

Lessons of Racism Learned When Young

The name calling started when she was about three years old.



Credit: Jacob Lund (Canva)

The following is an excerpt from a blog written by Adele Halliday. Your Mission and Service gifts support anti-racism programs and initiatives like the ones Halliday develops as the United Church's Anti-Racism and Equity Lead to help all of us be in deeper, more equitable relationships with one another.

The name calling started when she was about three years old. They were racial slurs, and names, and taunts. My child, my own flesh and blood, was being ostracized for having Black skin. The people slinging the insults? Other children on the playground.... She may not have necessarily always understood the particular terms that they used, but she knew that they were related to her

Blackness and her racial identity. And this deeply wounded her tender heart....

Despite all of our intentional modelling, teaching, and proactive actions, our child is still already developing internalized racism and inferior notions of herself.

The children who were taunting her were offering explicit and overt notions of racism, but they were children! They had not even started primary school! And yet, the children had already learned behaviour (at home, or elsewhere in society) that Whiteness is superior. And, they had the audacity to vocalize that to an innocent little child....

This is in part why I am so deeply committed to dismantling racism in all its forms—racism is damaging and destructive for all people in society. It reinforces negative notions for people of colour. I live it in a particular way because of my own racial identity, as a Black person who has lived with racial injustice my entire life.

The systemic nature of racism is something that cannot be ignored.... This effort to overcome racism is a continuous effort. And I am committed to this work for the long haul.

I hope that you will be too.

Please take the time to read Halliday's full blog post about her experience.

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