

G379 - Readings (*Choose 3 readers*)

The Offensiveness of My Pain By Shane Paul Neil

I'm on my way to a job where I am the only black person in my office. I work with people who either don't know or don't care about Alton Sterling or Philando Castile. They are going to ask me "How are you this morning?" and the simple truth is that I can't be honest. I can't say that I'm scared and angry and that I want to take a mental health day. I can't say that I and people like me subconsciously fear for our lives on a daily basis.

I can't say how I am this morning because it will make them uncomfortable and offended. The offensiveness of my pain is why we have to remind America over and over again that Black Lives Matter: because if you lack empathy for our tears it's likely that you lack respect for our lives.

From Tim Tyson's address at the Granville County's Human Relations Commission Annual Banquet, September 2004

..lean into it. I am talking about racial discomfort. I have certainly felt my share of it, through the course of my work, and I recommend racial discomfort to you. Lean into it. That is, doing exactly the opposite of your first instinct, which is to retreat as fast as possible, and is also perfectly logical. None of us wants to feel uncomfortable. But there is no way we can have a fruitful and candid conversation about race in an interracial setting and always feel comfortable. But it won't kill you to feel a little uncomfortable. Just go ahead, lean into it, and listen. Listen to other people, of course, but listen to your discomfort. It will teach you a lot. You'll be okay. And we'll all get better at this.

The Invisibility of Whiteness By john a. powell

The invisibility of whiteness means that one doesn't have to notice that one is white. So there are people, and then there are black people. There are people and there are Latino people. And people—just people, just folks—turn out to be white, but we don't notice it.

White people have the luxury of not having to think about race. That is a benefit of being white, of being part of the dominant group. Just like men don't have to think about gender. The system works for you, and you don't have to think about it.

So they live in white space and then they don't have to think about it. First of all, they think about race as something that belongs to somebody else. The blacks have race; maybe Latinos have race; maybe Asians have race. But they're just white. They're just people. That's part of being white.