

EDUCATION GRADUATE STUDENTS OF COLOUR

COUNTER-NARRATIVES

CLOSED WOUND, HEALING SCAR

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It's interesting, how my present escapes back into the past every year

Every September, for the last 15 years,

I am reminded of the 9-year-old me

Sitting at my desk, having an existential crisis at that tender age, you see,

I was the only student in the class with deep brown skin, full lips, and hair that defies gravity

But still,

I've never had to question myself because I knew who I was

Until,

That Wednesday morning in Mrs. T's class

She always began the class by saying, "Good morning class!"

She seemed so nice and, she was trusted to help me enjoy the excitement and challenges of learning

But that Wednesday morning, she became the roadblock, to my learning

Hear me out!

Many of us could remember "that one" educator that helped us when in doubt,

Helped us set a path to our future education

You know, the ones that help prepare the next generation

Just not for me she said to my peers, “Out of everyone, you chose her to be the leader?”

That’s the sentence that comes knocking on my door every September like a yearly reminder

Sending me right back to that day in a classroom in Quebec

I was walking towards Mrs. T’s desk

Behind my back, I hear the woman who was supposed to be caring, and kind, to **me**

Lead me along the path where I wanted to be, **me**

Someone my parents trusted to keep me safe, and let me be, **me**

Thought of me as inferior to other students no matter my high grades, just for being, **me**

That afternoon, I learned that in front of her, I was dwarfed compared to other students

Her words were not by accident

Out of the abundance of hate,

She expressed her feelings towards me, coming from her heart

It was then, that I learned I was different from those with skin lighter than mine

Those with hair and features deemed “softer” than mine

It was the first time that I had asked myself what it would be like to be different

With each grade after that I continued to feel insignificant

I decided to go see my guidance counsellor, about the matter

Instead of assistance and advice, I was belittled and asked “what IS the matter?”

As if nothing was the matter. Nothing! Nothing seemed to matter

The denigration didn’t matter

The insult to my intelligence didn’t matter

I, as a Black person, didn't matter

I am reminded of the "Black Lives Matter" movement

Those saying "all lives matter" counter movement,

Are oblivious to the structural and systemic discrimination and racism that exist in our society

Just because discrimination and racism are not your experience, it doesn't mean they're not a reality

Trying to fight what I thought was confirmation bias,

I stopped myself, to think about my lived experiences of discrimination and racism, and how I remained quiet

Learned behaviour! When I spoke, I got shut down

My words deemed insignificant because my skin is brown,

Rich brown seen as a threat for simply being, so I watched my words carefully

I began eating myself to obesity as therapy

Looking around for someone to talk with that looked like me

Hard to be found in positions of education and counselling, you see,

This society is not structured for people like me

There are times that I thought nothing else could be done

The damage to people like me, Indigenous, Black, People of Colour, cannot be undone

It can't. Closed wound, healing scar!

But, we have come from far

There is a gap in education, a gap to be filled with Indigenous, Black, People of Colour as educators and counsellors in schools

Young People of Colour want to be heard, understood, and fueled to begin or continue healing
our scars

With more experience and 15 years later, issues of discrimination and racism are still prevalent
today

It is no mistake that I am in the master of education program in counselling psychology today, as
my past self (once) envisioned it as “someday”

I am changing the narrative for my People of Colour

I have learned that I have to start and not another

To my Indigenous, Black, People of Colour, I encourage you to change the narrative with me

The road is ten times harder for us as the society is not structured for us but you see,

I believe in us

Do YOU believe in us?

I believe in you

Do YOU believe in you?

To all my Indigenous, Black, People of Colour I say again, I want to be thought by you

To all my Indigenous, Black, People of Colour I repeat once again, I want to be counselled by
you

You matter!

The road may seem impossible but you are the answer,

To the confusion to self, guiding our little People of Colour’s existence

Pave the way! Confuse the system! Shock the system!

Don’t be afraid to take the tenth seat with nine others taken by white people

Don’t be afraid to speak up just so they could be comfortable

Love all but don't be a fool to none, it has been too long

Continue to be who you are, and how you are, and don't try to prove yourself to them to belong

Look at your scar and see how far you have come all this time,

Despite its state as a fingerprint from crime

Committed

Never admitted