

### Looking Within

By Becky Calzada

I recently read the book, *I'm Still Here* by Austin Channing Brown; in this powerful and very personal account, she shares nine words a fellow white student shared after a class field trip to visit a plantation: "Doing nothing is no longer an option for me" (2018, p. 58). Those words speak powerfully to the current call to action many librarians have answered and engaged in. The political climate has opened up gaping realities and truths about our country's racism that has entered into our schools and libraries. Knowing many of our students in our district felt fearful was unacceptable for me. Doing nothing was no longer an option for me.

In "Flowing through Change," Anita Cellucci nudges us "to move forward through consistent, thoughtful, and intentional practice." She acknowledges how overwhelming the work can be but shares how viewing interactions with compassion motivates her to shift her practice slowly. Nancy Jo Lambert shares her learning journey and application to her practice in "Equity, Race, and Reflection." Our library spaces have always been spaces of refuge for many but our spaces and collection also provide an opportunity for much more. Being kind and teaching kids to be kind isn't enough; it requires us to be strategic and intentional in our own learning and professional growth. So I'm launching this space with a focus on personal introspection. This subtopic offers subscribers several resources to delve into and consider the interpersonal work that must be done.

"Services for Black Youth Lesson 8: Getting Started in Your Library" by Sandra Hughes-Hassell and Casey Rawson is a webinar with helpful guidance along with a bibliography filled with some incredible resources to expand your learning even more. The infographic, "Restorative Justice Explained" by Rebecca J. Morris showcases how librarians can impact their programs by establishing a mindset that views all children as valuable. In "Underserved Populations: We have the Power to Imagine Better," Anita Cellucci challenges us to consider underserved populations and shares 10 ways librarians can focus on making improvements. And finally, in "Librarians As Paradigm Shifters for Justice," Maisha T. Winn reminds us of our charge as a conduit of profound possibility for all we serve.

And be sure to visit Project READY (<http://projectready.web.unc.edu>). The Project READY website is an incredibly robust website with online professional development modules for school librarians that will improve your knowledge about race and racism, racial equity, and culturally sustaining pedagogy.

As you review all of these resources, consider the following reflective questions:

- What were the new ideas you came across? Which ones will you carry into your practice or implement into your program?
- What were ideas you struggled or wrestled with? Why were these ideas difficult for you?
- What are you more curious about? What additional resources will you seek out?
- What did you discover about yourself as you read through all the resources?

I recently had the chance to take the StrengthsFinders quiz by Gallup and Tom Rath; my number one strength was learner. I've discovered my deliberate journey to competence excites me but also has the potential to exhaust and overwhelm me. I've also discovered all this learning doesn't make me the subject matter expert; my desire to learn and be a catalyst for change in my district and profession motivates me and keeps me energized to improve and continue learning and working for the benefit of all I come in contact with. I hope it does the same for you!

#### Works Cited

Channing Brown, Austin. *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*. Convergent Books, 2018.

Rath, Tom. *Strengthsfinder 2.0*. CliftonStrengths version. ed. Gallup Press, 2017.

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