairness and equity. But that means we have to make a change. And I love this quote by James Baldwin, it says, "I love America more than any other country in the world. And

exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually." Criticizing our country is not an unAmerican thing to do. It's actually extremely patriotic to say "hey, we have these values, and we're not living up to that. What can we do to change things so that we can live up to them?"

And I wanted to read you a poem. You might have heard it, it's by Langston Hughes. I'm going to read just a couple of stanzas of this poem, because I feel like it gives a really clear perspective of the fact that America has not been America for all of us. It's called "Let America be America Again." And he says,

"Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed--

Let it be that great strong land of love

Where never kings connive or tyrants scheme

That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

Oh, let my land be a land where liberty

Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath

But opportunity is real, and life is free,

Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me, nor freedom in this 'homeland of the free.')

That is a poem by Langston Hughes and he is a Black man, and he's explaining that, as a Black man, America has never been America for me. So Critical Race Theory and anti racism, they're not teaching children to hate America. They're teaching children that if we want America to be America, we have to work together, because as Langston Hughes said, America has never been America for some of us.

So the last myth that I want to share with you is this idea that it's going to indoctrinate our children. I watched a video with a black representative from Idaho, his name is Chris Mathias, and he made a really good point about indoctrination. They were talking about Critical Race Theory in Idaho they were talking about it in their colleges and whether or not they should take away money from their colleges who continue to teach Critical Race Theory. And he explained that the definition of indoctrination is actually the opposite of critical thinking. So, in the New Oxford American Dictionary, it says, under the entry for indoctrination, it says, quote, "the process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs on critically." Now that kind of made me laugh a little bit because I was like, "okay, obviously, this worry about indoctrination is just a non issue, because Critical Race Theory has the word critical in the title!" So we were teaching children or teaching adults in law school, where this is usually taught, how to think critically about the laws in our country. Indoctrination means we are telling someone, "believe what I'm saying and don't think critically about it." But Critical Race Theory is literally telling people to use critical thinking skills, to look at the policies that we are implementing. So, we just don't need to worry about indoctrination because that's not what's happening here. And I think about it like, would we label it indoctrination when our teachers are teaching children their multiplication facts? I mean we tell them "memorize these facts, memorize these math facts," right? We always do that with our students. That's not indoctrination. We don't consider that indoctrination. Why would telling the truth about history be considered indoctrination? Teaching truth is just good teaching.

If you've been here for a while you know that I used to be a second grade teacher. I taught second grade I taught third grade, and I remember teaching in both of those grades, teaching the difference between an opinion and a fact. Now that is teaching a child critical thinking, right? When they can read something and distinguish, "wait is this someone's opinion, or is this a fact?" That is a critical thinking skill, and I have never had a parent come into my room and say, "oh my goodness don't teach my child to distinguish between opinions and facts, you're indoctrinating them." So why would this be any different. When we are teaching our children to look at the world with a critical eye, and think about things critically, we're not indoctrinating them, we're empowering them.

Alright, so in this last little section I just want to talk about what is going on in our legislatures and in our school districts. You've probably heard that it's going around that people are trying to ban Critical Race Theory left and right, and legislators across the country, in at least 15 states, are trying to prohibit teachers from teaching about racism. I read an article that was written by the National Education Association called, "We Need to Teach the Truth About Systemic Racism." And in this article they interviewed different teachers about how they feel about the laws that are being passed. And one of the teachers kind of made me laugh. He said, quote, "The irony is that they are teaching a master class about how ingrained racism is in our society by passing racist legislation to ban the teaching of structural racism." End quote. So basically these teachers are saying, "we need to teach our students about racism, and for you to tell us that we can't talk to students about racism is a pretty racist action."

Now there are lots of laws across the country but there was one article by Rethinking Schools. It says, quote, "A bill in Texas is particularly instructive as it specifically targets how teachers address current events or widely debated and culturally controversial topics of public policy or social affairs. It also bans schools from providing course credit for student activism including practicums, service learning, and internships." End quote. Okay, this bill is saying that you can't get college credit for service learning. Y'all, I was in service learning. Service learning, it's a class where, for most of the class, what you do is you go to a nonprofit in the community, and you serve, and then you write papers about your experience and you go to class, you talk about your experience, you talk about your position at the nonprofit, you talk about how you served in the community, and all the problems that your community is facing and how you can solve them. This bill in Texas is trying to ban our students serving in the community. Does this align with our values? No, it does not align with our values. And this is where we need to stop. We have to stop acting in ways that don't align with what we value.

In the show notes I will link a few different articles that talk about all of the bills and all of the different laws that are being considered in these legislatures, but just know that if this doesn't align with our values, then we should not be passing it.

So what can we do about this? The first thing that we should be doing is we need to show our teachers that we support them. Teachers need to know that they have the support of the parents in their classroom. As a former teacher, I know that that was so meaningful to me when

I had parents come and say, "I support you, I will go to bat for you. I know that what you're teaching my child is so important, and I'm grateful that you're teaching my child to be inclusive." So take some time to reach out to your child's teacher. Tell them very specifically that you support them, and that their efforts to make their curriculum more inclusive and more anti racist is something that you want to see in their classroom.

In addition, the Zen Education Project is doing a campaign called #teachtruth, where teachers are going to historical sites in their communities and they're pledging to teach the truth about what went on at those sites. So if you look up the hashtag on Instagram you'll see teachers holding up signs that say why it's so important for them to teach the truth about what happened in their community and their commitment to teaching truth. So if you're a teacher, then it's definitely something that you can participate in, and they interviewed a handful of teachers for this campaign. I just want to share one perspective with you. This teacher says, quote, "I want it to be known that I was one of the countless educators nationwide who taught kids to identify, understand, and work to end racism, sexism, and white supremacy culture and the silencing of marginalized voices from our curriculum. Teaching the truth does not mean teaching kids to hate America. It is teaching them that we all play a role in helping our country become a more perfect union." End quote.

So if you're a teacher, this would be an amazing campaign for you to get behind. If you're a parent, you can also encourage the teachers that you have in your life to #teachtruth. The other thing that you should be doing is getting involved with your local school district. So you know that there are school board meetings happening all the time that you should be attending, that you should be listening to, that you should be paying attention to, to ensure that they are not doing anything that's going to keep your child from learning the truth. There are probably people in your district who are already working to combat this notion that anti racism is bad or that Critical Race Theory teaches children to hate America. There are people in your community who are trying to band together to fight against this. So find those people, join with them, join that group.

And, of course, we need to be talking to the people in our circle. People are always saying things when they think that the people in their life are not going to push back on them, right? People will make jokes or say things that are racist or insensitive, and we need to be speaking up when we hear those things. Correct those mistakes, help people see that what they're saying doesn't align with their values, and that if they want to align with their values, we have to change.

Okay, I hope you feel like you can take a deep breath. I hope you feel like you have the competency, like you have the tools you need to talk to the people you know and love, to support the teachers in your life, to teach the children in your life. And I just want to end with this: I've heard from a few different people since starting this work, I've heard a lot of people say things like, "Do you have any hope at all. Do you even have hope for this change?" And all I have to say to that is "yes." Oh my gosh, yes I have so much hope. I would not be doing this if I didn't have hope. If I didn't think that we could change, if I didn't believe in our values of equity,

inclusion, liberty, and justice. Believe me, I would be doing something else with my time. So just know that I am hopeful and I hope you can feel hopeful too.

And I want to remind you that this is our season finale, so we will be back on August, 24 2021 for season four episode one, and I hope that if you've missed any of season three or if you're just joining us, go through and listen to past episodes. If you listen to this episode and you have a question, if you want to ask me something specific, maybe someone said something that you need to know how to respond to or your child said something and you're not sure what to do about it, please join our Patreon. That's [patreon.com/firstnamebasis](https://patreon.com/firstnamebasis). And on August 1 of 2021 we will be doing our live Q&A and you can ask us anything and everything, so that you can get the answers that you need from us and from other parents in our community who are trying to live lives with their children that are inclusive, justice-oriented, and anti racist.

Oh my gosh, I almost forgot. Today's my birthday. Today is my birthday. So, in celebration of my birthday, will you please share this episode? Share it on your social media, share it with somebody that you know and love. I just think this message needs to be in as many ears and as many homes as possible, because I have heard from so many of you that this has been a topic that you have wanted me to touch on for so long. So, in celebration of my birthday. Please share this episode. And if you want to give me a little extra gift, will you please leave a review on Apple podcasts, rate this podcast, review this podcast, tell me what you like about it. Tell me what you want to see more of. I love to hear from you. I love reading your reviews, they really do make my day, my week. I don't know, I'm not kidding, whenever I'm feeling down I open my reviews and scroll through them and remind myself of why I do this, so thank you. I love you, and I'll see you in season four.

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 a 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](mailto:hello@firstnamebasis.org). All right. Have a great week my friends, and I will talk to you again soon.