

# TALK

THE

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT  
**RACE, LOVE & TRUTH**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

## THE BOOK

This powerful and age-appropriate collection gives an honest depiction of the conversations parents with children of color have to have about systemic racism and a timely look at white fragility and the importance of learning to be anti-racist. Published in partnership with Just Us Books.

## ABOUT THE EDITORS

Author Bio: Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson are the co-founders of Just Us Books, Inc. For over thirty years they have published, written, and collaborated on books that reflect the diversity of Black history, heritage, and experiences.



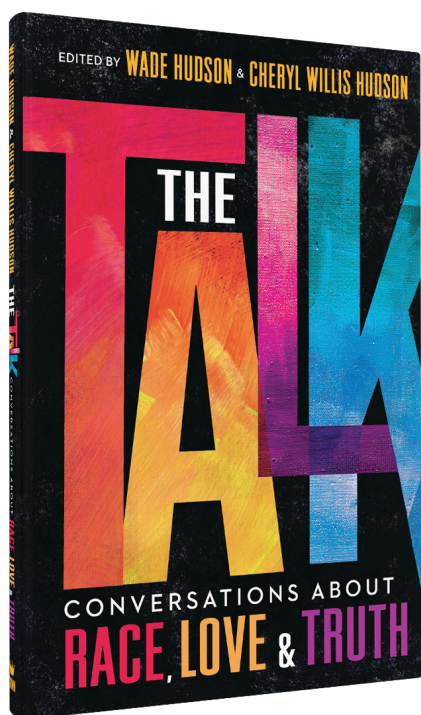
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## THE AUTHORS

Renée Watson • Shadra Strickland • Derrick Barnes • Gordon C. James • Grace Lin • Wade Hudson  
E. B. Lewis • Traci Sorell • MaryBeth Timothy • Daniel Nayeri • Zeke Peña • Duncan Tonatiuh  
Adam Gidwitz • Peter H. Reynolds • Valerie Wilson Wesley • Don Tate • Tracey Baptiste • April Harrison  
Torrey Maldonado • Natacha Bustos • Selina Alko • Sharon Dennis Wyeth • Raul Colón • Nikki Grimes  
Erin K. Robinson • Meg Medina • Rudy Gutierrez • Minh Lê • Cozbi A. Cabrera • Christopher Myers



## INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### BEFORE READING

What is your identity? You may be a sister, brother, student, athlete, coder, or dancer. But also think about how you identify in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, region, ability, or economic class. Have you ever thought about how these identities have developed your sense of who you are and how others perceive you?

### AFTER READING

In “Ten” (p. 71), Tracey Baptiste begins, “Because the lights are flashing behind us, I need to tell you some things. . . .” She then lists ten important pieces of advice that are necessary for her Black children to be safe when stopped by the police. What is on your list of ten things for you and your friends to do to be safe in today’s world?

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES

## BEFORE READING

1. Do members of your family mention race or ethnicity when describing friends or strangers? Why?
2. Are you all able to recognize and discuss racism, injustice, and discrimination that you see around you?
3. How does your family work together to learn about race and social justice? What else could you do?
4. Reading *The Talk* and other books like it and then discussing them together is an important anti-racist action. Has your family taken any other actions?

## AFTER READING

1. In trying to explain and fight racism, Duncan Tonatiuh challenges us to learn the history of others' struggles in the United States. The editors of *The Talk* worked to gather essays that represent a variety of cultures and issues and to provide us with insights into one another's histories.
  - a. What have you learned about Cherokee culture from Traci Sorell?
  - b. What have you learned about Chinese American culture, and specifically about being a Chinese American girl, from Grace Lin?
  - c. What have you learned about being of blended heritage from Selina Alko and Minh Lê?
  - d. In reading these stories, did you realize any biases that you have about another group of people?  
We all have biases, but we can't overcome them until we realize we have them and confront them.
2. In "Our Inheritance," Adam Gidwitz describes how his non-racist family profited from both hard work and systemic racism. He instructs his daughter to be honest about their family's inheritance. "But the first step, the most important step, is being honest. Learning, and being uncomfortable with what you learn, and most of all, being honest." (p. 101)
  - a. What were some of the laws and practices that benefited the Gidwitz family?
  - b. Who did these laws harm?
  - c. What do you know about your family's history? How may you have benefited at the expense of someone else? What opportunities were available to you or your family that may not have been available to someone else? Why? How can you learn more?
3. Unfortunately, none of the situations presented in the book are unique to the individuals who wrote about them, and they are not confined to the past. They still happen. Through this book, you've learned a little about situations with racist undertones (or overtones) that harm Native Americans and People of Color. Discuss the situations and stereotypes that African American authors Wade Hudson, Valerie Wilson Wesley, Nikki Grimes, and Sharon Dennis Wyeth encountered. Thinking these situations through and being aware of how racism actualizes may help you realize when someone is being racist, whether it is you or someone else. What could you do in such a situation?

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CLASSROOMS, LIBRARIES, OR COMMUNITY GROUPS

## BEFORE READING

1. Do you recognize the names of any of the authors or illustrators whose work appears in *The Talk*? Think about other things you've read that they wrote. What common themes do you see in their work? For example, what do Renée Watson, Meg Medina, and Derrick Barnes often write about?
2. Think of some of the people who you look to and learn from, whether in real life or on social media. How diverse is this group of people? Do they all look like you, or are they different? Why is it important to pay attention to this?

## AFTER READING

1. Daniel Nayeri's essay (p. 33) begins with a poem he wrote to his son. He explains that his writing was influenced by Lennox Lewis, Bruce Lee, and the Persian poetry that his own father would share with him. Which line(s) of Nayeri's poem would you use to create a meme? Explain what the line(s) mean to you and why you think they work well in this format.
2. In "F.R.I.E.N.D.S.: Looking Back, Looking Forward," Torrey Maldonado explains the acronym F.R.I.E.N.D.S. (p. 68) in order to help his daughter recognize her true friends. Can you give examples of how his daughter can be a true friend using Maldonado's acronym?

Fight for you

Respect you

Include you

Encourage you

Need you

Deserve you

Stand by you

3. Artwork complements the essays in *The Talk*. Raul Colón's illustration (p. 80) expands the young ballerina's character.
  - a. How would you describe her attitude?
  - b. How does Colón empower this ballerina in his artwork?
  - c. How might you pose in a selfie to show the same attitudes along with self-empowerment?
4. In "Mazes" (p. 112) Christopher Myers writes about heroes, monsters, and mazes.
  - a. What is the role of the monster, the hero, and the maze in his story?
  - b. What makes up the monster's maze?
  - c. What makes up your maze?