

Ep #325: The Courage to Lead an Antiracist School with Dr. Daman Harris



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With Your Host

Angela Kelly

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Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 325.

Welcome to *The Empowered Principal® Podcast*, a not so typical educational resource that will teach you how to gain control of your career and get emotionally fit to lead your school and your life with joy by refining your most powerful tool, your mind. Here's your host certified life coach Angela Kelly Robeck.

Angela: Well, hello, my power leaders. Happy Tuesday. Welcome to the podcast. Boy do I have a very special guest here with you today. Daman Harris, he is the author of *The Antiracist School Leader* book that was published by Solution Tree. The reason that Daman and I became connected was through a connection at Solution Tree. Her name was Jamila. We're so happy she connected us.

I'm honored to have him on this podcast today because this is a topic that I don't speak of personally because it's not my wheelhouse. It's not my area of expertise. Obviously, as a white woman, as a white educator, it's not my place to actually teach this content, but I feel very passionate about it. I worked in a school that was extremely diverse.

I felt really blessed. I felt like we had a lot of training, professional development, and conversations around equity and inclusion and diversity and ways that we could take note of how we were engaging on a daily basis.

Antiracism is something I consider to be like a mindset practice and a daily practice. It's not a one and done. You don't become and then you're evolved. You are always growing and learning and evolving. There's more things to learn about more things to discuss. Daman is here today to have that conversation with us. So Daman, thank you so much for your time today.

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Dr. Harris: I'm excited to be here, Angela, thank you so much.

Angela: Oh, welcome, welcome. We're just going to dive right in. I'm going to turn it over to you and let you introduce yourself and tell the story that you shared with me earlier this week and how this book came to existence.

Dr. Harris: Gotcha. So, again, my name is Daman Harris, and I am, during the day, I am the manager of the Professional Development School's program in Higher Education Partnerships in Arundel County, Maryland, which is between Baltimore and DC. We border Baltimore. We are a school district of about 85,000 kids and 125 schools or so. Schools and school districts in Maryland tend to be a little big.

During the evening hours, I guess my superhero mark, I am a co-director of a nonprofit that supports efforts to recruit, retain, develop, and empower Black and Latino men in education is called the Building Our Network of Diversity project or BOND project. We are centered in Maryland as well. We call it the DC, Maryland, Virginia area or the DMV as a lot of folks know it locally.

So we also have something coming up next month. It will be in April. It will be the Bond Academy. So our yearly conference. You can go to bondeducators.org to find out more about that.

I also do a lot of work. I've had in 28 years in public education, I've been in a bunch of different roles, like most of your Empowered Principal® audience. So I've been the principal, I've been an assistant principal, I've been a school coach, I've been a district coach, I've been a bunch of different things, adjunct professor of graduate studies in a couple of different places. So I've gotten in to see a lot of different schools and a lot of different districts and engage with a bunch of different folks.

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Over the years, I got into what folks call now and I guess called a little bit then equity work right around 2001. When I travel around to talk about this work, I am in whatever role, whatever capacity I'm serving at the moment, I still run into the same issues of equity. My reading led me to believe and my other anecdotal experiences with conversations with other folks have led me to believe that there are some things that we haven't been touching on with respect to equity, at least not reckoning with them hard enough. Brene Brown, like wrestling with them, these issues hard enough.

It is what's causing some issues that are sort of common threads throughout the work that we see as educators. I'll give you an example that what you and I talked about in the past was to sort of have, and it's a chapter in the book, a passage in the book that there's a graphic. I'm going try to give a visual to the audience.

Like to imagine a multi-line graph, right. Those line graphs that show change over time, and you have five different lines. They're sort of in a hierarchy going across. We think about this line graph over the years as positive outcomes in schools. So, and now we're going to think of each of those lines as a racial or ethnic group.

You can look, without even thinking, if you have that visual in your mind of four or five lines going across in a hierarchy demonstrating positive outcomes in schools. Folks already know, in your mind, which racial or ethnic groups are in which position without having the lines labeled. We know that to be the case. We feel it. We see it in our own context.

Now, if you do the same graph but change the topic to something negative, like dropout rates or suspensions or [inaudible] at the elementary school level. Now, you see those same lines, you know who's at the top. You know who's somewhere else and where we fall.

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What I said to myself over time, and what I said to my staff when I was a principal, is these demographic hierarchies, the stagnant demographic hierarchies have been the same for 100 years. We've changed a lot of things in our school and in our district in the last 10 years, in the last 20 years, or more, but these hierarchies remain.

We either have to believe that this is more because of the deficits of our kids and our families, or that there's a system. It's more about the system that is recreating this. It's not just the educational system, but that's where we have the most influence.

Angela: Yes.

Dr. Harris: If you, for now, I choose to believe that is the latter. That systems do what they're created to do, what they're designed to, whether we state it that way or not. So I believe that the thing we haven't reckoned with enough, we haven't wrestled with enough is the impact of racism and white supremacy on the teaching and learning and just the overall construct of ours.

So my staff, we had like collective light bulbs going off as we were going through these issues. But go around and talk to folks about this type of work, I'd use antiracism, specifically and not just equity. But when I go around and talk about this work, some folks have a light bulb all go off as well. Or they say I've already had that light bulb. What I don't know is what do I do next?

So how do I now get my school to this spot, to an antiracist spot. I talk about in the book or just in general about this is not an endpoint type of activity or phenomena. This is an orientation or reorientation in a certain direction. Then moving that way as often as possible. Work.

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So that's why I wrote the book because I had these conversations with dozens if not hundreds of folks, not hundred folks plus. So I thought a book, there was an audience for this work. Now, I do know the last thing I'd say in that because I can run off at the mouth. I've been known to do that.

Angela: It's you're passionate.

Dr. Harris: Oh, I forgot what I was going to say. Oh, I do know that title. *The Antiracist School Leader*. Using the word antiracist in the chapter title is going to move half the country away from this work.

Angela: Yes.

Dr. Harris: And I get it. What I hope is that is not a half of the state, like a whole state. Half of a state perhaps. But now we can get some of those folks who are in those states where the half was split to start doing some of this work and bringing all of their family members, all of our family members in this country to work collectively.

Angela: Yes. That's why the title of this podcast is the courage to lead an antiracist school. Because the hardest first step, in my opinion, from my seat on this bus is being a white person, having to understand just the definitions and the language around it, reading it and understanding the difference between different words and how interestingly you said we can talk about it in terms of equity, and everybody's very comfortable with the word equity. We can use that word and kind of put it out there professionally and feel safe.

But you say we're going to lead an antiracist school, whoa. That has another emotional charge to it. It's about leaning into that discomfort to educate yourself, to actually become more comfortable. Now all of a sudden, when you understand what antiracist and antiracism is and your effort to be an antiracist school, what you see is that you're actually leaning

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in to what you want, which is equity, building equity, understanding equity, and creating platforms for equity, even at the smallest amount.

Like one person isn't going to change an entire institution, a system that's been built by tons of people. But we can do, at the micro level, things every single day. The way we make decisions, the way we hold conversations, the way that we communicate, the way we set up our vision, those little things with mindfulness. As you said, chapter one is all about educating yourself and committing to this movement. This way of being, I should say. It's not just a movement. I feel like it it's a way of existing in the world. That starts with you internally.

Dr. Harris: Absolutely. Folks, sometimes we get a little nervous about using the word racism or antiracism instead of equity, in part because sometimes we can feel like, and sometimes it's actually true that we get unfairly judged, right. So we say hey, if I say the wrong thing, I'll be labeled as racist. Then now people will treat me like a pariah in my community. So I don't want to engage in that type of work.

That shouldn't be the case. Or we have to make, as leaders, we have to cultivate a psychologically safe environments where folks know that they can make mistakes. It doesn't mean that because you said a certain thing, or even if you have a certain viewpoint, it doesn't mean that you are an evil person, an immoral person. You lack intelligence, or you don't have the information. None of that stuff isn't necessary with us having opposing points of view.

We just have different life experiences that brought us to have different perspectives. When we share those, each of us, not just the two of us, but all of us on this team. We share our different perspectives, our ideas are stronger. Everybody benefits.

Angela: Yes.

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Dr. Harris: So it's okay to engage in this work. It's necessary to be uncomfortable. That's where the growth comes. We know that as principals, as school leaders. You know that audience that nobody grows in spaces where they're totally comfortable. Let's figure out a way where we can hold hands and do this walk together. Get some collective life experiences that will shape both of our perspectives.

Angela: Yes, that's one thing I really enjoyed that you shared with me the other day was I was asking you how, especially if you're a white person leading a school, especially a diverse school. You want your students to be treated equitably and to have the opportunity to succeed and to change some of those lines on that graph.

You were sharing about, I asked you how does a leader start? Where do they start? We talked about it starting internally, but you said something about creating space, like a safe space, where the conversation becomes relatable. I loved that. Can you share more about that? Like how leaders can create relatability amongst staff to order to create that safe space to have those conversations.

Dr. Harris: Definitely, in some ways, and this is, I write a little bit about this in chapter four, which is encouraging and embracing resistance to this work. Like I said before, when you get people to poke holes in your ideas and poke holes in your logic, it makes your ideas stronger. So you should invite all of that type of work.

If you have people, particularly people on your team like your stakeholders, if you have those folks who care enough to give opposing points of view. Now you've got you got a team you can work with. You've got a team that can grow together. That's what you want.

Now, if you had the focus, kind of like being a romantic relationships. The worst thing that the opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is

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indifference. So like if you have people that are like ambivalent, they are just indifferent to the work, disengaged, now you've got a problem. The problem isn't that people that push back. You need those folks on your team.

So one of the pieces that I write about in chapter four, there's a table there, and there on page one to 22 where I list here are some potential expressions of resistance. People express a disbelief in anti-dark racism, right. So what do I do about that? Or people shout cliches in public forums. What do I do about that?

People feel like they can't make mistakes. So I don't want to engage in his work because I don't want to be labeled racist. Well, what do I do about that? Right. In chapter four, I lay out a couple of countermoves that people can use when they engage in some of that type of stuff.

Now, before I say the one that you describe where you said what if people say I don't really see the racism. What can I do with that? I'll come back to that one. I need to start with what are we doing when people put stuff on social media about it?

So here's my recommendation. Ignore them. That is that. Fred Jones and his book *Tools for Teaching* that he wrote back in the early 90s. Fred Jones said, and he wrote about discipline issues. But he said, if you are lured by an emotional, gored into an emotional exchange by a student in his case, but for me, someone who's clearly disinterested in any productive outcome. Then if you engage in that activity, you are agreeing to be a costar in a play that is written, produced, directed, and marketed by the provocateur.

Angela: That's so good.

Dr. Harris: Don't take the bait. Fred was saying that three decades ago. So I'm urging folks to do that now because that is where we spend too much of

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our time is chasing shadows in social media. But to come back to when folks say I've got to know some individuals can be racist, but I don't know if the whole system can be set out to be racist. I don't know if I believe that.

In my case, I had a staff that are majority were white women from upper middle class, which was pretty much the demographic sort of nationally how it plays out in schools. What I was able to do is have a conversation with some of them and say hey, you've seen sexism and misogyny out there.

They say yeah, of course. You can see. You can tell. They name different examples. Look at the Fortune 500 or look at our school districts in terms of the leaders that write our checks. We are mostly female staff, but mostly majority male administration. There's just a bunch of different roadblocks along the way. You can cry, Daman, and it's cool and endearing. If I cry, then it's not. It's weakness and being driven by emotion. All those things can be true.

I said, and I can't see those as well as you because those are obstacles that I don't face, which is why I ask you to help me see those things. How we work to counteract those things that are happening to you and our female babies that are here in our schools. It's the same. It's analogous to racism. It's hard for us to see the obstacles we don't face.

Angela: Right. But it doesn't mean it's not there.

Dr. Harris: Right. Then we can work together to engage with folks who have experienced that and work on it together.

Angela: Yes. That's why I love chapter one is all about like familiarizing yourself, and you gave resources of places people could go to get started. Here's what I think about that. There are facts out in the world. There's statistics. There's data. Just like you can prove in a court of law that sexism

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exists. Whether you believe it is a different thing. But there are facts out there that indicate people behaved in a way under the influence of sexism. The same is true for racism.

You might not feel like you're acting out of racism, or you might not believe in racism, but there are facts out in the world separate from your beliefs that indicate acts that hinder student success. That have nothing to do with their intelligence. That have everything to do with the color of their skin and the way that they look. It goes on and on. The ways that the brain will identify people.

I just I want to make that clear that there are facts out in the world. Then there are your beliefs about those facts. Those are separate. That's what we're talking about. You can sit and argue whether there are facts are not facts and get into this engagement with people that you're not going to find productive or fruitful. Those are not your people.

The people you want to work with at your school, think about it. There's always a teacher on campus who is the negative. Like the no thank you. I'm going to be a struggle to work with. That's not your go to person. When you're starting these conversations, you go to the people who they already believe in the facts. They already see them. They already support them. They might not know the next steps, but you're not fighting an uphill battle on a belief system based on facts and the interpretation of those facts.

Dr. Harris: There are facts that are present in every school district that are particular to the local context. I'll give some examples. These aren't actual statistics for anybody's school district in the audit. But I'm giving a couple of examples of how these facts could be partially the result of or primarily the result of problematic policies that are part of the system that are baked into what we do that lead to racially disparate outcomes.

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If a school says, I don't know what our data is related to this then it's on you now to go and search that out. Now you know that you need to be doing this type of work. Let's find out. So for instance, maybe there is 26% of Asian students might reply to an end of year climate survey that indicates that they don't feel personally connected to the content and the curriculum.

Problematic policy. Si that's a fact. That's a data point. Now problematic policy, there could be school curricula aren't and instructional practices or the materials of instruction aren't regularly audited for cultural relevance and racial representation.

So if that's a part of your system, then that's why that outcome that could be a part, a big part of why that outcome is there. So if you don't know if your Asian students feel connected to the curriculum because you haven't asked, somebody in your district needs to ask. If not, because that's a part of the system. That's what I'm talking about.

If we say 35% of our Hispanic caregivers don't attend parent conferences when school staff conduct everything in English. If these are non-English speakers. They conduct everything in English. They do everything during the school day, a nine to five or nine to six window.

So, again, those are problematic policies that lead to racially or ethnically disparate outcomes. If you don't know that data, go find out about your school or your district. That's the work. So yes, you can ignore some of these data points, but it's willful at this point.

Angela: It is willful, and it's also it doesn't serve you or your vision. Even if your vision doesn't include antiracism necessarily, let's say it includes equity. Most of them include equity, which, like antiracism is how you get to creating more equitable schools.

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But if you are like looking at that data and looking for how can we make this better. Start with your RTI. Look at your RTI kids, look at your SPED kids. There's data that's going to tell you what's going on in those two groups. But it behooves you as a leader, your vision to move your school forward, to have more students working on and above grade level, this is the work that gets you there.

Because those children need us to look at that data and to interpret it in a way that's like what is going on here. I feel like we keep trying the same thing over and over expecting different results. We know that's insanity. But yet here we are putting the same kids in RTI, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, and then we say RTI is not working. Or these kids just, we've got to put them into, I guess they need special ed.

Is it that? Or is it the system that we're implementing within our school? I'm saying what's in our control within the system of our school? That is where this courageous conversation can take place. Look, this kid has been in for three years. It's not the kid. It's our system.

Dr. Harris: Right. This kid knows every lyric to every Taylor Swift song. How can I kid know that, but that kid can't read?

Angela: Yes.

Dr. Harris: So yes, the kid can. We're not making the connections that are necessary for this kid to thrive.

Angela: Here's the other thing I want to say about this. Like having been a school leader of a very diverse school, I had to sit in meetings that were uncomfortable and have conversations about curriculum and engagement and certain strategies that we use in our classrooms that are deemed best practice, but best practice for whom?

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It tends to be best practice for the kids who are already being successful. Because if kids aren't being successful, then to me, that's not a best practice. I, as the school principal, had to be able to say my teacher was taught to use these best practices, but I'm just saying these best practices might not actually be best practice for everyone on our campus.

What would it look like for these children to have best practice? Like what does that look like for them and just having that conversation and being okay. You're not at fault. I think this is the thing like we're afraid to have this conversation because we're scared we've done it wrong. We're going to be in trouble. People are not going to like us, or there's some big scary social negative outcome that will occur. But the truth is the opposite. It actually opens us up to deeper connection, deeper conversations, and actually becoming a better educator.

Dr. Harris: Absolutely. It's analogous to what we tell our students.

Angela: Right.

Dr. Harris: It's okay to make mistakes. You have to try some new things, engage with some new folks, learn what we call that that effective effort. We know we're working hard. Now let's use some strategies that we can add to that hard work that, we can leverage that to make even greater gains.

It's okay if we mess up. We learned the wrong way. Now we do it a little differently the next time. It'd be the same thing with our students. We tell our students we will be here. If you mess up, we are right here with you all the way along. We're going to do the same for each other.

Angela: Yes, yes. Yeah, because this isn't about creating a culture of blame, but it's also not about abdicating. It's like taking ownership and

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responsibility. But as a collective ownership, collective responsibility versus isolated blame or responsibility.

This isn't an individual problem to solve. This is a community or collaborative, a cohesive problem to solve that together. I love when you said like when people poke holes, it just makes your ideas stronger. That is so true because it helps you see, and I'm a coach. I'm a life and leadership coach for school leaders. So what I do is I help people.

I think about you're driving a car, but you have no mirrors, and you can only see this way. Then these conversations are the mirrors to help you see somebody coming in on the side. The police on, what's happening, right?

Dr. Harris: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Angela: Yeah, yeah. So the collective whole is about us putting on as many mirrors as possible to see all the angles, all the perspectives. Then when you have that level of vision then you can see very easily the solution, the next best solution. I invite these conversations and bring them in. Oh, what you got there?

Dr. Harris: You struck me because I was about to extend the car metaphor a little bit. So I grabbed a book off my shelf *Building Equity* book from Dominique Smith, Nancy Frey, Ian Pumpian, and Doug Fisher. In their work, they write about connecting to cultures in equity and how the view from the sidewalk, they say, is way different than the view from the windshield.

What I took that to mean is, like to extend that car metaphor a little bit but I want to take credit for that metaphor. Is that cultural piece as well, like the antiracist piece, that cultural relevant piece, you have to get out into the community to build connection, to understand the circumstances that surround your students and their families in order to make sure you are

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serving them well via curricula, via instruction, via family engagement, however. But you have to be there too. So like that car metaphor just rang a bell.

Angela: Yes, no, I love that. I was thinking about this work. I know school leaders, when they listen to this podcast, they want something. They're listening to it on their commute, and they want to jump out of the car and then run into the building and apply the knowledge today to solve the next problem. I'm going to caution you against that, especially with this topic. Here's why.

Actually, with most of my concepts. Like there are tangible things you can go apply today. But this work, in particular, in my opinion and correct me if I'm wrong, I feel that this work is like a slow internal growth process. You read and you contemplate, and you look for what where it occurs in your own life professionally and personally.

Then as you understand this and you practice it, you can practice it on your own. But before you run into a staff meeting and say hey, here's a book study we're going to do, and hey, here's the new vision for our school. This is a slow internal thought provoking contemplative work, in my opinion. At least from where I stand, my perspective. That I encourage you listeners to not, I mean everybody go buy this book immediately, but then slow your roll. This is not going to be solved overnight.

I think we have this thing in education where we've got to save these kids right here, right now. Everybody all at once. That is when you get overwhelmed. That is when you roll out without truly having your vision prepared and understood to be able to communicate it so people can connect with it. Am I on track at all?

Dr. Harris: I totally agree in that folks, and I also think folks can begin to do some of the work.

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Angela: Yes. Let's talk about that.

Dr. Harris: Yeah, the, I think folks are also driven by some of the sentiments of themselves or their staff where they say hey, just give me some going to do right now. I can't have the staff meeting, this PD, without walking away and saying here are the things you can apply right now. So I certainly agree with your statement, Angela.

What I tell folks is if that's the case when my staff, we had a similar conversation, and I put up on the screen during one of our staff meetings. I said here's the internet search for antiracist instructional practices. Three point something seconds. It's 900,000 hits. You don't need me to tell you like what practices you can try. Our work together is on why you haven't done that already. That's the work.

So if folks are riding here like I just need to employ something when I get out of my car and walk in, do internet search on antiracist school leadership practice. Click Amazon or Solution Tree and buy my book. There's a thing. There are some steps in my book that say.

Angela: Yeah, I love that you have it broken down into think, do, think, or know, say, and do. So here's what to know, here's what to say, and here's what to do. It's very simple and practical, that section. I like it.

Dr. Harris: Yeah. Folks, at the end of each chapter, that's how that's laid out. So you could have the first chapter is educating yourself and committing. There's a lot of content about a bunch of different work, probably a hundred folks have done this type of work already. So you can learn, like I am, learn from those folks. Share what you're learning with your colleagues. Find a colleague that you can be an accountability partner with. Talk to or call Angela, and say hey, I'd like some coaching on this stuff.

Angela: Yeah, yeah.

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Dr. Harris: I'm sure you'd be an accountability partner with some folks.

Angela: Yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Harris: You have a support network is built in. You just have to act on it.

Angela: Right. No, that's so great. Because especially when you're doing this work, here, to me, the biggest feeling, the biggest emotion you're going to feel is vulnerability. That it feels very scary, and your nervous system will go off. You're going to go into fight or flight when you read things that trigger you.

Look, I believe in educators. I believe in their hearts. You do not go into this field, for the most part, without pure intention, positive intention to help all of the children, all of the people. When you become a principal, your goal is to help support all of your staff.

Now, you're going to have the thought oh, I'm doing it wrong, or I should have known better, or I don't want to offend anybody. Like there are thoughts that white people have in trying to get it and trying to be inclusive and be kind and be loving and be supportive. I think of racism as like I think who said this?

I think it was Glennon Doyle where she said it's in the air we breathe. That you don't understand that systemic racism and all the isms are the air that you breathe. You're not out there seeking it. It's just a part of your intake. The way we've been conditioned to think and believe and to feel and to act and all of that. We're not asking you to change or that you're telling you're doing it wrong. We're simply saying ponder, question, contemplate, examine, explore, open to possibilities, open to the idea that some of this conditioning, you weren't even aware of.

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Dr. Harris: I heard Brené Brown, she interviewed Ibram Kendi a few years ago on her podcast, and they had a conversation. I don't remember whose idea it was to talk about it like this, which they said that it's like being in a steady rain of this type of information that we're all just being inundated by. Someone says hey, here's an umbrella. So now you've got an umbrella so you can be defended from some of it.

Angela: Yeah, oh that's a really good.

Dr. Harris: You don't have shame from somebody handing you an umbrella. So it's okay to say I didn't know. I'm getting better. The beautiful part about this work for school leaders is your students, their families, and your staff love you. They know you. They know your intention. So they will give you the grace to make mistakes. They will also give you the grace to help cast a vision that you believe will be better for everybody in the long.

Angela: That's why you build a shared vision with voices, and we talked about this like having voices heard on campus, having your Asian voices heard. Do you connect to this curriculum? Having, I'm thinking elementary school, but you having adults like monitor that kind of thing. That's why you ask for the voices so that your vision can be inclusive.

You cannot create a vision by yourself and then consider it to be inclusive. That doesn't work like that. The voices are what create the inclusivity and create the diversity, I think, and there are holes that you cannot fill. It's like, again, driving the car with mirrors. You just can't see. There are blind spots in all of our visions. It becomes a more comprehensive vision when we include and ask for those voices. Not out of where am I doing it wrong, but how do we make this stronger, better together?

Dr. Harris: Sometimes folks can get stuck a little bit with thinking about antiracism or white supremacy and white supremacy culture and get confused with saying that white supremacy is the same as white people. It's

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not. So there's a lot of different terms that we conflate race and culture. I don't say that there's a Black culture. Black is a race, is a social construct. That's a whole other show.

But I don't think, I don't say race and culture are the same thing. I don't say white supremacy means white people. That is counterproductive because we're all on the same family. So it also lets people of color off the hook. For us, I am a person of color, by the way. It lets us off the hook by saying we all sometimes uphold white supremacy culture. Of course we can.

So it is more about this supposed hierarchy that a lot of us don't necessarily believe. We're not actively trying intentionally to recreate this hierarchy. But sometimes when it's in the air we breathe, when it's in the water in which we swim, when it's that steady rain, we do it unconsciously.

Angela: Yes, yes. So this book is the umbrella.

Dr. Harris: There you go.

Angela: This book is the umbrella. That's how I feel about it. It's such a good read. I'm only a few chapters, you guys, but I, and I don't typically have like authors. I don't typically sit here and like shout out to the rooftops a book because we're not a book podcast. But I am an antiracist, I want to promote antiracism in schools. I did the work to the best of my ability back 10 years ago when I was a school leader, and I value this work.

I want all of you to feel, number one, just to have the courage to read it yourself. Let yourself feel those feels. If you need help with that, come on over for coaching because that's what I help you with. I'm going to help you process the emotion. But really, I want you to step into your empowerment. This is *The Empowered Principal® Podcast*, and empowerment means empowerment for all. The way that you can be a more valuable, more

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empowered leader is to empower every single student and staff member on your campus. This book will help you get there.

Dr. Harris: Amen.

Angela: Yes.

Dr. Harris: You are only alone insofar as you choose to be. There are so many people out here doing this work and thinking about this stuff that you do not have to be alone.

Angela: No. Oh, I love that. Okay, I know we've gone way over time. But I just want to ask is there any one last words of wisdom, shout out, like a tip, strategies, or anything you just want to say enclosure here? Because I want to encourage people to get the book, but I also know you're listening to this and you're running into school or you're driving home for the day. I just want you to plant a little seed for them as they're heading off into their work week.

Dr. Harris: So you find out more about the book or me and some of the work that I do at my website damanharris.com, D-A-M-A-N. You can think of me as Da Man Harris.

Angela: Love it.

Dr. Crockett: Dot com. As you walk into your building today, I'd like you to just think about how you already have the skills to do this work. You already have the staff to do this work once. You might just need a little bit more of knowledge or connections to do this work. But greatness for your students and your staff with respect to this work is just on the other side.

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Angela: Yes, yeah. That's what we're all here for. That's what we're all here for. So all of Daman's contact information links will be in the show notes. So you guys can just drop down in your whatever podcast platform you listen to, check out the book, check out his links, check out his website. But this work is the solution to move your school forward and to take out some of the obstacles that are in students' ways.

I often say yes, we cannot change state testing, maybe necessarily right now. But what we can do is we can put the conversation into perspective around the scores and what they mean because students do better when they believe in themselves.

Our work is not about raising test scores. That's not the goal. The goal is to help students break down barriers, thought obstacles, belief systems about themselves that break them free from believing they're not capable, or that the test is too hard, or that they can't learn, or they can't read, or math is no fun. Whatever the thought systems are driving these students to not put in all of their effort into this test.

It's not about the test. It's about the beliefs of the students and the beliefs of the teachers. This book is going to help you break down the obstacles and give you some practical solutions to empower students to believe in themselves, to become lifelong learners, which is why we're in this in the first place.

Dr. Harris: And chapter six, evaluate your antiracist impact, has a list of a bunch of different types of data you can collect in addition to that state test data that can frame your story.

Angela: Awesome. Great. So good. Thank you, thank you. This, I think, is going to be a powerhouse of an episode. If you're listening to this, please share it with your fellow colleagues. Share it with your district staff. If you're having a hard time maybe coaching up, you can lead them to the podcast.

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Let them listen to this, and let them think about the book or maybe buy this book as a gift for some people that maybe you need their support and getting this conversation started at a district level.

But I think this is the beginning of just breaking across some barriers that we haven't been able to do in education. So thank you for your time. Thank you for this book. Thank you for your knowledge and wisdom. We appreciate it.

Dr. Harris: Thanks, Angela. It was great to be here.

Angela: Great. Thanks so much.

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