

4.12 Three Things I Wish White Moms Knew About Black Motherh...

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SPEAKERS

Sheryl Ellsworth, Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast Season Four, Episode 12: "Three Things I Wish White Moms Knew About Black Motherhood."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:16
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 00:49
Hello, First Name Basis Fam. I am so glad you are here. Oh my goodness, I cannot wait for you to hear this episode, because I feel like it has been such a long time coming. I have had the idea for this episode for ever. And seeing it come to fruition has been absolutely amazing. So I've invited my friend Sheryl Ellsworth to come on the show and talk about three things that white moms need to understand about Black motherhood, because as you know, we do not all experience motherhood in the same way. And I didn't even feel comfortable doing this episode myself, because as someone who is Black-biracial, my children are going to experience something completely different than children who are Black. So if you've been following me for a while, you know that I have two little daughters. One is four and one is one. And my older daughter, Violet, she is white-presenting. So a lot of times when people see her, if I'm not right next to her, they don't actually know that she has a Black mom. And then my daughter Holly, she is definitely brown. Like when you look at her, you can totally tell that she is Black-biracial. So I have a unique challenge. As a mom, I am raising one child who holds white privilege and one child who doesn't necessarily. So there are a lot of things that I'm thinking about as a mom of multiracial children. But there are some things that Black mothers think about that the rest of us will absolutely never truly understand.

So I've invited my friend Sheryl—she's Black, and so are her children. And I've invited her today to really help us understand what it is that she goes through as a Black mom. And in this conversation, we are just scratching the surface, but I'm so grateful that she shared her energy and her story with us because, oh my goodness, it's just something that we truly need to take the time to listen to the Black moms who are in our communities, and figure out how we can spend our privilege to dismantle the systems that are oppressing them and their children. I mean, yeah, you'll hear Sheryl and I go into it, I could say so much. But I just want to jump into the conversation.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 00:52

First, I'll tell you a little bit about Sheryl, and then we will hear from her. So Sheryl Ellsworth is a Black mom to two absolute dolls. Her children are so cute. Her family is so beautiful. You have to go to her Instagram and see the amazing picture of her gorgeous family. So Cheryl grew up in Richmond, Virginia, and then she went to Utah for college. She spent some time in Utah, and then she moved to DC to be a teacher. So she was a teacher just like me. We actually did the same teaching program, if you can believe that. So after her time in the classroom, she moved back to Utah, and she became a family engagement specialist. So she cultivated family engagement at the school district and state level in Utah. And now she currently works as a project manager for a pipeline that is trying to increase BIPOC representation in her state. So every day she goes to work and sits down and thinks about what we need to do in this state to bring more people of color, to bring people who are super talented, and not just bring them to the area, but also keep them—like make it a sustainable, lovely, encouraging, inclusive place to live, so that Black, Indigenous, people of color want to live, work, and raise their families together with the people in Utah. So she's doing amazing work in her community. And that was one of the reasons why I wanted to talk to her specifically, because she has had so much experience between being a teacher, a mom, and the project manager of this pipeline. She is perfectly situated to help us see the intersectionalities of all the things that Black children are going through and will go through as she's figuring out what it looks like to raise her kiddos in a society that was not created to support them. So I hope that while you're listening to this conversation, you will truly take in what she has to say and reflect on the privileges that you hold, and how you can work within your sphere of influence to dismantle the systems of oppression that are hurting Black moms and their children. So without further ado, here is my sweet sister friend, Sheryl Ellsworth.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 04:52

All right. Hi, Sheryl. Thank you so much for coming on First Name Basis.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 05:33

Thank you, Jasmine. It's such an honor to be here.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 05:39

Okay, I have to ask you first about your family and your kiddos. Just tell us a little bit about your life.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 05:44

Yes, um, I am a mother of two children. Two very small children right now. And so I'm in the thick of

everythingâ€”of becoming a mother very quickly, and then having two children, and so they are wonderful. I have one boy, one girl. And I'm really thankful for both of them. Happily married. Trying to work and create change in the state that I live in, while being a mother,

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Jasmine Bradshaw 06:19

oh, my goodness, yes, that is so much that you do, especially with your two little ones. I'm in the same boat. So like we're always sharing those middle-of-the-night stories with each other. Right? I'm sure, because your kiddos are adopted, when you were thinking about adopting your children, I'm sure you were thinking about the harsh realities of what it would be like to raise Black children in a country that's really not designed to prioritize their needs over the needs of others. Walk us through some of those thoughts and feelings that you were having.

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Sheryl Ellsworth 06:51

Yep, absolutely. Um, so my husband is Pacific Islander, a Pacific Islander person, and I am Black. And when we were thinking about growing our family, we recognized there would be some difficulties and challenges that would come with that, due to some problems I had with infertility. And so when we decided to pursue and grow our family, through adoption, you have a paper in front of you, and you have to decide and be very intentional about the child that will be placed in your family. And so there are boxes to check for race, for disabilities, for things that you're okay that the birth mother has done. And it is a time that you cannot be a savior, it is not a time where you are like, "yeah, oh, I'll be able to do this," if you really don't think you're able to do it. But my husband and I were very, very straightforward and said that we were prioritizing, and our number one choice was to raise Black children. And so I think any Black mother who's having Black children, whether they're Black-biracial, or what someone would call "full Black," has to really think about what it means to raise Black children. But it was really interesting to look at a paper and say, "I am choosing to do this." And what does that mean, as I made these choices, when we were recognizing that this was the way that we could grow our family. We were very, very intentional about this. But we also recognize that there will be different complexities and different lenses that we need to move forward with in raising a Black daughter and a Black son.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 09:03

Mm hmm. So I asked you to share a few things that you wish that you could tell white mothers about Black motherhood. And one of the things that you said is that you really want them to understand that you're raising kids with rules from from an unwritten rule book. Can you tell me about that?

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 09:22

Yep, I call itâ€”I say that, because it's a rulebook that doesn't exist for white people. And it is something that I feel that my white friends don't have to think about. They don't have to think about their children being treated differently by teachers, authority figures. They don't understand that there's a complexity that's different in raising a Black daughter than there is a Black son. So when I think about my daughter, I think about her being overlooked. I think about my daughter not being respected as much, my daughter being paid less, my daughter, you know, not always having the same opportunities as her white peers. Then when I think about my son, I think about protecting his body, I think about him being overly tokenized, because I think sometimesâ€”Black boys, it's like, there's this extra celebration of them, which

is really amazing and awesome. But the moment they want to date someone's white daughter, it's a problem. The moment that they want to overstep boundaries that white people are uncomfortable with my Black son goes from being super, super cute, to being a threat. And, and it's scary, because it's like, I don't even know when this happens. And it's all these rules I have to navigate. I once heard an interview with Gabrielle Union, and evenâ€”she's like the star with all this wealthâ€”and she's has rules for her children. She's like, "When you go into a house, you are always by the parents, you do not wander around." And she just like, has all these rules. And we both have all these rules that we deal with and live by. But they're unwritten, and it feels very unfair and very frustrating.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 11:20

Yes, oh, my goodness. And there's so many things that we have to think about. I mean, I was just talking to my dad the other day, and he was telling us about when he, when my parents, bought the house that I grew up in, and he used to drive by it, because he was so excited to move in that he would drive by, and one time he was looking at it at night, and no one lived there. So like, it wasn't like creepy, this house or anything, but he's just like imagining what the life will be like, right? And he said, he drove down the street and there was a truck, and the door was open, and the light was on. But nobody was in it. And it was just a neighbor down the street. And he thought to himself, "Oh my gosh, I should, you know, close that, like their their battery's gonna die or whatever. Or I should help them or go up to the door and tell them." And it was nighttime. And he thought, "I can't do that. I got it. I have to get out of here, before somebody thinks that I'm, you know, stealing it or making some kind of mistake." And it was just...so it's just these decisions that we're always having to make. Or, for example, when I was growing up, my parents had a very strict rule. And that was no toy guns of any kind. "You're not allowed to play with them here. You're not allowed to buy them. You can't play with them at other people's homes." And it was so hard as a kid, because I didn't understand. But now as an adult, I'm so grateful, because I look back and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, we know what happens to Black kids who are holding toy guns. Yeah, we know the trauma, the devastation, the destruction that the white community will do to Black kids who are holding toy guns." And, and my husband, he tells me stories about how he took a paintball gun and spray painted it Black to look like an assault rifle and ran around his neighborhood in all black with his friends having these wars, right.?

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Sheryl Ellsworth 13:02

Oh, must be nice not to worry about your body. Exactly. Hearing that.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 13:07

I know. And I know if I saw that happening in my neighborhood, I would be nervous about it anyway, but I was...we were just talking about it and he was like, "I think about so many things that you experienced growing up that I just never had to even think about at all, because no one saw me as a threat." Right?

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 13:25

That's what I mean, like when I say he must be nice, not that he can...that he chooses to do that, but that he can choose it without thinking about it, and not having to worry about his his body. I really am concerned, and I fear for my child's body as a Black boy. I fear for my child's body as a Black girl. And even when I've had conversations with my husband, who is a person of color, he recognizes that his experiences

aren't going to all be the same that his kids' experiences are. So what I mean by that is, he recognizes he's had experiences as a person of color. He told me one time he was being pulled over by a police officer, and after the police officer gave him a ticket, he called my husband Mexican. Which: one) has nothing to do with anything; two) was just like, it was meant to be a derogatory racial slur, which is a huge problem on its own. Yeah, so my husband's like, "Okay, well, I'm actually not Mexican, I'm a Pacific Islander." And he's like, "Whatever. Y'all all look the same anyway."

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 14:41

Oh, my goodness.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 14:42

And he knows that he's experienced things so that he can, again, give our kids these rules when we're talking about authority figures, how to act when a cop might pull you over, but at the same time, he knows that our kids are going to experience different things, because they're Black. And we have to think and be very intentional about where do we live? Where do we go to school? Or where do our kids go to school? And luckily, we have options for that mobility to move. Not all Black families do. We could live anywhere, but deciding to be parents, we had to be way more intentional about everything.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 15:29

Yeah. Oh, yeah. It's, it's just one of those things that's always in the back of your mind that I think, due to white privilege, people just don't even grasp on to it. Like, when my husband and I were first married, we were combining our car insurance. And he was like, "Oh, my gosh, the great thing about this insurance is that they have an app, and you can just pull up the app if you ever need it, and just show your insurance." And I'm like, "No, I cannot do that. I can't be fumbling with my phone. If there's a police officer at my window, I need a paper copy printed out that I can just easily know exactly where it is." I keep it on on my little visor thing. And I can just grab it and hand it over. Like, "I will be too anxious, you know, to be figuring all of this stuff out on my phone." And it was just another one of those moments where he was like, "Oh, my gosh, I never—"

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Sheryl Ellsworth 16:18

—"never had to think about it. It's these rules. That's what we're talking about. And I think someone could say, as kindly as they're saying it, they could say, "Maybe you're overthinking things," and it's like, "Gosh, yeah, so maybe we want to protect ourselves, because you don't know what that fear is like to be in those situations." And something that I recognize, talking again, about this unwritten rule book, my mother is an immigrant to the United States. And so there are a lot of rules, for example, that she didn't even know about navigating different spaces being a Black person in America. I think her first navigation was being an immigrant with an accent, who was also Black, right? Like, there's so many intersectionalities there. And so, um, my brother made the point to me once that even though our mother didn't share all of these unwritten rules with us, we still experienced it. And the reason I share that is because I have a friend who's white, her husband's Black, so her children are Black-biracial, and she is just like, "No, I'm not going to talk about race with my kids. I don't want them to ever feel stressed, or overwhelmed," all of these things. And I understand that there are, it's a developmentally appropriate conversation that you'll have at different times about certain topics. But what I'm trying to help her understand is that her children may experience

these things, even if she doesn't talk about it with them. Wouldn't it be so much better if you could give them the tools to navigate those situations, rather than her kids coming home super traumatized, not understanding what happened? Not understanding the complexities of being Black in America?

J Jasmine Bradshaw 18:26

Yeah, if they were prepared. Well, that leads perfectly into the second thing that you wanted to share, which is, you were saying that there's a constant battle of preparing your kids for the likely racist incidents that they're going to experience while also trying to keep their joy and their innocence. What does that even look like?

S Sheryl Ellsworth 18:48

I feel like my husband and I are constantly acting as a buffer. At the playground we're always around and we're within earshot away. We don't have the luxury of just letting our kids go and play. We find ourselves having to intervene and teaching white children and their parents, which is exhausting. Because we are constantly worrying. We are constantly saying, "Okay, honey, we don't want you to touch our child's hair. Okay, please stop." You know, we don't want our kids to—we don't want kids running away from our children because they look different than them, or using the N word, or saying that our kids' skin looks like poop, or saying—or being so confused about our children just because, you know, our kids look different than them. And so right now my child doesn't get it, right? And I want to protect him, but I see kids running away from him, or staring at him, and he just wants to play. And it's really, really hard to watch. And so, Matt, my husband, and I we are constantly just like, "Okay, we need to just act as a buffer for as long as we can. We need to help him to not understand yet why a child might see them different, or him different my child be is different than that child. We don't want him to experience that yet. So we find ourselves acting as a buffer.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 20:21

I know it's so hard as a parent, when you see these things happening, and you you feel so grateful that they're, they're not noticing, and that it's not sinking in for them. But you know that someday it will. It's just like, and I sit there at night, and I wonder like, "What do I say?" What do you say, as a mom, when you know that your child is experiencing racism? Like just the other day, I was dropping off my daughter Violet at dance, and there was a little girl there with her mom, and they were both white and my daughter Violet, she is obviously from me, but she's white presenting. And so people get confused. And this little girl, like a lot of even like adults, she was confused. And she looked at Violet, and she looked at me and she looked at Violet, and she looked at me. And then she looked at her own mom, and she ran up to her mom and said, "Mom, I'm so happy that our skin matches."

S Sheryl Ellsworth 21:12

Ahh

J Jasmine Bradshaw 21:13

And it was just like, "Oh, my goodness." And I, you know, you just get that—your heart's beating fast. You

get you feel the heat in your cheeks. And I was just like, "Oh, my goodness." And I looked over at Vi and she was she was playing with a dog. So I was like, "Okay, good. She has no idea what just happened," And the mom was like, "Yes, it does!" And she was kind of celebrating with her daughter. And it just, it was such a hard moment, because I understand what the mom was saying about like, "Yay, we're family." But it was so hard to see her actually reinforcing this narrative in her child's mind that it's better when your skin matches with your mom, you know?

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Sheryl Ellsworth 21:50

like, instead of like families look in all kinds of ways.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 21:56

And a perfect opportunity to have that conversation. Yeah. So it was just so hard for me. I remember driving home thinking, "What would I have said, if Violet was paying attention?" I probably would have had the families look all different ways conversation with her hopefully loud enough that that little girl could hear me. But it was just, it was so hard. And and I know what's coming, you know?

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Sheryl Ellsworth 22:15

Right. Right. That's the thing we know it's coming. And it's like, "How do we keep our kids joyful and happy?" Because unfortunately, Black children's joy is stripped away a lot earlier. And it, we don't want that. And we just want them to be happy and to be kids just like any other kid.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 22:38

Mm hmm. And I see a lot of people who get kind of, I don't know, frustrated, that we are celebrating Black joy so much. And I'm like, "You don't understand what a big deal this is." You know, that this joy is in existence, and our joy really is a resistance because of the things that that are constantly being pushed on us in our lives.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 23:03

Definitely. And I think when I first started seeing, like, Black joy hashtag, or look at my child experiencing this Black joy, this is before I became a mother and I was like, "I don't...I don't think I understand this." Even being a black person, "I'm like, of course, we're joyful. Of course, we're happy," because I just felt like a very joyful and happy person. Um, and then something clicked when I became a mother, and I recognized like, I am seeing these things all around my kid that they don't see yet. And I want them to have the tools to be joyful and happy, so that when they recognize what's really going on around them, they can navigate that and still have that confidence within themselves.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 23:58

Yeah, yes. It's like we're building this resiliency before they even need to tap into it.

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Sheryl Ellsworth 24:04

Exactly. And showing people that our kids are happy, and showing people that we are happy, because there is this narrative as well, and not just a narrative, the truth behind it, is systemically Black people have been marginalized for many, many years. And we're still marginalized today. And this is why I always say to people, "I'm not sad to be Black. Yeah, I'm happy. I'm a happy black person. The issues are racism."

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 24:37

Mm hmm.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 24:38

That's the problem. White supremacy. That's the problem. So when we're talking about systems that keeps these barriers in place, that's what's the sad part. Not us being Black.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 24:52

Yes. Amen. And it took me a long time to get there. It really did. Yeah,

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Sheryl Ellsworth 24:57

Yeah. I mean, I think you know, from the media from like, what is the the white way? Like, it's like, it just feels like it's push and push and push. And so I mean, what a time, right? Like, at this point, and I would say this to your viewers or your listeners right now, I guess, they're probably not so unaware that the Black experience is different than the white, or Latino, or Polynesian, or Asian experience. However, I've been in so many conversations that are super exhausting, where people just really don't understand the systems. And it's the systems that you've got to unpack. I think people think racism, they think it's always on this individual basis, where it's so much deeper. There is individual racism, but there's also systemic. And when we're looking at the systemic pieces, you could be a really nice person. There were really nice white people during slavery, okay? You could be a really nice person, but you still have this system in place. So we've got to recognize the bigger picture than just being individualistic as being a racist person as a person versus a racist system.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 26:27

Yes, well, that speaks perfectly to the last thing you wanted to share, which was the fact that white moms really do need to invest in and focus on anti-racist education. Tell me why you feel like that's so important.

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Sheryl Ellsworth 26:42

Still, today, white mothers have the power in our society, and they have the power to change it. They can make things happen. I have seen. It's boggles my mind when my white friends asked me questions like, "What should I do? Like. how can I solve problems?" And I'm like. "You know how to organize yourselves.

..... You can, you can march to a district. And if you're really upset about something I've seen you all make things happen. So when I'm looking at this, white women have a disproportionate amount of power.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 27:24
Yeah

S Sheryl Ellsworth 27:25
So use that power to do something good. change things.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 27:31
Yeah, I think that they...I feel like that so many white women don't see the power that they have and know that like their talents of like, putting together PTA events, and class parties, and volunteering and all the things that they do speak perfectly and align perfectly with anti-racist work, like so much of what you're doing in your life already gives you the tools to make this change. And I know, they know how. I know they know how to make signs. I know they know how to make phone calls. I know they know how to get people on the news.

S Sheryl Ellsworth 28:06
It's funny that you even mentioned something like the PTA because I think the PTA really sees themselves as an organization for all, but I used to be the family community engagement specialist for my state, and I worked really deeply with the PTA to recognize that not all marginalized communities feel that they belong in the PTA. So it's it's really interesting that you even talked about something like so specific as organizations at schools, because not all parents feel like it's for them. But systemically it has been built for white women, and white mothers specifically, to have a lot of power in these spaces. And so it's like, utilize that power. Speak up. Gather. Organize yourselves to make changes, so that all kidsâ€”all meaning ALLâ€”have a good, strong experience in places like school and public spaces.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 29:10
Yeah, well, I think too, it has to do with so many of the things that they just don't necessarily consider when they're planning meetings, or something like that. I was, when I was at the school that I worked at when I was teaching, the PTA used to meet during the day, and I remember having a conversation with one of the moms in my classroom, and she was like, "I can't go to the PTA meetings because I work, like, so I can't be a part of the PTA." And I was like, "Oh, my goodness, they really need to consider..." I mean, I didn't know much about the PTA. I didn't know they were meeting there during the day. But I remember going to my principal and saying, "Should we talk to them about this? Because there are so many parents who are being left out and who want to serve and help and be in community in our school, but don't have the opportunity because they're doing little things like meeting during the day that doesn't allow, you know, this integration of families

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Sheryl Ellsworth 30:01

I mean, you hit the nail on the head, right? And so we've got to recognize, like, how can we invite and be more inclusive of all kinds of families? And there's, there's so many ways that you can do it. And I, and I think you recognize that well.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 30:18

Yeah. Well, thank you, because I think that when white moms really realize that this isn't a Black problem, this is a community problem, and if we're going to create the communities that we want...I mean, one of the biggest community hubs is in our schools, and so many moms have so much power and leverage and involvement with the local schools, that we can really make a change if they recognize that this is something that they have the power to influence.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 30:49

Absolutely. And and I'm not sure the demographic of your listeners, but having been a former educator as well, like mothers have a lot of power, and so do white fathers. And so if there are fathers listening out there, you know, recognize like, this is not only a space for, meaning schools, for women to have power to make changes. When we're looking at different legislations, for example, against Critical Race Theory. I think about that, because unfortunately, there's been a lot of euphemisms that have been connected to Critical Race Theory that aren't Critical Race Theory, like multiculturalism, equity, diversity, inclusion. So what's very frustrating about that is, one) I actually laugh with a lot of my former teacher friends, because there's all this like hoopla about Critical Race Theory, and we're all looking at each other like, "Wait, were you taught that? Because I wasn't taught that? Were we supposed to be teaching this in schools?" So it's we're all looking around, like, what is everybody even talking about? We don't even talk about this in school. You're lucky if you're in a school that has like, a watered down Black History Month.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 32:08

I was just going to say that!

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Sheryl Ellsworth 32:10

I don't even know what kind of Critical Race Theory people are talking about. But the problem is, is when we're looking at all these legislations right now, they are more racist legislations, because they're not allowing teachers to talk about leaders of color. They're not allowing teachers to really talk about the Civil Rights Movement as it really was, they're not really allowing educators to talk about slavery, and reconstruction, and Jim Crow laws, and all of these pieces that are really ugly, but necessary to understand how we got to today. And so we're getting this like really mixed messaging, where I'm like, "White people, I need you to be there with us." Because one) we're tired; but two) this isn't just our problem. It is not just students of color that are going to be affected by this legislation. Your kids are not going to understand history.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 33:16

Mm hmm. True. Yeah. And how can we fix a problem that people don't even know exists? Right? When we

Mm hmmm. True. Yeah. And how can we fix a problem that people don't even know exists? Right? When we don't know the true history, how can you how can you change the future? And yeah, I'm really glad that you brought the dads into that as well. Because, I mean, obviously, white men hold so much power, and when we have families working together with other families, it's like, I just, I think that's the whole point of my podcast, is I want people to see the power that they have within themselves and within their own homes to make huge change.

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Sheryl Ellsworth 33:48

And I want people who are listening to recognize that even if you don't feel like it's a problem that impacts you, you still need to get involved. It frustrates me to no end, where until something really impacts people, that's when they're like scrambling. And I'm like, "Well, look around. Just look around you and recognize disabilities. That impacts you, right? Racism impacts you. Sexual orientation impacts you even if you do not think it does." And I just think it's like, I get that not everyone can, you know, not everything can be everyone's fight, but when I'm talking about like, specifically race, this does impact everybody. Truly. It truly does. And I just, I just want people to like, do what they need to do to get involved to make the changes.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 34:53

Mm hmm. Yes, exactly. And I think when we're thinking about that impact, I like to help people understand that if you look around your neighborhood, and you don't see any Black people or you have one or two Black families, that's the impact. The segregation is the impact. The fact that you have one Black friend or no Black friends is the impact. And so I think that that's what people get confused about, like, "Oh, how can this be impacting me? I don't, I don't even see them." But that is the problem right there.

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 35:22

Right. And unfortunately, the system was designed for this to happen, and it's doing exactly what it was designed to do. And, but it's hard when you're scrambling, again, looking for Black people, to educate you, where you could have been putting yourself in spaces with Black people and understanding our culture in our community. But it, but it's, it's when like, things are confusing or hard, then you're scrambling and putting all this emotional energy on your one Black friend to answer all these questions for you. And it's exhausting.

J

Jasmine Bradshaw 36:02

Yeah, it really is. It really is. Okay. Well, after that heavy conversation, the last thing I really wanted to ask you is, what would you tell a Black mom who is just starting out on this journey? Because I mean, as we were talking, there are so many things that we have to think about as Black mothers, like, what would you say to her, who is just holding that little baby in her arms for the first time and trying to figure out what to do next?

S

Sheryl Ellsworth 36:27

Yeah, I think I would just say to that mother, or those parents, to remember that it is not, we are not sad to be Black. And yes, there are going to be rules that you're going to have to navigate and figure out for your

be Black. And yes, there are going to be rules that you're going to have to navigate and figure out for your children that are unwritten. Yes, you will have to act as a buffer. And yes, you may feel powerless a lot in our society. However, our joy is real. It's palpable. People love being around Black people for a reason, because our joy is so palpable, and we've gone through so much historically, where we just refuse to be beaten down. And it's like, please raise your kids to love themselves, right? Your kids, your kids to love themselves. Because at the end of the day, that love and that confidence, and that power is like what we have to be able to hold on to when other things around us are trying to beat us down.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 37:43

Yeah. Oh, my goodness. My sis, thank you so much for coming on. This was so good!

S Sheryl Ellsworth 37:49

Oh Jasmine, you're doing good work. I feel like, you know, people don't really like to talk about uncomfortable things, and you keep doing it. Keep doing it and don't stop. And I hope your listeners get it. Get how much research you put in to all of your podcasts. I'm learning with you. And I think sometimes people come to Black people for all these answers. And it's like, "Do you understand that I'm trying to figure it out, too?" Like, I don't have all the answers. And just like listening to your podcasts, I'm like, "Okay, I've got to understand certain parts of my history better to understand who I am, so I can move in glory, right? I can move in, like, with power, because I do come from power. I do come from Kings and Queens. And my story did not begin at slavery, although that's what we learned in school." And so thank you so much, so much for all the work you're doing.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:54

Thank you, that means the world.

S Sheryl Ellsworth 38:56

Your great.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 38:59

Y'all. Isn't she amazing? She's amazing. She has so much wonderful advice, and I'm so grateful to her for being so vulnerable. Being a mom talking about your kids and the struggles that you know they will face like, that is so hard. So thank you so much, Sheryl, for coming on the show. And thank you to all of you who are listening. I hope that you will take some time to even go back and listen again to some of the really important things that she was sharing. And I hope that if you are a white mom who is listening, you recognize the power that you really have to make change within your family and within your community. And if you are a mom who is a woman of color, I see you, my sister, and we can do this. We have such beautiful, intelligent, amazing children. And it is a big responsibility for us to guide them and try to protect them as much as we can. And I just want you to know that you're doing an amazing job. Okay my friends, I will talk to you so soon. Definitely come and join me over on Instagram at [firstname.basis](#). And I just love you. I love you so much.



Jasmine Bradshaw 40:13

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](#). 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.