A True White Ally

Through action and from a place of respect, Shannon let me know that she stands firmly by my side as a genuine friend.

August 31, 2021 By Megan-Claire Chase

I received You Are Your Best Thing: An Anthology edited by Tarana Burke and Brené Brown and card from my lovely, supportive, and compassionate friend Shannon earlier this week. The Black authors who contributed to this anthology are extraordinary and so raw in sharing their experiences of being Black in this society. It has taken almost the entire week before I had the right headspace to begin reading it.

I feel an avalanche of emotions topple over me after reading the introduction and the first four stories. My head is spinning, tears drying, and heart is still pounding.

I must thank Shannon for sending this to me because it is not something I would've bought on my own. To be honest, seeing Brené Brown's name on it made me hesitant to even open it at first. Once I read the introduction, I appreciated that Brené acknowledged that some Black people would feel this way and she and Tarana addressed the reason for this collaboration and both explained the dynamics of their friendship.

The fact is, Shannon reads my blog, my social media posts, and takes time to check on me and really talk to me about racism and how she's worked toward acknowledging her own white privilege. She's heard the brokenness in my voice, has seen the pain and exhaustion on my face, and continues to reassure me that she IS a safe white ally and genuine friend.

She knew I needed a different kind of support and keenly aware that she should not be that person for obvious reasons. I've expressed countless times through conversations and through my writing that I don't have many Black friends and have always struggled with accepting my own Blackness and experiences. It's what prompted the blog piece I wrote called Mixed Fragility last year. Much of my existence has been where I am the only Black person in the room, in the company, at the table or on the stage.

2020 was a pivotal year for me because it's the first time I truly began to be afraid to drive alone, live alone, go into the store alone. I also felt a newfound sense of rage and brokenness that differs from all my previous feelings and entered a period of wanting to rise up and express the hurt and confusion I continuously feel for being in this skin.

I'm about to make another cup of chai tea and read a few more chapters because this is the first

time I can honestly fully relate to parts of these Black experiences shared. These Black authors are exceptional, and I can feel a tender pull of togetherness and understanding from their words. I used to think I was the only one who felt such rage, self-hate, and shame.

Through action and from a place of respect, Shannon let me know that she stands firmly by my side as not only a white ally and anti-racist, but also as a genuine friend.

Courtesy of Megan-Claire Chase

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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