

Bonni: [00:00:00] Today on episode number 147 of the Teaching in Higher Ed podcast Stephen Brookfield discusses racial identity and the higher ed classroom.

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Bonni: [00:00:22] Welcome to this episode of teaching in higher ed. I'm Bonni 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 increase our productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:48] Joining me for this episode is Dr. Stephen Brookfield. He's actually been on two episodes in the past and I'm very grateful for his continued conversation to our community. He was on episode number 15 how to get students to participate in discussion and he was on episode 98 talking about his absolutely wonderful book called The Skillful Teacher and one of the things that we talked about in the Skillful Teacher is as he revised it he added in a chapter about race and what an important part of our teaching that is. And I'm going to share a little bit with you now about Stephen but quickly get to welcoming him to the show. Stephen Brookfield began his teaching career in 1970. He's worked in England, Canada, Australia and the United States teaching in a variety of college settings. He has written code written or edited 18 books on adult learning, teaching, critical thinking, discussion methods and critical theory. Stephen Brookfield Welcome back to teaching in higher ed.

Stephen: [00:01:56] Thank you Bonni. It's always a pleasure to come back and pontificate and to challenge the open air. Thank you for inviting me.

Bonni: [00:02:06] The last time you were on the show we spoke about The Skillful Teacher and you had talked about adding in a chapter about race.

Bonni: [00:02:14] I wonder how did the issue in some of the challenges of race first come to be significant to you.

Stephen: [00:02:22] Well it's interesting to me as I think back over my life and I am coming up to 68 in a couple of weeks that I'd say for the first half of my life I was race blind really. I mean I knew intellectually that the world is full of multiple racial groups and cultural identities and ethnicities and so on. But in terms of my deciding that addressing race was something that I needed to focus on in my own practice it really just wasn't at the forefront of my consciousness. And I think that's because mostly I work in all white contexts and my colleagues like my students were white. My employing universities and colleges are mostly a white European clientele so you know it was something that I could just not be required to focus on at all. And it was only when I moved to New York started working in New York in 1982 and then subsequently spent 10 years working as an adjunct in Chicago. I got in the reality of race really forced itself on my consciousness and I say you go back and look at my early books. There is almost no reference to race. I talk about learners as if they were a generic group almost but pretty much the only difference is that I talk about have to do with social class rather than with racial formation. So it was encountering diversity in my everyday life working with colleagues in multi-racial teaching teams working with students who were from different races backgrounds. And then I couldn't really ignore it anymore.

Stephen: [00:04:29] So it's always interesting to me how people come to deal with race and I spoke to so many people who say until we find ourselves in a multi-racial environment it's not that we consciously exclude this is just that that there is no reason for us to focus on that. So I'm I'm very pleased that in American higher education now we see an increasingly diverse student body. And and if you go into community colleges I mean that's absolutely amazing. You have every racial group ethnicity every culture there. And I think that that is increasingly the case in universities even though when you look at faculty of course faculty of color are disproportionately under-represented. But given the demographic demographic changes in this country we're not and I don't think anybody is going to be able to ignore this this lately. And then of course as I came over to this country I became much more aware of racial dynamics of fights of contestation of how power operated. And so my background and critical theory really along nicely with my interest in race and critical theory looks at how systems manage to contain challenges through the spread of dominant ideology. And if we consider white supremacy as a dominant dominant ideology then it was kind of a natural for me to start focusing more on is that the ideology of white supremacy remains relatively unnamed and unchallenged

and really shapes people's behavior. So I'm kind of interested in that process of ideological manipulation that goes on.

Bonni: [00:06:30] So talk about the former you, Stephen. Introduce me to Stephen Brookfield the "good white person."

Stephen: [00:06:40] OK um just before I do that. One of the teaching resources that I've used is a New York Times video. It's an Op-Ed video called Conversations with my Black Son and it's a serious all of African-American parents describing the conversation sooner or later they all have to have with their son on how he is going to react when he stopped by the police and how he's going to negotiate that particular encounter in a way that keeps him safe and I've used that as it's just available online for the use that as a discussion prompt before we move into discussions where race and racism are going to be the focus.

Stephen: [00:07:27] So the good white person is a phrase that I borrowed from Shannon Sullivan who has written a very interesting book with several books but this particular one is called Good White People and it's focuses on the virtues of racism which is an idea that came up in the 80s whereby whites can convince themselves that they somehow have escaped any kind of racist conditioning that they have a good heart and that they don't see color that they judge people on the basis of the content of their character to use. Martin Luther King's famous phrase that they take people in terms of what actions and choices they make.

Stephen: [00:08:15] And really they don't discriminate on the basis of race ethnicity or anything else. And I really recognize myself in that because I think up until the sort of mid-eighties I heard worked as a teacher for 15 years I began my career in 1970 and I felt that I really didn't see color that I somehow had escaped racism. The tie just by a sort of fierce moral Christianity a strong core of integrity and authenticity. You know that I had I was one of the good guys. And yet all the time I was colluding in a system and in practices that reinforced racism without consciously being aware of this. So something I mentioned earlier the fact that my books were race blind. You know I take the first two or three words a good example of how I was colluding in a system by just supporting the European American hegemony and in literature on adult education and teaching. So the good white person is someone who like me has convinced themselves that they don't really need to deal with race because they're one of the good guys and they're an ally to people of color and that if called upon they will speak out against racism and so on. All the while of course never

actually finding themselves in a situation where they have to do that. And you know I say that not with a sense of shame or guilt it's just an empirical descriptor. You know I think a lot of whites like myself just grow up with that mental framework and unless something interrupts it you tend to think you're a good white person.

Bonni: [00:10:19] One of the things that you've talked about is just the danger of us and problematically considering ourselves allies. Can you talk a little bit more about that some of the caution cautionary notes that you might have for those of us who. I'm very much with you on having thought of myself that way or wanted to think of myself that way in the past.

Stephen: [00:10:40] Yeah. I've been in a lot of multi-racial groups over the years where one of the things that the whites have said very passionately and emotionally is that they say these two peers of color. They say I want to be your ally I'm your ally consider me your ally. I'm here to support you and speak on your behalf and so on and I don't this is hard because I don't want to disparage that. That's obviously something that people need to be feeling. It's just that I've noticed colleagues and students of color sometimes tighten up when a white person like myself says that I talk to them about it. And I you know the ways that baps declaration of ally ship is sometimes received is well. Calling yourself an ally is a very nice thing for you to do to make yourself feel better and to make you feel like you're on the moral high ground compared to other whites who are masters racially evolved as you think you are. But really I've not seen evidence of you being an ally and saying that you're an ally. Well that really doesn't cost you anything. Anybody can say that when I've actually seen some evidence of behavior that cost you something in standing up to racism then maybe I will consider you an ally. So I always tell colleagues who white colleagues who are you coming into this work and really eager to do the right thing which is a wonderful sentiment and you absolutely don't want to dampen that. But I do say to them Don't ever call yourself or name yourself as an ally.

Stephen: [00:12:41] Now if a person of color says to you I regard you as my ally then you wear that descriptor with great pride. But it's a dangerous thing just to say that with out a continuous experience of having acted in ways that really do that. And being acknowledged as such by my colleagues and friends of color. And I know this is a you know quite a controversial stops to take and I could be completely wrong about this.

Stephen: [00:13:16] But based it's really based on my own autobiography and how I've noticed that tightening and stiffening up of people of color and multi racial groups when whites say that.

Bonni: [00:13:29] One of the things I would imagine too is that if I have at my core yes I've done it I'm an ally it's still I'm still thinking of myself as the good white person and what that could potentially hold me back from doing. Is that continual work were never done of wanting to become aware and then rid myself of some of my own unintentional racism that lives within me and you used the phrase earlier white supremacy. And what I realize as I've heard you talk about this more is you don't mean it in the way that I interpret that word. I interpret that word we've got you know white hats on and we're you know burning crosses. I don't think that's what you mean. So can you talk about white supremacy what you mean by that and how you've even said that it lives within you and I'm guessing you probably would say it lives within me as well.

Stephen: [00:14:23] And I often wonder about using the term like supremacy Gadhafi's that's got a lot of folks in anti racist work use and it's partly I think used as a trigger to shock people into focusing on racism. And to that degree I think it works very effectively sometimes because you know when when people say well we we want to work in an anti-racist way. Well most of the people in my sphere agree with that. And and it's there's nothing particularly new or transformative about it. But when you say we all need to identify in the combat the way that white supremacist lives within us and it's embedded in common practices like hiring and the curriculum is designed and the way our assessment mechanisms are developed those sorts of things you know saying that white supremacy leads in things that we do every day really gets people's attention.

Stephen: [00:15:33] So that's that's why I like to use that but I always do. You know as you've said Rodney I start off by saying that white supremacy is not a neo-Nazi skinhead it's not the Aryan Nation it's not a far right group that the Southern Poverty Law Center monitors white supremacy is the idea at its core that whites should occupy positions of leadership authority and should be entrusted to make decisions on behalf of all of us. And the reason that white should be the natural decision makers in control of resources responsible for making important decisions for all of us is because whites are more intelligent have a superior intellect use reason and logic and objectivity and swayed by the emotions and often the raw emotions that are attributed to people of color.

Stephen: [00:16:36] So we should trust whites because they inhabit this sphere of pure reason and and that's why when you look at political world the economic

world the military world. It should be the case that most bases are white who are in senior positions of authority and then the idea of white supremacy white should be the natural gatekeepers and authorities does get invented and all kinds of social practices. I mean you see it institutionally and the way faculty of color have such a hard time getting tenure and feel constantly at least of faculty of color that I know tell me you know not only do we have to teach our subject we also have to teach the rest of our colleagues about race. That's like a second full time job that's been on officially dumped on us that's not in the job description but we're looked at as the people who should be doing this. So I think when you look at things I mentioned programming practices and the way correct or a curriculum constructed you see white the ideology ideology embedded in those practices.

Stephen: [00:17:56] And then of course when you look at the world outside and you look at policing and you look at where water communities power stations are located in and where the top notch hospital facilities are it's very evident that communities of color are systematically excluded and disenfranchised.

Stephen: [00:18:19] And the most beneficial resources are located overwhelmingly in white communities. So that's what I mean by by white supremacy this idea that because of the virtue of their superior intellect whites, should be in positions of authority and control it should be the ultimate arbiters in matters of how resources are distributed for everybody and not. I think what we need to dig down to is white people and and understand how those are embedded within our consciousness and how they surface in our own actions.

Bonni: [00:19:01] One of the fights I have with myself inside my own brain is try not to treat these things as binary. And when I think about your examples of that that phrase white supremacy I think gosh it's so much more helpful for me if I can treat it as a continuum. And I was thinking about some of the my own journey of becoming more aware of how my own race enters into the classroom and I think perhaps this is the evidence of my thinking I'm a good white person because my power points have diverse generic corporate backgrounds of business people of different colors. And then I was sort of swept upside the head in the last few years when you start to have people on Twitter particularly saying OK go and look at your syllabus. Or who is your textbook written by. And who are you having assigning your students to read and I thought I have absolutely no idea who my syllabus was written by and recognizing though that a lot of this is of course common in business but but really having a predominant representation of white males in the syllabus and the reading and then where I really get to where gosh I have to grow in this area is in guest speakers. Why

don't I have in my contacts a broader list of diverse business owners and people in executive positions to bring in to my classroom to speak to the students so I like to think of it. It helps me realize one you'll never get there.

Bonni: [00:20:34] You just have to be constantly moving yourself closer toward that ideal where I can rid myself with as much of that as as as possible.

Stephen: [00:20:44] Yeah I mean I think that's true. Would Lindemann who was an adult educator back in the 20s and 30s and 40s in the last century wrote about democracy that it's always a partially functioning ideal.

Stephen: [00:21:00] And that's how I think most of my life I'm I'm trying to improve things but if I measure my success by whether or not this is being a fully democratic classroom or a fully anti-racist curriculum I'm going to feel permanently depressed. I just have to understand that this is something you always have to keep working towards.

Bonni: [00:21:28] One of the approaches that you recommend sounds really counter-intuitive and I'm wondering in terms of how this might have shocked people you've talked to about it in the past. How might we normalize racism.

Stephen: [00:21:43] So I'd use that word normalizing racism. And I was actually this podium last week and a colleague of mine suggested the term naturalizing racism which also was an alternative and viable. What I mean by that is I think one of the reasons why white. I'm speaking about white colleagues and students here don't want to get into discussions of race is because they fear a moment of shameful confession when they have to talk about a racist action or a racist thought or a time when they were accused of being racist and they just don't they fear that moment of confession. It's well Michelle Foucault talks about his confessional practices which are very common in human affairs these days.

Stephen: [00:22:45] So what I'm trying to do by saying we need to normalize racism is to just communicate to white students and colleagues that it would be very very strange if we didn't grow up with a degree of white supremacist ideology embedded within us because that is the ideology that's been transmitted. We've been acculturated to it. We've been socialized into it. We've been soaked in white supremacy. We are naturally expecting people in authority to be white and haven't had many examples when that's being counted.

[00:23:28] So not to have racist elements of white supremacy in you would be really really weird. So I'm trying to get across to them you know having this within you it's not a matter of shame or something you need to beat your breast about it and feel guilty about and constantly apologize for. It's just very very normal. Most white people grow up with these elements embedded in their consciousness but they were unaware of that. So what I often say is my function is to show people that this is just an everyday widespread way that whites perceive the world and that whenever that manifests itself in your thoughts and actions it's not something you should think of as a sign of your essential inhumanity or air or immorality or anything else. It's normal. So it's unremarkable really. So let's not make a big thing about it. Instead let's get interested in trying to document the ways that we've noticed it appearing in our lives and and one when the whole ideology of show up has shown up.

Stephen: [00:24:58] So when I say normalising racism I don't obviously mean making a racist structure seem normal. I mean the opposite of that. I'm trying to get to the opposite of that. But I'm I'm trying to help people understand that feeling elements of racism is very normal and natural thing. And and they shouldn't immediately become overwhelmed with shame and guilt about it.

Bonni: [00:25:27] One of the things I think I hear you saying although I don't know if I just hear myself saying what is in the importance of actually being able to name things I found when I would teach Principles of Marketing students would have a really hard time even just using names for different ethnicities to say Latino or Latina or to talk about African-American and that kind of guy. Oh gosh do we say African-American or is that black. And and even just trying to teach a vocabulary albeit clumsy because that's not like there's a master dictionary of respect to something respectful ways of referring to other people who are different than us.

Bonni: [00:26:07] But then I also hear you talking about just that it doesn't have to be that all of a sudden you go and you become an absolute named racist because you inflicted micro aggression without realizing it and not having that intent and how can we ever get you to become more aware if we don't lessen that shame like you talked about and lessen the guilt a little bit. So I hear a little bit of just naming things and then also that if we talk about them it doesn't have to mean you're just forever going to be a terrible person. But there's movement there's room for growth.

Stephen: [00:26:42] Yeah. Yeah that's exactly it. So the point of naming certain behaviors is to help you become a little bit more alert in the future. When you

start slipping into those same behaviors. And so you start noticing things that are happening in closets that have things that are happening in faculty meetings or in professional conferences in seminars or panels or and so on.

Stephen: [00:27:11] So yes the intent is just to name some of the things that are happening so that you can watch out for them with a little bit more of a raised consciousness and allow us that thing about how we name groups. I mean that's one of the things that whites like myself I've done this. We agonize over getting it right. Getting the nomenclature correct. And because we don't want to sound disrespectful and be called a racist. And so we're terrified of saying the wrong thing. And I think that terror saying the wrong thing is what shuts a lot of white students and white faculty down when they're in a multi racial group because they don't want to be called racist or think of themselves as racist. But if you just get across the idea well you know if you're going to define racism as learning an ideology without realizing that that has happened then you are going to do a lot of racist things. But it has no bearing on your essential character. It's just a manifestation of the success of ideological conditioning so naming them and being more alert is the short term project. I think that certainly for me I'd say that that's a big thing of what I'm trying to do in my own teaching.

Bonni: [00:28:51] What is a micro aggression and could you give us a few examples that either you've encountered or observed or are perhaps even inflicted?

Stephen: [00:29:00] Yes, a a micro aggression a something that was first developed in the first named in the 70s or more recently Darold when you see a teacher's college huhs has written several influential books on this and online you see this little instructional videos he's he's giving on this.

Stephen: [00:29:19] So micro aggression is a small behavior. Maybe it's why you direct your eye contact in a meeting. Maybe it's the choice of a particular word. Maybe it's how you notice hands going up in a room and who you call on in class.

Stephen: [00:29:43] So a micro aggression is this small almost remarkable action that you take not the receiver when they're on the other end of it is often left wondering well if someone trying to disrespect me here. Are you trying to insult me or am I just imagining this. So it's not an over you know a racist slur or telling someone to shut up. It's a much more covert and unintentional action that has the same effect as telling someone overtly to shut up.

[00:30:26] So I'm chairing a meeting and I disproportionately favor the men in the group or the whites in the group then in effect I'm shutting people up. But I'm doing it in the quote unquote loving way. You know and not intentionally trying to keep people quiet. In fact I think I'm running the meeting with transparency and honesty. So these are very slippery little things. And as I say the receiver is often left wondering well planned Was that intentional and when the actor is confronted with a micro direction he or she will usually strenuously deny that anything has happened. And often people of the dominant culture will die even to save the person the an actor by trying to convince the receiver by saying no no you're imagining it. It's not really a big deal it was just a momentary lapse forget helpfulness.

Stephen: [00:31:31] So an example of this that I like to use quite a bit is I I was teaching a class a while ago and we were discussing a particular issue in class and I asked all the students to go around and each of them quickly gave me that position on the issue. So we did this and then I finished up by saying well it seems that you know from from what you've said the main questions you have about this topic are a and b you know summarizing this discussion and the white woman in the class raised our hand and said that we haven't heard from and she named among students in the class and I was totally astonished and said Oh I'm I'm very sorry about that. So you know what would you like to say and I turned to this woman invited her to give her contribution and then I went away. We took a break and I was thinking in the break this seems to me a real example of a micro aggression. So I did something completely unaware and unintentionally but that was probably received by this particular monk students as exclusionary and a way of silencing her just not acknowledging a valuable contribution.

Stephen: [00:33:08] So I came back into the class and I said just before we go on with class I wanted to say that I think what you just witnessed before the break was out of the commission of a micro aggression on my part and that I had no idea that I had excluded anyone and I did not come to class thinking I must make sure that so-and-so doesn't speak but if I hadn't been challenged by it on this by the white woman who spoke up I would have gone on happily without ever realising that anything was untoward. And in response to that a couple of white students said as is very predictable with my micro agresions, Oh don't be so hard on yourself Professor Brookfield one student said you just had a brain fart. It's late. We all had moments of forgetfulness. You know really don't don't read so much into it.

Stephen: [00:34:05] And then the young woman spoke out and said this has happened to me in pretty much every one of the classes I've taken here at The University of St. Thomas which is my employing institution. And she said at some point I felt that something that happened in class that has somehow shut me out from being able to voice my contribution or my opinion. So for me that that's a great example of a micro aggression and hopefully also it's an indication of the way that a classroom teacher have been mindful of the sorts of things can catch them and check in with the group. So I think you become better once you're aware of these my or aggressions of being on a higher alert for them and checking in with receivers on the effects that your actions are having.

Bonni: [00:35:14] I hear two themes and what you're saying one is that we are part of a larger system. And you said that but I have to break it for my own mind. So we're part of patterns and if it had just happened once then it probably wouldn't be a big deal. But one of the things that Yolanda Flores Neeman shared. She's one of the co-authors of a book called Presumed Incompetent and one of the things that both from reading that book and also getting to interview her really struck me is it is these patterns that makes it it's I think the expression is death by a thousand cuts is that the expression? Would you talk a bit about anger, how anger has shaped your thinking and reactions to racial differences.

Stephen: [00:35:58] Well, as a teacher, one of the things I'm very interested what whatever area I'm teaching in is why students are reluctant to learn something. And so in the school teacher I had a whole chapter analyzing possible causes of resistance and reluctance. And our teachers should respond to those.

Stephen: [00:36:21] And when it comes to teaching about race and racism one of the reasons why I think students are reluctant to engage in those conversations is because there is this fear that the conversation will get out of control that strong emotions will be expressed that people will start to cry. And in particular people will get angry. And for white students it's the fear that students of color will get angry with you for that racism.

Stephen: [00:37:03] And for students of color it's the fear that white students will get angry with them for playing the race card and seeing race where it isn't really that. So there's this fear of anger is I think a very strong inhibitor to getting discussions about race going and it's not usually overtly expressed. So it's not like students say well I don't want to talk about this because I'm afraid of getting angry although I have heard that occasionally but mostly it's silent fear. Bell Hooks talks about the way that bourgeois decorum is how she describes it, rules

in American higher education so the idea is that classrooms are places of calm reason and that in applying reason because that's what academics do. Intellectuals do their reasoning beings. In applying this there really is no place for emotion. And if you get emotional you've somehow fallen off this academic pedestal.

Stephen: [00:38:21] And so she says this bourgeois decorum notion is rare that gets in the way when you're looking at very contentious issues rooted in serious personal experiences of people and that of course anger is going to be part and parcel of people authentically talking particularly about being on the receiving end of racism or on what they see what brought on being in their minds unfairly accused of being racist.

Stephen: [00:39:00] So one of the things I'm interested in is how do you prep students for sustained expressions of anger and how they realize that in this kind of conversation that's probably going to happen. And you know there are a couple of ways that you can do this. One is to use this idea of the brave space classroom rather than the safe space classroom.

Stephen: [00:39:31] And in a brave space classroom the focus is on challenging. You know we're here to challenge rather than to make to reassure. And so we know that we will have been successful when we start to feel uncomfortable and why some of our comfortable assumptions are being questioned. And so there are various guidelines on how to create brave space classrooms and ground rules in the way you described this in the syllabus I use deliberately specific discussion protocols that allow for and expect a sustained expression of anger. So so one of them is a Bohmian dialogue it's a particular way of having people express what they're feeling. And one of the ground rules is that nobody can challenge the validity of someone's expression of deep feeling. You can talk about how that expression impacts you and your own responses to it but you can challenge or deny it.

Stephen: [00:40:51] And I like that ground rule because I've had students of color say to me that when they talk about the racism that they see around them and that they've personally experienced white students often try and talk them out of it and say well no that really wasn't racism that kind of like the Mike our aggression thing that was just you know forgetfulness on the TV.

Stephen: [00:41:16] So I think and I talk about this in a book I published last year the discussion book I read with Steve Fresco which has a lot of different

techniques for running conversations. I feel that discussions about race need to be carefully structured and you don't just kind of breathe into them.

Stephen: [00:41:35] That has to be attention to ground rules either through grade space guidelines or through something like the Bohmian dialogue approach. So and then I was going to say the third thing around the expression of anger I think is to model your own willingness to sit with expressions of anger first. Now it's hard to say to a colleague of collop, come in and express your anger to me in front of the group.

Stephen: [00:42:12] That seems a little contrived to me. Maybe maybe it went on piqued when I'm teaching in multi-racial groups. Maybe this will happen which which is fantastic opportunity to model this but what I'll often do is use video in which people of color are expressing their experiences extremely angrily and strongly and at that video and just play that and then say to the group you know let's not move straight into conversation here. Let's just sit with this expression of anger. And if you're not from that racial minority think about the experiences that might have informed it if you can think of things that you've witnessed in your personal life that might also explain some of the anger that you just witnessed. Think about that too. And then often all you know do that for a couple of minutes and then I'll ask a question. But I'll say I don't want anyone to speak about this question either I'd like you to just do a 90 second free write in response or I'll use the today's meet to today's meet as a web site I use and every one of my classes. Todaysmeet.com and it's an open access back channel of communication in which students can anonymously post their responses so I'll ask the question on and off and I'll say you know take 90 seconds and post your response on today's meeting and then we'll be able to see what everyone has been making of this expression of anger that we've just witnessed on videotape.

Stephen: [00:44:13] So that's about the best right now that I can come up with in terms of protecting students for this I'm modeling doing it myself.

Stephen: [00:44:25] But you know it's going to happen so I guess I need to let people know this is in store and I don't regard that as copping out or you know allowing students to talk about it because that's not what's happening. It's more helping them realize what's going to be happening in the future and preparing themselves for it emotionally.

Bonni: [00:44:51] Before we get to the recommendations segment, is there anything you want to make sure that we talk about before we sort of switch subjects but sort of not.

Stephen: [00:44:58] Well I would say the one thing sort of ontological thing I'd say about just the nature of being in this kind of work is that I always feel I screw up every time I do this I feel very conflicted about whether I've done anything meritorious.

Stephen: [00:45:21] And I'll usually leave a discussion or a class or a workshop wishing that I could rewind the video tape and think of things I should have done and said you know what when I'm back home that evening. So I think we're all just struggling to make our way through this muddling through in an informed way as I'd like to say in the skillful teacher. And I don't think there is a template that we can follow. I don't think there is a manual or a set of precise guidelines. I think all we can do is talk to each other about how when negotiating those struggles from positions of feeling like impostors and relatively inexperienced. And even though I've been doing this for quite a few years I still feel you know completely inexperienced in no way am I an expert on that. I may have more years making mistakes but that's about the most that I can say about it.

Bonni: [00:46:29] This is the point in this show where we get to the recommendations and a former podcast guest Rob Park had recommended The Code Switch podcast. There's a wonderful episode that they did recently on it I guess it's a continuing part of a series of episodes they're doing on the sanctuary movement.

Bonni: [00:46:48] And this is showing up in sanctuary schools. But this particular episode is looking at sanctuary churches and what I really liked about the episode was twofold. It really helped me become more informed about the sanctuary movement and specifically about some hard choices that churches are having to make in terms of all of this but the second half of the episode really looked at storytelling and of course if we're going to want to be advocating for issues like protecting people who are undocumented in our country then we're going to want to tell their stories. But of course when we tell their stories then it puts them at risk.

Bonni: [00:47:31] And I just thought it was a fascinating look at storytelling. And one of the hosts there Adrian talks to a woman named Jeanette Vizguerra and she's living inside of a Colorado church. And she is fighting a legal deportation

battle. And he talks to her and some of the risks that she's deciding to take. And of course the church there is navigating all of this and I thought it was really fascinating too because she's still trying to manage all the aspects of her home that she can't do while living in this church and trying to make sure her kids are getting to school and making sure that people she relies on are picking her up and some of the story actually relates back to what Stephen what you were talking about previously about being a white ally and because some of the people who help her are white is just a really really interesting story.

Bonni: [00:48:19] I learned a lot and I loved the way that they were so respectful of the really difficult choices that people are making in this area. Stephen, what do you have to recommend today?

Stephen: [00:48:29] My recommendation is often times when I'm working with faculty as well as students I'll get requests from people who say you know we'd really like to get more intensely involved in this work. Are local groups that we can join in. And so you know people know all the Black Lives Matter groups hopefully that are in their local town or city. But I'd like them to mention another group which is called SURJ. The initials are S U R J. SURJ and the acronym is Stand Up for Racial Justice particularly for whites who are you know coming to a great commitment to work in this area.

Stephen: [00:49:27] The SURJ groups are a very good resource. They're a national network. And so you know they will be out Black Lives Matter protests and a lot of that work is on how whites can become more aware of their own white racial identity while allies shift meanings and all the things that we've talked about.

Bonni: [00:49:52] Wonderful. It sounds like a terrific organization. I will definitely check it out and we'll be linking to everything in the show notes which will be at teachinginhighered.com/147. And Steve thank you so much for joining me for this hard and important conversation. And you've just inspired me and I appreciate your transparency in all of this well.

Stephen: [00:50:14] Thank you so much Bonnie and I. I look forward to hearing from anyone. You can contact me directly via my home page which is just StephenBrookfield.com. My name all one word, StevenBrookfield.com. . and you can e-mail me directly from there. So I'd love to hear from people who have any follow up comments or questions.

Bonni: [00:50:38] Thanks so much.

Bonni: [00:50:41] It's wonderful having Stephen back on the show to talk about these important topics. If you haven't listened to Episode 15. Which he was on previously or episode 98 I'd suggest you go check those out and just thanks again for his wonderful contribution and thanks to all of you for listening.

Bonni: [00:50:59] These are really important conversations for us to have about our teaching. If you'd like to comment on this episode you may do so at teachinginhighered.com/147. If you're looking for a little bit more of a private way of engaging we do have a group that's set up you can go to teachinginhighered.com/slack to find out more.

Bonni: [00:51:19] And to join us in those somewhat more private conversations that are out there for all the world to see in the comments section. I'm really looking forward to our continued conversations. We've got episode 150 coming up here in just a few and it's going to be an all recommendations episode so get ready for that see ya next time.

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