

## Moms And The Movement: Cheryl Wood's 5 Ways To Help Young Kids Deal With Racial Injustice

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3 Comments



Dealing with racial injustice and the trauma it causes is difficult for people of color of all ages, but it can be extremely hard for young children who are still developing their own sense of self. It's a sad reality that parents of Black and Brown children must teach their kids early about racism, discrimination and policing in order to keep them safe.

To help with setting the stage for a positive dialogue between you and your little ones, Mommynoire tapped empowerment expert Cheryl Wood for advice. The fearless entrepreneur and mom of three spends her days coaching professionals and youth on how to overcome internal and external obstacles and life's harsh realities.



**Mommynoire:** What inspired you to start *Cheryl Empowers*?

Like so many women and mothers, I was tired of just existing and following a mundane routine. So I started my company out of a desire to create success on my own terms. I was in a desperate search for time, freedom and financial growth. I wanted to be a fully engaged mother and I started my company so I could create this potential.



***How do you balance work and being a mom?***

As a wife, mother and business owner, I tend to shy away from using the word balance because I don't believe I can ever balance everything in my life at the same time. Instead of balance, my goal is always to create harmony in my life, making sure that whatever I'm committed to in the moment is getting 100 percent of my time and attention. Harmony helps me to overcome any feelings of guilt about trying to achieve balance.

***How old are your children?***

Jayana is 12-years-old, James is nine-years-old, and Jalen is eight-years-old.

***Wow, they are all very young. Do you speak to them about racism and inequality? What exactly do you tell them?***

I speak to my children about racism and inequality. I explain to them that racism and inequality in the world will likely impact them as African Americans, but it does not have to define them. I openly show my children examples of racism and inequality as it has shown up in the media in the past and the present. I remind them of the importance of showing love to all people, not hate.



***What tips would you give to other moms to help their kids deal with racial injustice?***

1. **Create ongoing dialogue:** Instead of sheltering your children, make sure they are aware and educated about these injustices. Have open conversations about our history as African Americans and about current world events related to racial injustices. After all, knowledge is power.
2. **Be open to questions you can't answer:** Let your children ask the hard questions such as why these things are happening and why racism exists... and be okay if you don't always have a perfect answer. The goal is to allow them to express themselves, not to always have the answer or solution.

**3. Teach them the power of 'emotion with a purpose':** Just as it is appropriate to talk to your children about racial injustices, it is equally appropriate to teach them about controlling their emotions and using them to impact change versus perpetuating the problem or retaliating. When your kids express disappointment or even anger, remind them to use their emotions to create a plan of action about how they will help to make the world a better place, no matter their age.

**4. Surround them with people who demonstrate love of all races:** The best way to combat racism and racial injustices is to demonstrate to your children firsthand what it means to love all people. Introduce them to different environments and individuals that express love to all people.

**5. Reassure them of their greatness:** Racial injustice can cause minority children to question their worth, so it is critical as parents that we reassure our kids of how great and amazing they are. Remind them that they have the potential of achieving anything they want in life.

*That's really great advice. Any tips specifically for helping Black entrepreneurs cope with the added stress of worrying about racial injustice affecting their children?*

I believe some of the added stress can be eliminated by educating and informing your children. Having conversations about how to best handle situations if they find themselves in a difficult position related to racial injustice.

*Your business specifically teaches people not to hold themselves back. How does that manifest in women?*

Many women hold themselves back by staying in their comfort zone, refusing to take uncomfortable risks, and lacking belief in their ability to achieve greatness. Fear is a direct connector to why many women don't soar and reach their fullest potential – fear of failure, fear of inadequacy, fear of judgment of others, fear of taking risks that have no guaranteed results, and even fear of success. Fear sparks an internal conversation with women that keeps them focused on what they're lacking instead of what they possess that will support their forward movement and growth.

*How do you inspire women to move beyond this fear?*

I help women to focus on what they might be missing by allowing fear to hold them hostage. I help them to explore what is possible in their lives if they immobilize fear and walk in a space of boldness and courage. And, I remind them of the importance of creating a sense of urgency about sharing their gifts and talents with the world with no regrets.