

**Bonni:** [00:00:00] Today on episode number one 66 of the teaching and higher ed podcast Dr. Bruce Hoskins and I attempt to model how to have healing conversations about racial identity.

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**Bonni:** [00:00:24] Welcome to this episode of Teaching and Higher Ed. I'm Bonnie Stachowiak and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to improve our productivity so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

**Bonni:** [00:00:50] Today's guest Dr. Bruce Hoskins is a professor of sociology at Mira Costa community college. He's an Oceanside California native. Like the students he teaches his educational journey started at a community college after earning a bachelor's degree in ethnic studies. He discovered his passion for the subject and for teaching. This led him to earn a Ph.D. in sociology with an emphasis on race and ethnic relations and multiracial identity formation from the University of Southern California.

**Bonni:** [00:01:23] Beyond teaching Dr. Hoskins continues to research multiracial identity formation and in the fall of 2011 he published the book Asian American racial realities in black and white. His text examines how people of Asian white and Asian black descent experience race. He is also a spoken word hip hop artist who has released two albums with poetry hip hop pieces that cover his experiences and as a father husband son professor and mentor and something that's a little bit different about this episode from normal wens is that I've actually known Bruce since high school. We have not stayed in touch too closely as much as Facebook would afford.

**Bonni:** [00:02:06] It has been many many moons since we've ever had a conversation together. And I contacted him about being on the podcast I listen

to some of his spoken word poetry and I watched his videos on his YouTube channel of his Strange Fruit Sociology show and really got intrigued by the idea of having him come on the show to have a conversation about racial identity the way I thought it might be interesting rather than to speak about it from a hypothetical thing to do somewhat of an ethnographic approach for each of us as we thought back to our younger years when we did know each other and were in social circles with one another and how we experience our own racial identities forming and so a little bit of a different episode.

**Bonni:** [00:02:49] You're going to hear some things about each of us that wouldn't normally maybe not come up on conversations like this but each of us really believes in the power of these healing conversations about racial identity. So please join me in welcoming Bruce Hoskins to the show. Bruce welcome to Teaching in Higher Ed.

**Bruce:** [00:03:07] Hey how are you doing Bonni.

**Bonni:** [00:03:09] It has been a long time and it's been a long time.

**Bruce:** [00:03:15] You know when you contacted me I was really like this is Bonni? Well crazy your maiden name so. You know what with the name changed I was like well no but definitely the same Bonni. This defiantly looks like her. But man it has been what 20 25 years for crying out loud that we've interact with each other. So awesome. Besides being friends on Facebook you know and I was really looking forward to hearing from you.

**Bonni:** [00:03:39] And not only did you have that sort of difficult to pronounce last name but you knew it was love when you saw the new last name being so difficult to spell and you're like she must really love that man that she married into that last name.

**Bruce:** [00:03:54] I was like look I'm not even trying to say her last name. I'm going to pass on that. Bonni! Yay!

**Bonni:** [00:04:02] Well I really appreciate you not just coming on the show because lots of people come on the show and it's a great way to promote textbooks and to promote people's work. But you and I are going to embark on a difficult conversation for both of us. And I just thank you for your courage and your trust in me because we are two very different people who are going to talk about race today.

**Bruce:** [00:04:26] Indeed. I'm looking forward to it.

**Bonni:** [00:04:29] So why don't we start out with what are some of your earliest memories of even knowing what race was.

**Bruce:** [00:04:37] You know the earliest memory that I have though was vividly a clearly about race was actually in my senior year of high school. You know there's things that I've thought about before that I know weren't racial to say that I know that in retrospect they were already Orient around my race. However I didn't have proof that it was about my race necessarily.

**Bruce:** [00:05:00] And so there's a lot of things that I've unpacked for myself later on the same as this is probably has something to do with race but it wasn't clearly and definitively racist. But in my senior year of high school I dated a young white woman and her father, secretly dated her because her father was vicious. I don't know how else to say it was a white supremacist. Definitely had negative attitudes towards black people specifically.

**Bruce:** [00:05:32] So we dated secretly I honestly I didn't know a whole bunch about her father. At the time she just said you know you know to kind of keep the sand on the down low. And I'm like well no I'm fine I don't need to meet her parents or whatnot. But I remember this day it was it was almost me feel like it was yesterday where she comes to school crying and told me that she has to break up with me and I'm like did I do something wrong. What was going on.

**Bruce:** [00:05:59] She said Well my father found out that I'm dating a black guy and he beat me literally beat her up over this some somebody on an anonymous phone call her. I'm not even kidding about this. I can't make this stuff up. An anonymous phone caller left a message on the answering machine and was told the father told the family anyway that his daughter was dating a black man and like I said he physically abused her for that and she winded to break up with me as a result of that.

**Bonni:** [00:06:32] We were so young and foolish though that you know like about a month or so later we wound up you know reconnecting it and getting back together and later on her father even met me. Didn't say a whole bunch to me but for whatever reasons allowed us to date. The second time around. But you know that was obviously and tragically a racist moment in my life. And I remember very very clearly Michael said that most of the things were were very racial. But but that was my first clear memory of being treated in a negative way. Another thing where you ask me just my first but I have another one.

**Bonni:** [00:07:12] Oh I'm sure you do, please please dear.

**Bruce:** [00:07:16] And somebody this was a want you know that I warned you about this says that you know this is something that when when I went through it I didn't necessarily understand that it was race or that it was racist. I just knew how bad I felt afterwards. And this is something that I really encourage people in especially like my students that I teach at a community college that there's a lot of things that you feel bad about and then you wind up later on finding out that the reason why you felt so bad actually has a name.

**Bruce:** [00:07:48] And I found out later on that that the name of that was was racism and stereotypes and things like that. But when I was at El Camino I was I was quite the spirit guy. I was a Mr. spirit Wildcat Spirit class I was present at Spirit club and all the stuff that really had a good time at El Camino and really you know it was a sport athlete played football all for years did track and field for two years. Did basketball for two years and all is really out there you know doing my thing. And people knew me and they do I had a good sense of humor at all. And so I was invited. This was where I had the cringing starts because what class of 89. I'll leave anyway on what class you were Bonni.

**Bonni:** [00:08:31] 89.

**Bruce:** [00:08:32] You don't want to tell anybody. Well you know in my part of 89. So you know just to give people the space of where we're at any time and you know what's going on in society what not. But we had a big pep rally and I was asked to do a watermelon eating contest and I still to this day don't know why I said yes except for the fact that I love watermelon.

**Bruce:** [00:08:58] I wasn't even thinking about that. This was in any way shape or form like racist that it wasn't the first thing that jumps to my mind. But then when I did the contest it wasn't really even a contest. What they were doing there what they were actually playing a practical joke on me and what they did is they blindfolded me gave me a watermelon blindfolded me and then they said go. And the thing is there was no one else eating watermelon. It was only me in the center of the gym eating watermelon and everybody around me and all of this eating and I'm you know in as fast as I can because the contest and after I'm done eating they take off the blindfold and I look around and I realize that I'm the only person that that's there. I feel really weird about that. I even have friends that are looking at me trying to figure out and engage my reaction to this. And I felt weird about it but I didn't know what to call this. I just felt weird

kind of so bad but whatever. I got to wash my face off I come back and you know the kind of the moment it's done and everything.

**Bruce:** [00:10:01] But the thing that really actually solidified that this was racist though was that later on one of the officers in the ASB they come up to me with the advisor of the ASB and they were like Hey Bruce we we're going to give this to you in the middle of the pep rally but you know as you walked out and we kind of lost our moment but there was a prize associated with winning the watermelon eating contest and the ASB officer hands me these big wax lips. And that's when I really felt bad. But again I still didn't quite know what that was.

**Bruce:** [00:10:41] Later on in my life you know I've figured out that this was all connected to racial stereotypes and everything. But those are two really pivotal memories that I had a ball race in my identity as I was coming up and being born and raised in Oceanside which is a very racially diverse city and is also economically very diverse. Also I never really had to think about it a whole bunch before these moments but I really started realizing at about that time that my racial reality was actually shifting on me because you know when I was a kid I really didn't think about it a whole bunch. But as I got older on the high school it definitely started becoming part of my identity or people were identifying me as black and so therefore I needed to do something with that. And so those were two of the moments that really stood out to me when I was growing up emotions are about how I learned about not only about race but what race I was.

**Bonni:** [00:11:41] One of the things that you didn't share about the watermelon eating contest story is that I was there and you remember me being there. I mentioned as you were sharing the story earlier that I have absolutely no memory of this. I have no no recollection of this kind of a contest although certainly thinking back to high school and junior high I mean kids can be really cruel.

**Bonni:** [00:12:07] I don't I don't even know why that would be funny to blindfold someone and to have them eat anything regardless of the color of their skin. This is not a this doesn't fit with my sense of humor. But I guess it both makes me horrified when we have a lack of leadership of teachers in there to help mold and form students to think more critically about racial identity and then so that sort of breaks my heart.

**Bonni:** [00:12:32] And I told you I'm embarrassed that I was any part of but I think you said I was on the ASB, it doesn't surprise me that I was. But I don't have any

recollection of actually being on here. I thought I told you I have terrible memories as far as that but I do have a couple of memories I wanted to share that about sort of my own sense of racial identity and their sort of stereotypical. But in this case they're true.

**Bonni:** [00:12:55] So that would be I remember growing up that my mom modeled for me perhaps clumsily and maybe not for the long term best but that you never refer to someone by the color of their skin. So you don't go to the grocery store and say oh you know go get the cart from the black guy over there you would never never. I'm cringing even just saying that to you now and I'm 46 years old. That was completely not allowed. You referred to people with the color of shirt that they're wearing. And that seems good at first.

**Bonni:** [00:13:28] Doesn't that seem great then where we're all just a rainbow colored person. I don't see race. You know and I think one of the things that I have learned is that no we do see race and endure. In fact in the times when we are temporarily blinded by it in that I know positively growing up I would have had no recollection that watermelon had anything of a racial slur to it. I would not have known that. But you know me not talking about race.

**Bonni:** [00:14:01] Not hearing about people's anger and hearing about hatred did not help me then be as equipped as I might have liked to have been to have an influence and positions when I was in teaching roles and mentoring roles and that kind of thing is that I think that one of the reasons I'm so glad we're having this conversation is that this is how healing happens not by pretending that it's not there. So one thing I remember is we weren't supposed to talk about people's race. And then the other memory I had I wasn't even going to share it but you sort of encouraged me to a little bit.

**Bonni:** [00:14:36] I mean this is so lame. But I used to be made fun of all the time because I'm so pale and all the time if I was ever going to wear shorts I knew I was going to have somebody make fun of how white my legs are. And then in one of the dances they awarded a king and queen of snowball dance and I was awarded the queen and then an African-American man was awarded the king. And I knew him and he was a really kind young man and I really liked him. So it was that was a nice thing to be paired up with someone I considered to be so kind. But we were both made fun of not just on the night of the dance they call the salt and pepper which if you haven't heard salt and pepper you should go back and revisit that from the 80's because they have really great music. So if you don't know salt and pepper that was a band at the time a group I don't think there's still around is that. Is that a fair assumption.

**Bruce:** [00:15:24] Well you know honestly I just go for it there's probably about six months ago we actually went and saw an old school hip hop show and soul music still performing this year. They surely are still performing.

**Bonni:** [00:15:38] That's awesome. So they called us salt and pepper and that was certainly racially. I mean that's all wound up and race and then it kept going because then when the year but came out they kept making fun of us. But you couldn't get the picture to look right. That I was either going to be the color of paper or he was going to be too dark skinned and it and I just remember being embarrassed and embarrassed and embarrassed. And but yet at the same time I hesitate to tell that story because that is not the same thing as racism. That's not the same thing.

**Bonni:** [00:16:08] Kids make fun of kids and a lot of it has to do with your appearance and sometimes your ears are too big or your eyes are too small or whatever the thing is. But that is not the same thing to institutional racism so I guess I bring it up just for people who are not a person of color to not be thinking Oh I know exactly what you mean. You know what when I was young I had this happen. No no no that is not the same thing as to signal racism so I guess I guess there you go.

**Bruce:** [00:16:36] Yeah. You know I really want to make sure the audience understands what we're really doing here because you and I although we were not you know at any time like best friends or anything but we definitely respect each other and knew each other and interacted with each other back in the day and I was wondering where you wanted to jump in on.

**Bruce:** [00:16:55] Bonni was actually the ASB officer that gave me the wax lips with the adviser next to her. And you know so this was going to be your prize. But I understand why for you that this wasn't a moment to even remember for you but for me it was actually the foundation where I would understand grace and understand my place in a racial you know in a racial hierarchy where black was at the bottom and wanted is at the top.

**Bruce:** [00:17:23] You know so we need to have honest conversations about this and we all need to see it. As you said earlier today in our anger we were talking about this later on but you know we all just ignore anger or pain or hurt and listen to other people's stories in all the spaces that we were. But you know I also understand that we're not that person anymore because we've continued to grow and develop and stay honest and to have these conversations.

**Bruce:** [00:17:49] But like I said I just wanted to let your audience know was like This is a very real authentic conversation that we're having and we're going to we're going to we're going to heal. This is going to help us heal and be better not only as teachers but us as people in your story.

**Bonni:** [00:18:06] One of the things that starts to emerge for me is that I'm hearing you tell the story and yes there are people but there's also institutional racism which just requires so much more than individual healing. We all have to be resisting We all have to be in the fight and that means just continually being woken up to our own inadequacies. And I wonder if you would talk a little bit about stand point theory and how that informs some of your thinking about racism because I think there's sort of a way we might fit that fit that in here if I understand it correctly.

**Bruce:** [00:18:48] Yeah. You know it's that Standpoint Theory I know other disciplines use it but for for us a sociologist we just talked about how how where you stand where your experiences lie and your you know the places of privileges and the places where you're not privileged that goes inform how you interact with folks you know and how you shape your reality and how you interact with institutions or what your perception is of those institutions.

**Bruce:** [00:19:14] And so Standpoint Theory. Let me let me give you a very real example that I used actually in my in my textbook is just later on I didn't share that chapter with you but where I talked about were it was a strange sociology video where my co-host and I we talked about how when the Michael Brown verdict went down this is I think is like what about two or three years ago now when the Michael Brown verdict went down. This is about things giving time right was like it was right there are round things given I remember that vividly.

**Bruce:** [00:19:48] And the reason why I remember so vividly is because when the grand jury decided not to indict the police officers involved in the Michael Brown shooting I remember my black friends and other friends who were social justice oriented were black people specifically really talking and really engaging in regards to you know this just happened. This is real. How do we deal with this. What are we going to do. Is the march. Where is the protests. What a what a community is doing what's you know creating action plan and stuff like that.

**Bruce:** [00:20:23] And really going in while the vast majority of my white friends we're talking about Thanksgiving recipes how they're going to go in and visit

their family. And you know oh my god, you know I'm going to take a nap after the turkey because of tryptophan...

**Bruce:** [00:20:41] And all of this stuff is like when I saw that it was it was just so real. So I mean for me I'm actually getting emotional about that right now. This is that was such a stark contrast and such a vivid image all of the literally the different world that I live in versus a person who being white is no fault of white person. Right. But this idea this construction of white myth. That's what I prefer to talk about. Can say white supremacy this really scares the hell out of people and then they get a very false image of what a white supremacist is. I remember that episode that you were talking about.

**Bruce:** [00:21:21] I think Stephen I don't know what his last name is but talking about when you hear the word white supremacy you think of the KKK you think of the hood you think of burning crosses but it's like I try to stay away from that and try to just talk about whiteness as as as an institutional conceit a construct and how we're taught to favor it. We're taught to believe in it we're taught to trust in it all we're taught to give it the benefit of the doubt when I'm doing something wrong. And so the social construction of whiteness is is so real that it can cause a very different lived reality for people on a day to day basis versus the people that it's not constructed for the people that it's that it's set against.

**Bruce:** [00:22:04] But like I said Thanksgiving I'll never forget it. And I don't want to make anybody feel guilty for talking about Thanksgiving because that's what you're supposed to talk about. That's what regular people are supposed to talk about during that time of year. But for me at that moment it wasn't even about Thanksgiving. It was about the police officer that was responsible for Michael Brown. Michael Brown's death was not indicted but now I really want to make sure that people really understand the problems not necessarily the person. Police officers are not the problem. You get riots like there's a there's a person in that uniform.

**Bruce:** [00:22:43] Right. The problem is the institutional behavior of the police not necessarily individuals like that is what the institution trained in teaching people do that's what it's doing. That's what people wind up doing. And the challenge that we're all having is that people are not necessarily the problem is what people are taught. I would argue is the problem. So when you see a police officer wrongfully kill someone then you just say OK that's just a bad peace officer.

**Bruce:** [00:23:13] That's an argument that I hear from a lot of the conservative spaces and from students who tend to lean a little bit more on the conservative side. And I completely respect that argument. It's like look I get it that they might very well be a bad officer or just a bad person in general who just happens to be wearing a police uniform. But you cannot create and this is where the sociology comes in this is where data research comes in.

**Bruce:** [00:23:34] You can't create the patterns the statistically Dimanche Dibbell patterns of the rate at which black people are more likely to die on the hands of police officers. You can't create that pattern by explaining just one bad apple in the bunch. And so I'm pointing more towards the institution itself and what was founded on the training that happens in that space when I was doing research in this I found out that literally there are some police departments that require less training than what you would need to become a hairstylist or a barber. I'm not even kidding. I'm not joking about that. And my jaw dropped to the ground when I read that.

**Bruce:** [00:24:17] And just that police officers that job is so difficult. And I really appreciate the people who are volunteering themselves and potentially their lives to this work. I really appreciate them. I just I me as a scholar a black man as a social justice advocate. I really just I really question how the institution prepares them for their job. That's the thing that I see as a far bigger problem than necessarily the motivations. You know the motivations of people. And so we want to create different behavior that we have to change the behavior at the institutional level rather than change it on an individual level.

**Bonni:** [00:25:03] You talked earlier about sitting with others anger and the importance of being able to do that. And for my recommendation I wanted to recommend your YouTube channel and some of your spoken word poetry. I'm watching the clock as far as this episode and we're probably too long to actually play one now. But I'll put a link to some of the ones that were particularly profound to me in preparing for this episode and also of course to the main channels to encourage people to listen will have links a plenty in this episode to also over to your website because people can purchase your spoken word poetry there too saw a link to a lot of of those resources.

**Bonni:** [00:25:41] But I guess my recommendation instead of just to go watch your videos would be to prepare to sit with another's anger in a relatively safe way. So if this is hard to do then it's not like Bruce is actually there he's not actually talking to you specifically although it will feel like he is so powerful in his

delivery. But I think that's a good preparation for us to just be continually preparing ourselves to.

**Bonni:** [00:26:08] I mean I could go this I could go on and on about it's not even just about race ethnicity but you were saying Bruce that you've been thinking a lot just about life and death and some of your poetry comes out and just some some of that that would be maybe pretty deep for some people to go and watch and I'm saying no this is what we have to do in that because so much in our society we've socialized ourselves to not grieve and not mourn and try to fix people and I know you and I share a faith background too and sometimes people of faith are the worst where they're like don't feel bad. At least he's with Jesus now.

**Bonni:** [00:26:42] This is helping. You not you are not helping. And anyway I'm going to recommend people go listen to your your magnificent powerful gut wrenching spoken word poetry and put some links in the show notes and pass it over to you to make your recommendations.

**Bruce:** [00:26:58] You know and to stay on a spoken word poetry. Thank you for the kind words I really really appreciate that it's spoken word poetry or simply very different for me. Could you just a lot of folks who. Definitely deal with the emotional content of my life. Well the person I'm recommending... His name is Anthony Blacksher professor or a professor Anthony Blacksher or his stage name is Ant Black and so you go to YouTube and you type Ant Black in spoken word poetry. All of his work will come up and he is my co-host on straight from sociology where we're pause right now he is actually finishing his dissertation right now. He should be done in December ish.

**Bruce:** [00:27:40] We're hoping and when he's done we're we're planning on continuing our screens through sociology videos. But he is a magnificent person friend and quite the accomplice a spoken word poet and he definitely deals a lot more with social justice issues than I do. I have a few. Social justice pieces. He is way more into that space and that's where he writes a lot of his poetry. But to just call him your social justice poll with his doctor.

**Bruce:** [00:28:11] That's too limiting. He talks about a lot of stuff but he is my mentor he is my sense that is spoken word poetry although he is younger than me. He is the one that taught me to be the poet that I am I be his mentor when it comes to teaching. But you're really my mentor and he taught me everything that I know about spoken word poetry and I just loved that guy. And if you if you click on one poll you're going to you're going to wind up bingde watching his

poem So prepare yourself spend five minutes watching the pope or whatever you're going to spend a good hour or so just watching you and seen everything that's related to he'll is absolutely amazing to me. You know I know about spoken word poetry.

**Bonni:** [00:28:52] Bruce this has truly been a really good thing. I'm going to treasure being reconnected with you like this and I'll admit to not really enjoying reconnecting with people from high school in general I mentioned not having a good memory for a lot of that part of my life but also just my gosh surface conversation abundant those that I would not go to a reunion I have no interest and just surface that kind of thing and I'm just so glad we got reconnected in this really unique way and that we each were willing to be vulnerable enough to have not just the conversation we just recorded but the one that we didn't reach before or that where we were talking a little bit and preparing for this episode so thank you so much.

**Bonni:** [00:29:32] And like you said before we started the episode I hope this is you know you'll come back on the show but I hope that outside of that that we can just actually hang out and have more of these conversations and not talk about what we had for lunch and what the weather is outside and how we live in a rainbow world of unicorns and clouds. But there's tough stuff going on and they got to do the work.

**Bruce:** [00:29:55] Absolutely. This is definitely one of the most meaningful reconnections that I got from our high school folks. So I applaud the work that you're doing. And yet know that although we're doing good work we there's a lot more work to do. But this is definitely walking us in the right direction and I really appreciate you for that.

**Bonni:** [00:30:16] As some of you might know we have an editor for our podcast my husband and I do, his name is Andrew. And sometimes when Andrew is editing the episodes he'll send me a note and explain why he took something out of the episode. And occasionally it'll be that he doesn't think that the listeners want to know how the sausage gets made. As he says it which always makes me chuckle.

**Bonni:** [00:30:38] And in this particular case I want to tell you a little bit about how the sausage gets made. Or in this case how this episode came about and share some of my reflections on being reconnected with Bruce in this way. I was first reconnected with Bruce on Facebook. I can't tell you exactly when it was but I remember being really intrigued by the fact that he was also a professor

like me and also being interested in his spoken word poetry and his sociology videos.

**Bonni:** [00:31:11] And I just thought that he would be the kind of person I would really want to talk with and reconnect and talk about our teaching. He has such a big heart for his students and started to get the idea that it would be fun to have him on the podcast and we kind of went back and forth a little bit over some months and finally decided that this was the season when we were going to make it happen. And when we started we went back and forth a little bit over e-mail as to what the subject might be. And know he has a big passion for his textbook and what he's been able to do with that.

**Bonni:** [00:31:43] And I was attempting to find a little bit more of a broader theme beyond sociology too just to extend that to other disciplines and so when we connected on the call for the actual podcast recording I pitched the idea that we might each just talk about since we did grow up together I mean we didn't grow up together like I don't remember if it was just high school or if it was before that but that we would have grown up in similar cities and in similar places and had at least gone to the same high school and that it might be interesting to weave together our own experiences of race growing up because we have had people of color before on the show. Share that as many of you I know have listened and we have also had Stephen Brookfield who is a white male. Talk about his experiences and Bruce actually listened to Stephen Brookfield's episode and really liked what he had to say about race and white privilege and so that was kind of my vision for the episode and what I thought would happen was that we would have almost like a theoretical conversation that oh well isn't that interesting we went to the same high school but. But that was sort of where it began and end.

**Bonni:** [00:33:03] And Bruce stopped me and said I would be happy to share those kinds of stories. But you should know that you're in one of my stories. And I was completely taken aback and hearing him recount this contest that was put on I was just completely horrified candidly. We talked for an hour and it was so I just felt so honored that he would share with me that RAW STORY for him. And then also just felt terrible.

**Bonni:** [00:33:36] I think that contest was completely mean spirited even if there were no racial overtones in it. What a terrible thing it would be to play a joke on someone who thinks they're in a contest. But no they're not actually in a contest. It's sort of to humiliate someone I just thought it was really mean spirited. I have

no memory of being in student government in general when I was in high school. Nor do I have any recall of this particular event.

**Bonni:** [00:34:01] And a couple of people that I've shared that story with They've assumed that it meant that it didn't really happen that perhaps Spurs remembered the story wrong and that's not at all how I see it. I assume that the reason I don't remember it is because of my white privilege that this is an event that would not have been memorable to me in the sense that it wasn't a pivotal moment in my life for the way that it was for him. And I'm going to admit that I do have that urge of gosh just couldn't this episode get lost in the mail. The podcast for him so I could look like the good way person who's never done anything like that. And it was really hard to hear that about myself that I was involved in any way with this even though it was 20 plus years ago.

**Bonni:** [00:34:48] I've been really impacted by Stephen Brookfield's writing on race he's done that in a number of his books but the most recent one that I read is becoming a critically reflective teacher and in that he shares it's very clear that far from having no racist bone in my body my skeletal framework has racism as it's bone marrow. I learned stereotypes and biases through jokes with peers family conversations and media images that flourished in the vacuum of no contact with anyone other than whites like myself. And that's a closed quote there. Now back to be me talking. I don't want to sound like I'm making excuses but as I reflect on what Stephen has said so much in his writing I would have had no idea that there were any racial stereotypes having to do with watermelons at that age.

**Bonni:** [00:35:43] And it's strange to think about but just how we can be taught these things through as he says peers family conversations of media images and not be aware of it and that it's in our veins it's in our hearts it's in our minds. Without us always being aware of it. And that doesn't make it OK to me what it means is that racism is systemic not only inside of individuals like me who can be cured and forever he hold this is back to Stephen quoting Stephen Brookfield in another part of Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher quote "for whites to hear students or colleagues of color describe their experience of racism with all the pain and anger that involves what is theorist's of transformative learning call a disorienting dilemma. This is particularly the case of the situation being described as one in which you've participated or eerily close to one you're experiencing.

**Bonni:** [00:36:45] This episode we recorded way way way before it's going to air and it's been really hard on me reflecting on my conversation with Bruce and I

did want listeners to know that I apologized to him for that incident that I didn't have a recollection of and that we really had a very moving conversation of just both wanting to connect on healing of our society and how much a treasure it is when people different from one another can come together and and be raw and real like that.

**Bonni:** [00:37:23] And since the recording didn't seem I don't remember that it captured as much of my apology to him as I would have liked. I just wanted to make sure that people knew how seriously I took that and just how devastated I am that I was any part of that. And I wanted to express my own continued desire to heal. And yet at the same time I know that without conversations like the one I had with Bruce without continually to put myself into situations like that I'll never be able to be where I want to be. And this is my final quote from Stephen Brookfield's *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* quote "but becoming critically reflective is hard work a long incremental haul in the struggle to do this. Teachers run political and professional risks and exercise personal demons."

**Bonni:** [00:38:20] Thank you Bruce for being on the show. Thank you for sharing a painful story with me and opening up your life and your stories to me and to everyone who listens to teach and and higher ed and thanks to all of you for listening and opening yourselves up to considering issues of race and ethnicity in our teaching. I look forward to having him on future shows and to contributing even more to these important conversations and also be hearing about what goes on as he releases his textbook that he's in the middle of writing and all the other things I know will be happening as we continue our conversation so thanks Bruce for being on today's show.

**Bonni:** [00:38:58] Thanks to all of you for listening. If you'd like to read the show notes and experience some of the links from this show especially Go check out his spoken word poetry and his recommendation of and blacks spoken word poetry. You can do that at [teachinginhighered.com/166](http://teachinginhighered.com/166) for if you'd like to have those show up in your inbox without having to remember to go and check.

**Bonni:** [00:39:21] You can always subscribe at [teachinginhighered.com/Subscribe](http://teachinginhighered.com/Subscribe) and we have a little bit more private conversations that happen on our channel if you have an interest in not as open a public of a conversation as Twitter affords us. You can. Learn more about the slack channel by going to [teachinginhighered.com/slack](http://teachinginhighered.com/slack). Thanks so much for listening and I'll see you next time.

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