
OPENING THE DOORS, A WHITE EUROPEAN AMERICAN ANTIRACIST MOVEMENT

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By: Bob Brown, Associate Director

CCED-Flint, with Neighborhoods Without Borders/Tendaji Talks partners are ramping up our efforts to overcome racism in Flint by initiating the “Opening the Doors, a White European American Antiracist Movement.” The phrase “Opening the Doors” is inspired by James Brown’s song, “I Don’t Want Nobody to Give Me Nothing.” His lyrics are powerful:

I don't want anybody
To give me nothing
Open up the door
I'll get it myself

White, European Americans, have kept the doors closed forever. It’s up us to open all the doors for our brothers and sisters of color. They can walk thru the doors on their own accord. What they can't do is open the doors because they are locked, and we White people own all the keys and historically don't share our keys. From the Racial Healing Handbook by Anneliese A. Singh, PhD, LPC, “the term “antiracist” refers to people who are actively seeking not only to raise their consciousness about race and racism but also to take action when they see racial power inequities in everyday life.

Being an antiracist is much different from just being “nonracist,” as Black antiracist and New York Times Best Seller Marlon James (2016) made clear. Being a nonracist

means you can have beliefs against racism, but when it comes to events like the murders of Black men by police, “you can watch things at home unfolding on TV, but not do a thing about it.” Being Anti-Racist requires action.



Proactively according to James, being an antiracist means that you are developing a different moral code, one that pairs a commitment to not being racist (whether verbalized or not) with action to protest and end the racist things you see in the world. I would add that saying “you aren’t a racist” isn’t enough to start healing from racism. You need the intentional mindset of “Yep, this racism thing is everyone’s problem—including mine, and I’m going to do something about it.”

Partners in the “Opening Doors” initiative include MSU Extension and the C.S. Mott Department of Public Health, College of Human Medicine.
