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January 8, 2021

Dear Friends,

Well, entry into 2021 has proven just as problematic as the sh*tstorm that was 2020. Like many of you, I watched the failed insurrection in Washington, D.C., this week in horror, but not in surprise. To be honest, if we are surprised by this week's events, we just haven't been paying attention. If we don't think the storming of the U.S. Capitol had everything to do with racism, we are in denial and ignorant of the historically racist underpinnings of this nation. This is why I do the work I do for social justice. What happened on January 6th was not just the work of a group of white nationalists in the present moment--the beliefs behind it have been embedded in the very structure of our country from the beginning of the nation. There is no shame in recognizing and naming that. Shame is just a barrier to liberation. It serves no useful purpose. We have to move beyond shame to look at ourselves with compassionate truthfulness and a willingness to take action.

I see this as a possible inflection point for the beginning of a true democracy in the U.S., but only if we can--for the first time--really face the truth about the white supremacy principles on which the U.S. was founded. I have written Joe Biden to ask that he make a "Truth and Reconciliation" process a

priority in the first 100 days he is in office. I hope you might do the same.

You'll find at the end of this newsletter information about upcoming "Hard Conversations" classes on racism and whiteness. I hope you'll consider joining us as we begin our new cohorts of those classes the week of January 18th.

In this newsletter, I had intended to write about the different ways that love shows up. That story, featuring my son Feliks, will have to wait until next week.

LINKS YOU MIGHT ENJOY

Here's [my personal reading list for 2021](#). Although, after seeing [this list](#), I might need to add more columns.

WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

I'd love to connect with you this year, either in supporting your social justice education/work or in supporting your writing. Here are some options for the start of 2021:

WRITERS IN THE PANDEMIC (starts Jan 25, 2021)

I started this online class when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in 2020, and, well, here we still are. So if you'd like a writing community, support, feedback, and motivation for your writing, you might enjoy "Writers in the Pandemic." This is a 2-week online class where you will receive several prompts each day to get you seeing, thinking, and writing more deeply and more consistently, with a group of other writers doing the same alongside you. Two one-hour Zoom calls are included, as well as the online classroom (open for three months) and an ongoing Writers in the Pandemic Facebook group. This is priced for the pandemic at \$37. [Go here for information and to register](#).

FREE WRITING PROMPTS FOR 2021

Do you want to get back to a consistent writing routine in the New Year? I am offering free writing prompts **every Monday-Friday** in 2021. If you'd like to receive them, you can do so in either of the following ways:

By text: Text "writing prompts" to me at 828-248-7513 to sign up for free. Your first prompt will arrive via text the day after you sign up.

By email: [Go here](#) to sign up for free. Your first prompt will arrive the day after you sign up. We added this method because some of you couldn't participate by text. I hope it is helpful!

HARD CONVERSATIONS ONLINE CLASSES

WHITENESS, RACE, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (starts Jan 19)

Starts on January 19th and meets every Tuesday for five weeks, with an online classroom of readings and activities as well as five live Zoom calls (\$99). You choose between an afternoon (3-4:30pm ET) or evening cohort (8-9:30pm ET). All calls are recorded, should you have to miss one.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: The Social Construction of Race and Whiteness

- Week 3: The Color of Supremacy
- Week 4: The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness
- Week 5: Developing a Solidarity-Based Action Plan

The course includes five 90-minute live sessions with your hosts and other participants, small breakout group discussions, an online classroom for study and discussion, and an extensive resource library on whiteness. Included: access to the discussion forum and resource library for three full months, as well as ongoing access to our private Facebook community for alumni.

REGISTER:

Students may choose the afternoon or evening series:

COHORT 34 - Afternoon Cohort: January 19 – February 16 (Tuesdays) with Live Seminars from 3-4:30pm ET (12-1:30 PT) on January 19, 26, February 2, 9, 16.

COHORT 35 - Evening Cohort: January 19 – February 16 (Tuesdays) with Live Seminars from 8-9:30pm ET (5-6:30 PT) on January 19, 26, February 2, 9, 16.

[Go here for more information and to register.](#)

DEEP DIVE INTO RACISM AND ITS UNDOING (formerly Intro to Racism and Its Undoing)

Starts on January 21 and meets every Thursday for five weeks, with an online classroom of readings and activities as well as five live Zoom calls (\$99). You choose between an afternoon (3-4:30pm ET) or evening cohort (8-9:30pm ET). All calls are recorded, should you have to miss one.

We include discussions of racism in general, and across several dimensions of diversity. Given the 2020 police shootings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Jacob Blake, and violent police and vigilante reactions to the Black Lives Matter protests, most resources in the course are focused on black/white racism. Though this is certainly not our only focus, discussions of anti-blackness are what prompted the creation of this course. We will hear diverse voices. We will ask questions. We will tell our own truths. And we will become not just allies, but effective allies.

- Week 1: Introduction
- Week 2: On Systemic Racism
- Week 3: On White Privilege
- Week 4: On Color Blindness and Microaggressions
- Week 5: On Being an Effective Ally: What Will You Do Next?

The course includes five 90-minute live sessions with your hosts and other participants, small breakout group discussions, an online classroom for study and discussion, and an extensive resource library on racism. Included: access to the discussion forum and resource library for three full months, as well as ongoing access to the private Facebook community for alumni.

REGISTER:

Students may choose the afternoon or evening series:

COHORT 36 - Afternoon Cohort: January 21 – February 22 (Thursdays) with Live Seminars from 3-4:30pm ET (12-1:30 PT) on January 21, 28, February 4, 11, 18.

COHORT 37 - Evening Cohort: January 21 – February 22 (Thursdays) with Live Seminars from 8-9:30pm ET (5-6:30 PT) on January 21, 28, February 4, 11, 18.

[Go here for more information and to register for the Cohort of your choice.](#)

If you have any questions about these courses, please email support@pattidigh.com.

NOTE: If you would like to receive text notifications about upcoming Hard Conversations classes and events, please text "Social Justice" to 828-248-7513. If you are alumni of one of these courses, please text "Alumni" to the same number.

HARD CONVERSATIONS BOOK CLUB

This ongoing group meets virtually every month to discuss the book for that month (The 2021 list is below). The cost to join is just \$5 *for the year*. We'd love for you to join these monthly conversations that deepen our understanding of racism and other -isms. You can find [more information here](#). Each call is on the third Sunday of the month from 8-9pm ET. If you are unavailable at that time, each call is recorded for later listening. Here is our booklist for 2021:

January - *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson

February - *Killers of the Dream* by Lillian Smith

March - *The Family Tree: A Lynching in Georgia, a Legacy of Secrets, and My Search for the Truth* by Karen Branan

April - *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own* by Eddie S. Glaude, Jr.

May - *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem

June - *Crazy Brave* by Jo Harjo

July - *How to Be Less Stupid About Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide* by Crystal Marie Fleming

August - *Real American: A Memoir* by Julie Lythcott-Haims

September - *Twelve Angry Men: True Stories of Being a Black Man in America Today* by Gregory S. Parks & Matthew W. Hughey et al 4th QUARTER

October - *Inventing Latinos: A New Story of American Racism* by Laura E. Gómez

November - *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* by Nick Estes

December - *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* by Paul Kivel

COVID deaths are at an all-time high in the U.S. Please stay safe.

I'll see you next Friday from my orange desk!

Patti

Sent to: _t.e.s.t_@example.com

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