

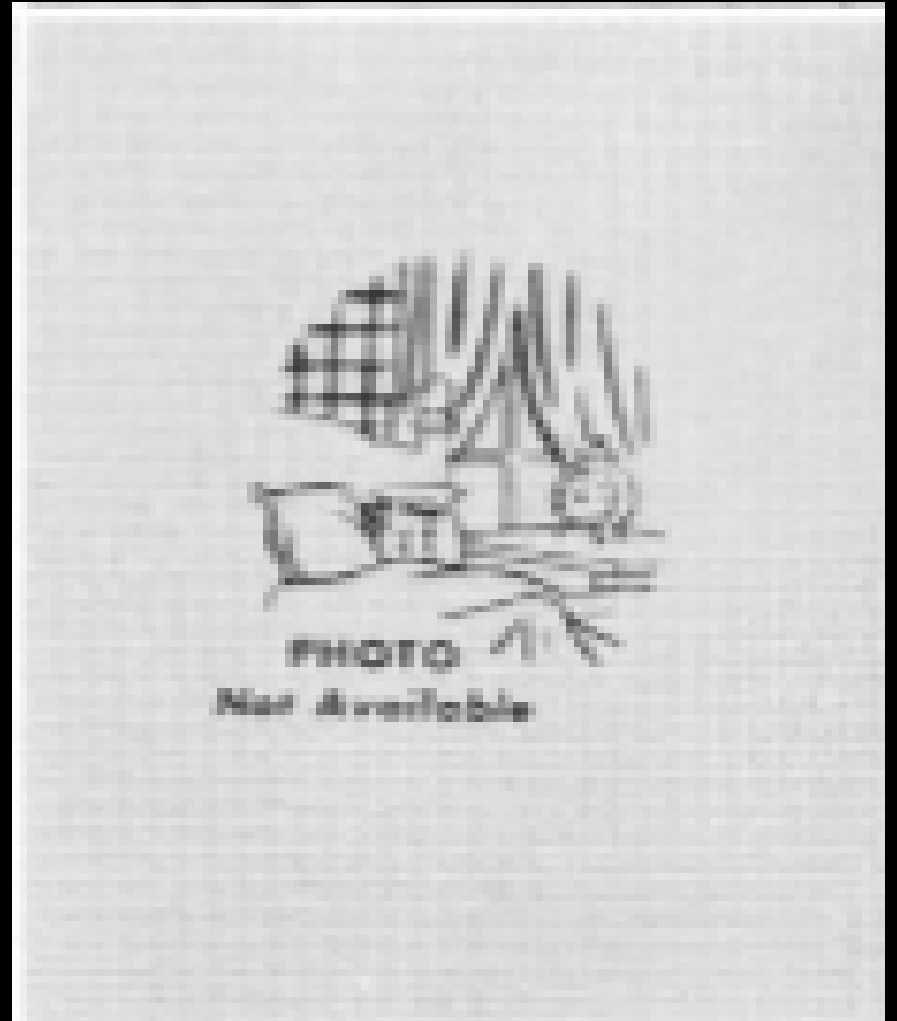
# Equity in Action— Love as praxis

SMCCD at a time of  
Interregnum



## One student's journey...

- This is not about MERITOCRACY! Revolutionary love changed this student's trajectory—student did not merely pull himself up by his bootstraps. Rather, he found people that were willing to be coconspirators; he found people that were committed to radical love;
- Revolutionary love radically reimagines what is possible!





1. Macrostructural
2. Institutional
3. Personal
4. Interpersonal

- a) The expression of racism between individuals
- b) Policies, practices, and pedagogies predicated on anti-Blackness and other forms of racism
- c) Internalized, private anti-Black/racists beliefs, ideas, and values
- d) Systemic, normalized/axiomatic (public) policies that serve racial capitalism and white supremacy



# The half has not been told

In 2020, many of the lies that this country is predicated on were laid bare. These foundational axioms, claim that things like the genocidal violence visited on indigenous peoples and the systemic/systematic theft of Indigenous land and systemic/systematic anti-Blackness are simply bumps on the road to a more perfect union.



# CRT and truth-telling

This is what the newfound, politically charged debate around Critical Race Theory (CRT) inheres around. CRT demands that we tell the truth about our history so that we can better understand the present, in order to make plans for a future where white supremacy and racialized capitalism no longer penalize, oppress, and murder non-white minds, spirits, and bodies.



## Understanding Race

Race was created to serve two masters, white supremacy, and racial capitalism, for two distinct yet interrelated purposes. The first purpose was to justify the dehumanization of Indigenous and African peoples so that they could be marked as physical "sites" of surplus value extraction. This means that their minds, bodies, and souls were used to create wealth for their oppressors. The second reason is to drive a wedge between people who have the same/similar socioeconomic realities, but different ethnoracial identities. That is to say, the concept of race is used to keep poor BIPOC peoples and poor white peoples from working together to overthrow capitalism.

*Towards liberation: Antiracism, Racial Capitalism, and the freedom struggle*

Jeremiah J. Sims



## White supremacy

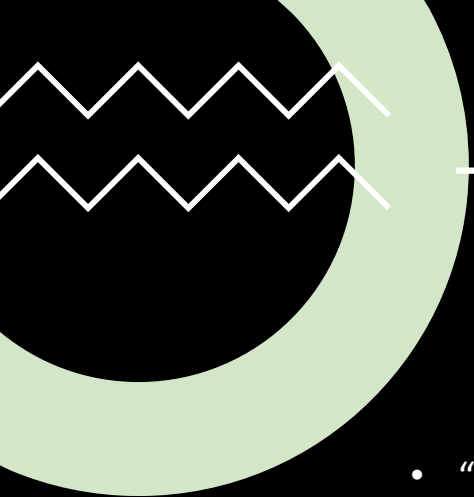
“white supremacy is not a shark; it is the water.”

Sharks kill one person per year, many thousands die from drowning—in the water...

How long will we tread water, watching for that great white shark as our students continue drowning?

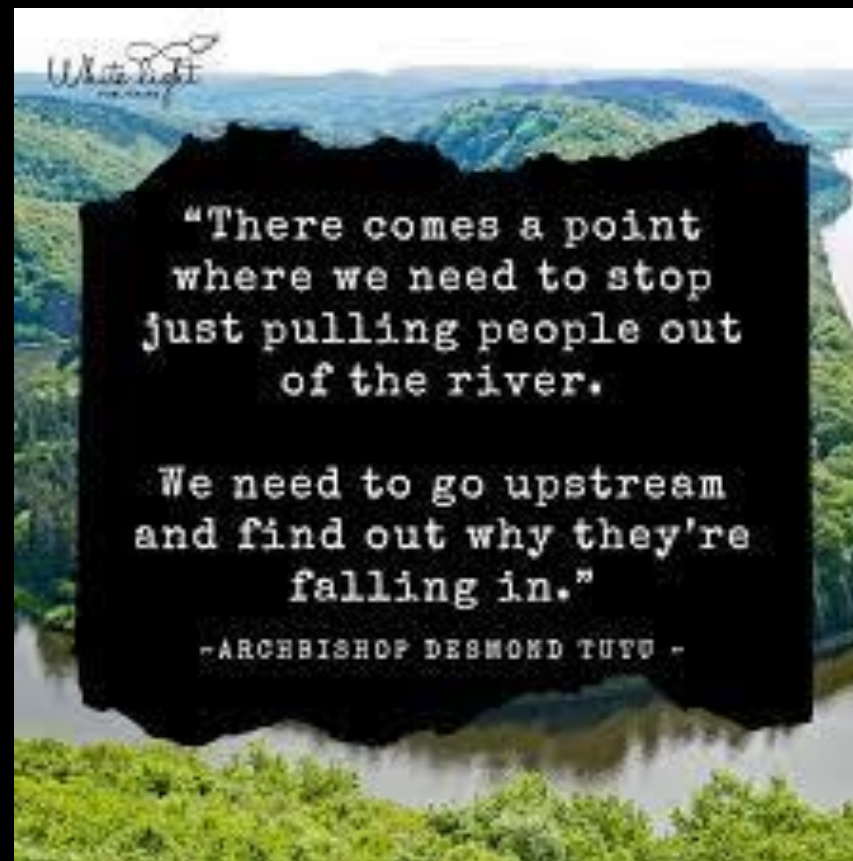
<https://guante.info/2020/11/22/nottheshark/>





# Too many students are drowning

- “I began to figure out what it meant to be a successful community college student, I drowned over and over again even though I was surrounded by faces that seemed to have not only the ability, but also the goodwill necessary to function as lifeguards. But they did not move; they did not react. This is ambivalence. In real justice work, there is no room for ambivalence. Educators that want to advance equity and justice cannot sit on the proverbial fence of ambivalence. Unchecked (white) ambivalence will eventually permutate and transmogrify into (white) apathy, **and, ultimately, antipathy**. If we are apathetic institutionally, our students are lost. We have to be impelled by love if we ever hope to achieve justice. According to Professor Cornel West, we must “Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public (Sims, Forthcoming).”





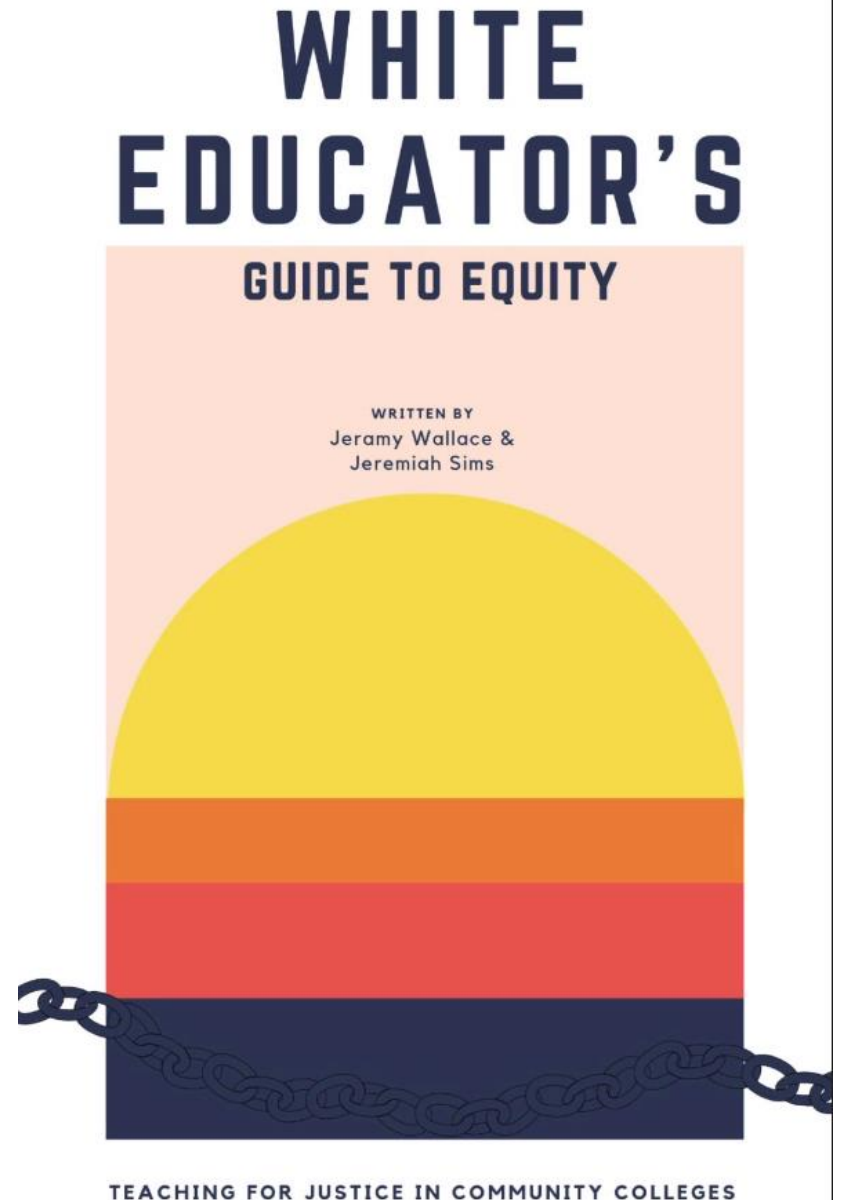
## Racism

Racism is bigger than individuals saying the “wrong” words. It’s bigger than interpersonal bigotry or bullying. It’s bigger than microaggressions. It’s about the *water*: the centuries of systemic, institutionalized disadvantage, discrimination, and violence that Black people, Indigenous peoples, and people of color have faced—and continue to face today.



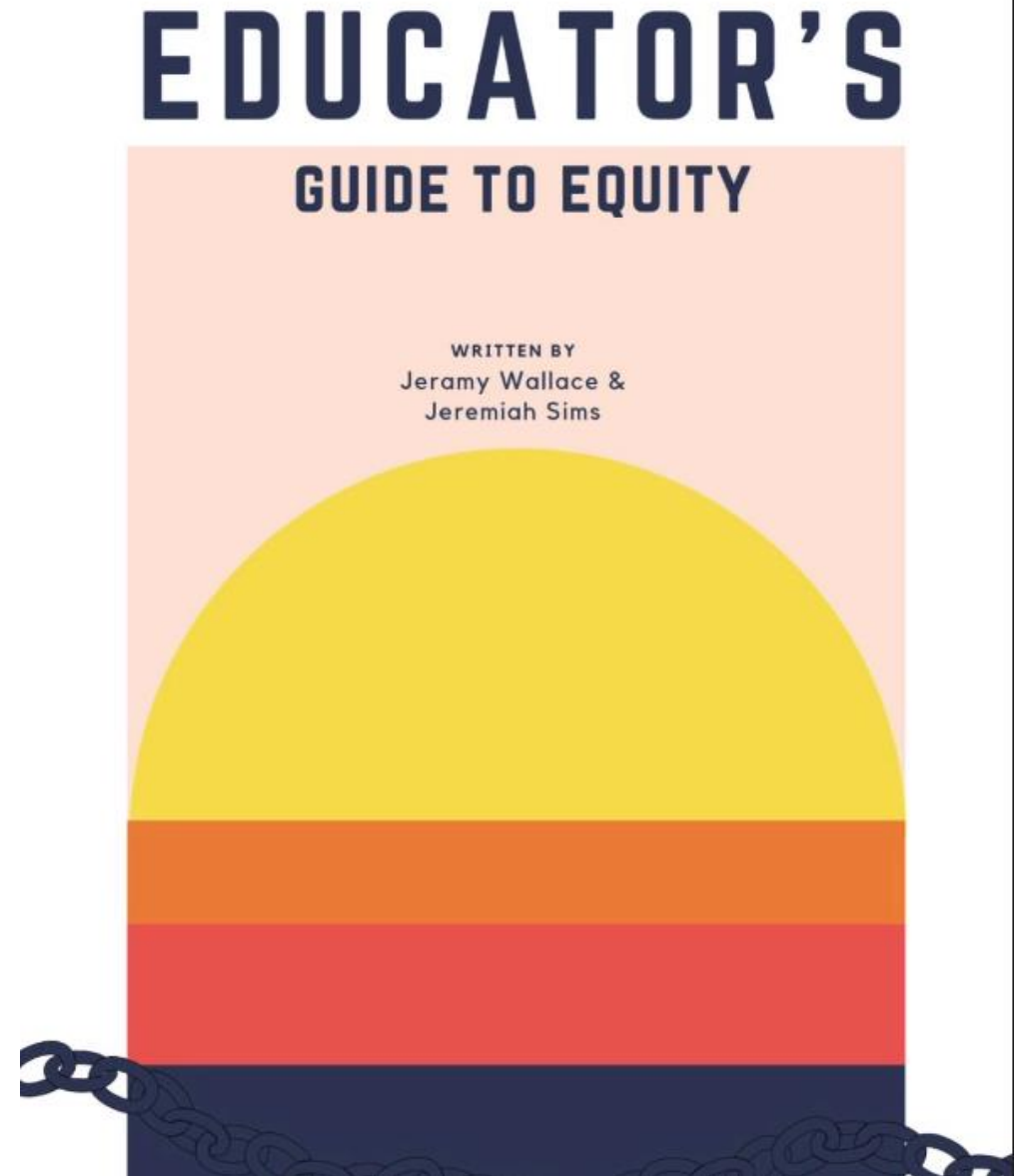
# Discussing racism

Nevertheless, when we discuss racism, we must understand that racism is the progeny of racialized capitalism and white supremacy. Racialized capitalism gave birth to white supremacy precisely because the enslavement and dehumanization of Indigenous and African peoples, in a purportedly democratic, free country, was a social and moral contradiction. (Sims)



# Capitalism

Capitalism is always racial capitalism; that is to say, capitalism is racialized in this country. The two, racialized capitalism and white supremacy, form a symbiosis that works in a concerted way, parasitically, to extract surplus value from poor ethnoracially minoritized peoples of color (PERMPOC). Therefore, any potentially liberatory (I use liberatory and emancipatory interchangeably), critical analysis of race must also be imbued with a critique of (racialized) capitalism (Wallace & Sims, Forthcoming).



# Anti-blackness


- Anti-blackness is one way some black scholars have articulated what it means to be marked as black in an anti-black world. It's more than just "racism against black people." That oversimplifies and defangs it. It's a theoretical framework that illuminates society's inability to recognize our humanity — the disdain, disregard and disgust for our existence.
- Black people are at once despised and also a useful counterpoint for others to measure their humanness against. In other words, while one may experience numerous compounding disadvantages, at least they're not black.

Dr. kihana ross-vakil



# We have to love the truth

If we hope to achieve educational equity and justice, we must tell the truth. The truth is that for PERMSCs, living in a country that normalizes racialized, macrostructural inequity—albeit while denying its very existence—is soul-crushing, spiritually-deadening, and potentially fatal. We must also admit that many of our institutionalized policies, practices, procedures and pedagogues replicate and normalize these harms. (Sims, Forthcoming)

A quote by James E. Faust is displayed on a dark blue background with a sunset gradient at the bottom. The text is white and reads: "Honesty is more than not lying. It is truth telling, truth speaking, truth living, and truth loving." Below the quote, the name "James E. Faust" is written in a smaller, red font.

Honesty is more than not lying.  
It is truth telling, truth speaking,  
truth living, and truth loving.

James E. Faust

# Minding the Obligation Gap

in Community Colleges  
and Beyond

Theory and Practice  
in Achieving Educational Equity

Jeremiah J. Sims,  
Jennifer Taylor-Mendoza,  
Lasana O. Hetep,  
Jeremy Wallace, and  
Tabitha Cooney

## We need love

Everything that we do positively impacts some of our students and negatively impacts others. Equity efforts alone won't fix this. We need justice. We need to love justice to the point that we are willing to fight for it. As we know, equity is not enough (Sims, et al., 2020); it is just the first step in a long journey towards actual, tangible (social) justice. Put simply, the fence that ambivalent educators sit on is nothing more than an additional obstacle for PERMSCs (Sims, 2018; 2020).

# What is *reactionary* care?

*noun*

- an action performed or a feeling experienced in response to a situation or event.

*"Carrie's immediate reaction was one of relief"*

Sims, J.J.(Forthcoming). *Love as praxis: Antiracism, liberation and justice*. Peter Lang. New York, NY.

*Reactionary* care is:

- Context bound
- Situational
- Transactional
- Passive
- Triage: attends only to microaggressive behaviors

# Making the argument for *revolutionary* love

*adjective*

- involving or causing a complete or dramatic change.

Sims, J.J.(Forthcoming). *Love as praxis: Antiracism, liberation and justice*. Peter Lang. New York, NY.

*Revolutionary* love is:

- Necessitates a radical reimagining of structures of power;
- Demands paradigm-shifting interrogation;
- Opens alternative possibilities;
- Proactive;
- Holistic;
- Transformative;
- Invested in treating chronic diseases like anti-Blackness, white supremacy, and racial capitalism, et al.



# Love as praxis

- Is it clear that my individual and our institutional actions are impelled by love?
- Do our policies, practices, procedures, and pedagogies demonstrate authentic care?
- Do our hypermarginalized students/colleagues feel included, affirmed, valued and safe?
- Are we growing; are we becoming more equity-advancing?





# What we're up against

- Axioms
- Ambivalence
- Apathy
- Antipathy





## Ambivalence

- Cognitive/emotional refusal to take a position;
- Caused by gaps in knowledge;
- Inability/unwillingness to wrestle in privilege and discomfort

**I DON'T FEEL,**  
and neither do I care to.

-Apathy

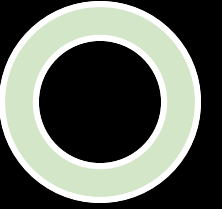
## Apathy

- Indifference
- Position taken: choosing not to work through discomfort;
- Defensiveness



## Antipathy

- Disdain for feelings complicity with and in white privilege;
- Misplaced anger at hypermarginalized peoples for causes feelings of white guilt;
- Blaming peoples victimized by white supremacy/racial capitalism

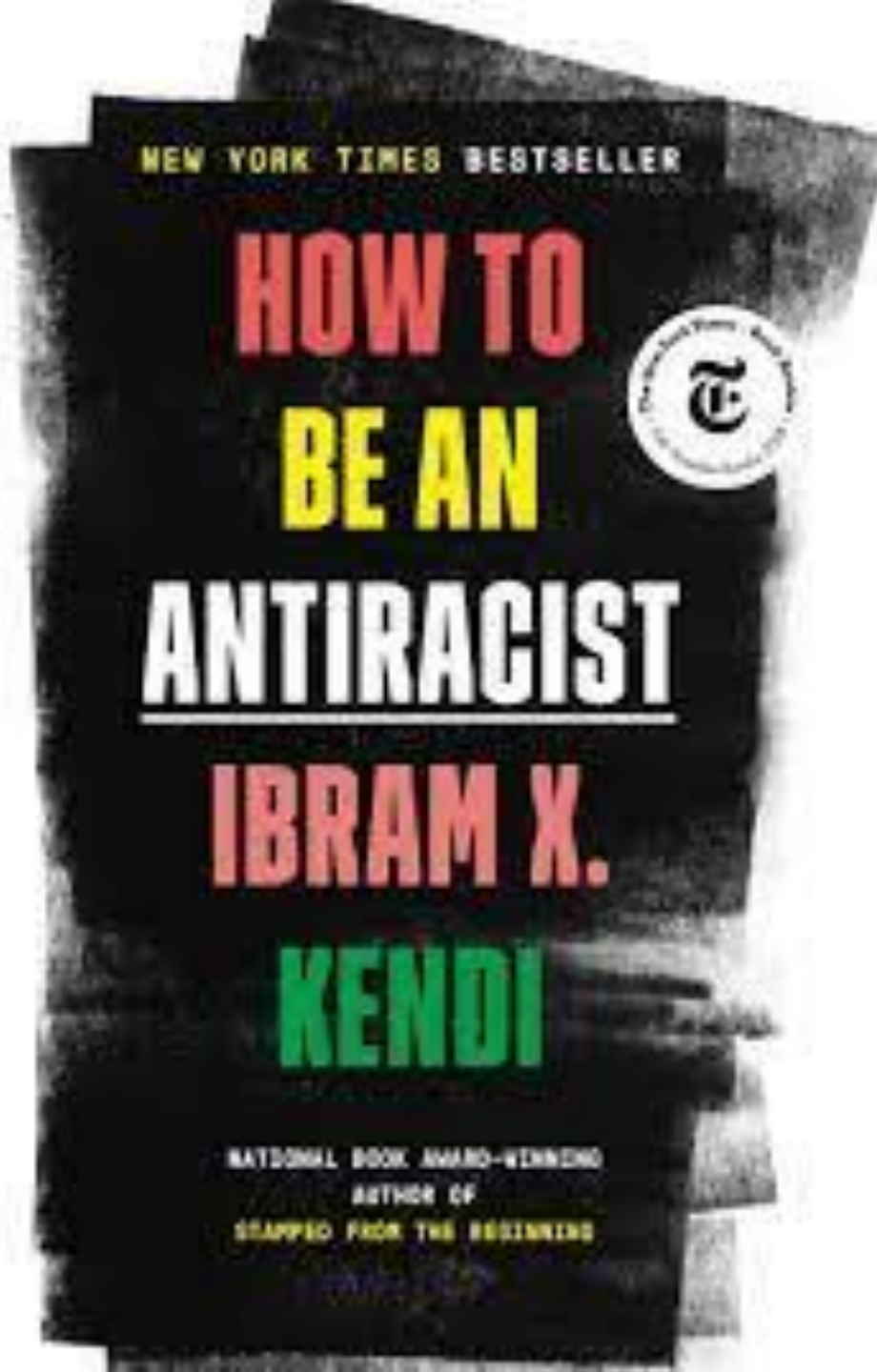


# Key Takeaways



- We have to challenge our individual and collective understanding of how things came to be.
- We must be willing to confront the lies that have become axiomatic.
- We must be willing to hold our institutions accountable.
- We must be willing to fully engage with IMPACTful work and to build solidarity by doing the work.
- Stay humble, be self-reflective and have grace for others.
- We must speak the truth in love!





# We have to look beyond the individual

“Americans have long been trained to see the deficiencies of people rather than policy. It's a pretty easy mistake to make: People are in our faces. Policies are distant. We are particularly poor at seeing the policies lurking behind the struggles of people.”

— Ibram X. Kendi, [How to Be an Antiracist](#)

# We all have a role to play

- How do you foresee your individual and our institutional commitment to love (as praxis) informing the educational environment at SMCCD?
- What will you do, both individually and collectively to make this a reality at SMCCD?



**LOOK CLOSELY AT  
THE PRESENT YOU  
ARE CONSTRUCTING:  
IT SHOULD LOOK  
LIKE THE FUTURE  
YOU ARE DREAMING.**

**ALICE WALKER**

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## Reflective Questions

- How have you applied the lesson you learned in 2020 to similar and/or novel issues in 2021?
- If you were to relive the most challenging part of 2020, what did you do differently in 2021; how did your response change?



# Questions that SMCCD Trustees must be able to answer

## **Philosophical/pedagogical questions for consideration.**

- How are the unequal/inequitable starting points of the SMCCD Community addressed here?
- How are our own embedded, inequitable practices disrupted here?
- Is there a competitive or a co-operative ethos being engendered by the Board?
- Who helps who, here?
- Whose ideas are the most important or count most?
- How are we demonstrating authentic care?
- How are we functioning as an ally/advocate?







## Questions that SMCCD Trustees must be able to answer

### **Practical/procedural questions to consider while reviewing policies/practices**

- How does this policy/practice/process help or hinder learning?
- Who benefits and who is disadvantaged from the current state of policy/practice/process?
- How is conflict resolved?
- How are rules determined?
- How can we democratize the relationship between SMCCD's Board of Trustees and the People that make up the SMCCD Community?
- Are we demonstrating radical love?

