

PARENTING DECOLONIZED PODCAST



Parenting Decolonized Podcast Ep #53: *Conscious Parenting Techniques That WORK with Decoteau Irby*

Yolanda Williams: This podcast is brought to you by the Rona, Racism and Radical Parenting Virtual Conference happening on September 23rd to 25th. It is designed to help equip you with the knowledge and practical advice you need to manage your triggers, yell less, connect more and raise liberated, emotionally well children. Click the link in the show notes for early bird registration and save \$40 off your ticket today.

Welcome back to the Parenting Decolonized Podcast, I am your host Yolanda Williams, and today, I have with me Decoteau Irby. How are you?

Decoteau Irby: I am doing well, thank you.

Yolanda Williams: I am so happy you're joining me today. Can you please introduce yourself to the people?

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, absolutely. My name is Decoteau J. Irby. I am a son and a father, a partner, I grew up in South Carolina. I have lived in many places, including Philadelphia, Milwaukee, San Francisco and now I reside in Chicago, where I'm an Associate Professor in the Department of the Educational Policy Studies. Outside of my formal day job, where I spend most of my time, is being a parent. I have two children, I have a son who is seven years old and a daughter, who is nine years old. She was like 9-1/2...

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: I am a creator, I create a lot of things, music, learning opportunities for people, you know, I've written books, short stories, plays, so I kind of dabble and dabble in a lot of different things. I also enjoy gardening and outdoor spaces.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: So I spend a lot of time in my community garden. I am active in my park, so kind of a jack of all trades. That is one of the things I find is useful and sometimes required to be a well-rounded parent...

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: Because you know you follow some of their interests and also try a lot of different things to see what they might take to and that sort of thing so. So yeah, that's a bit about me.

Yolanda Williams: Well, I am loving it. There is a book you wrote, or is it a short story, The Magical Black Tears.

Decoteau Irby: Yes.

Yolanda Williams: A Protest Story. First of all, I am in love with that title and can you tell us a little bit about that book?

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, sure. Absolutely. So Magical Black Tears: A Protest Story is a book that actually came to me in a dream back in 2016. At the time, I was living in Milwaukee and there was a police involved shooting, a police officer shot and killed a black man and there was uprising in the city and at the time, I was a younger newer father and I guess it was really (indiscernible) (00:02:32) on me and I actually had a dream one night, a very vivid dream and I woke up that night and I sketched out the dream, I told some friends and colleagues about it and they thought it was a great idea, I showed them the sketches but then I never did anything with it until 2020, when George Floyd was murdered and I had children who were asking me questions about why were people protesting, why are people out on the streets. So the story is about a father and a mother and their attempt to protect two children and from what's going on in the world until they realize that, you know, they can't really protect them.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: So in the story, the children are asking what's happening, they're not allowed to go outside and play this particular day, you know, they are called into the house and they are asking their parents, they are looking at the TV trying to figure out what's going on, their parents tell them don't worry about it, it will be over in the morning. Well, like children do, they were curious. Like children are, they were curious and they decided to protest the "don't worry about it", and they go out at night when everybody sleeps to find it out what's happening in the streets and in the process of being on the streets, they discover the magic of people who are fighting for racial justice. And I won't give any spoilers, but that's the general premise of the book.

Yolanda Williams: I love it because I just – so I started in on my little Tik-Tok journey. And someone was asking how, you know, for black people, black parents who were trying to raise children who are socially aware, who are resisters, how do we make sure when I am centering white supremacy and how we speak about things. And then for me, my response to that is to surround my daughter with images, arts, books, dolls, media of blackness, of you know, of black joy, of black beauty, but how do you approach that, like how do you as a black parent, because I know a lot of us, and like we don't – we want to keep them as innocent as possible for as long as possible, like black children do not get to have a childhood in a lot of respects. But we know that the world is what it is and we need to talk to them about the world, so how do you go about that with your own children?

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, I mean it is. It is very tough. I think I came into – initially came into parenting a bit more idealistic in terms of what I – of how I could protect their childhood, how I could protect their innocence. And then, you know, I realized that that's very difficult so for example, in 2020 like, you know, I live in Chicago and there were uprisings here and, you know, we had smoke coming into our house.

Yolanda Williams: Wow.

Decoteau Irby: So you know, you got to explain to the kids what is smoke coming from, you know what I mean, and so I think part of what I try to do is to be honest with them about what's happening and – but then I always try to make sure that within the stories and within how I am framing things, that I'm helping them understand the strength and the resilience of black people.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: So for example, when we talk about, you know, the transatlantic slave trade, you know, for a long time my children would say, well, they just couldn't understand why people would do that, right. So my daughter asked these very simple questions like, well, if they needed us for labor, why didn't they just like pay us or why didn't they just ask us to help them learn how to grow rice and indigo. Why they had to still us to do that and so you know, I talked to her and I tell her things like, well, you know, we are strong people, right. First of all, we are intelligent, we knew how to grow rice which is a difficult crop to grow. So we knew how to grow rice, cultivate rice. We understood color and vibrancy, so we understood indigo, we grew indigo, right? We knew how to use dyes and all that different sorts of things, and so what I tell them is like people envy and wanted what we had, including our physical strength, our ability to be immune to, you know, like malaria, like we were the people out of all the people in the world who people looked at and said, those people are brilliant, they know how to grow rice, there's fashion sense, their style is (indiscernible) (00:06:43), they understand indigo, their color, you know, this vibrancy and people wanted that.

And then I always kind of helped them understand that it's not on us what kind of decisions other people made about how they treated us, we got to recognize that we understand and know our roots that when we're in the right conditions, we're going to grow or we are going to thrive.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: So you know that's kind of how I just talk to them about it and I will always try to end on this – not necessarily a note of optimism but a note of curiosity and so for example, when – I live close to – well, I live out in Chicago, we had a lot of looting and stores being broken into along the commercial thoroughfare it is, you know, a block away from our house. So my partner and I, we decided that when that happened they were going to see it anyway, so we were going to take them for a walk, right.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: So we are going to walk down the block, you are all going to see Burger King destroyed, Dollar Store destroyed, banks, you know, all this kind of stuff, right. So we walked and, you know, as we were walking, you know, my daughter was like, you know, where are we going to eat breakfast, you know, they had these really basic questions, but the question that we kept on posing a hint to them was what else do you want to see here? What else could be here? Right. This building is burned down now, well, what would you put here? And it was coming up, well, a lot of stuff, you know, they said, yeah, we are going to make a bouncy house with Six Flags, we are going to put Six Flags right here in the neighborhood, you know what I mean?

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: So I think it was just like that's cool. You know what I mean. That's good, that's a great idea and so a lot of it was to leave it on a note, where they were able to use their imaginations. So as opposed to saying like everything is going to be okay, we will try to instill a sense of agency, like what do you want to see here? What would you put here? That sort of thing. Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: Ooph! Powerful! Powerful in the sense that I feel like a tool of white supremacy delusion just destroyed our imaginations, right.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: Like radical imagining is what kept us fighting for freedom, our ancestors fighting for freedom and running away and resisting and burning down kitchens. Like being

able to imagine a world in which there were no enslaved black people in the United States. It had to be imagined by somebody. It didn't just happen.

Decoteau Irby: Right.

Yolanda Williams: And I think people discount the fact that it is necessary for us to keep imagining and to instill this really deep sense of hope and imagination into our kids, but also it's this collective thing. It is not one person – right now, we're living in the imaginations of rich white men. That's what we are living in, whites so (profanity) I am sorry, you all know because...

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, okay.

Yolanda Williams: That's probably just the way it is. Because it is not made for anyone else, but rich white men.

Decoteau Irby: Exactly.

Yolanda Williams: So when we talk about liberation, we have to imagine – really radically imagine, what would this world look like without anti-blackness, without capitalism, without misogyny and patriarchy, what does that look like? What does it feel like and then work together to figure out what that reality, how it's going to serve the collective and not just the few and that is so important to instill in our children. That sense of imagination, and that's an amazing thing. I am going to start doing that when my daughter is able to really understand. I will make sure I do that as well.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: Pro tip! Really make sure that you're asking these questions, how do you – to your children by the way, not – and to your community, but really asking your kids about how they feel about race relations. Do you have that discussion with them?

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, yeah, I do and it's interesting because sometimes, you know, it sways, right, but you know, we made an intentional choice to like raise our children and, you know, a neighborhood that is, you know, 95% black.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: With all different kind of black folks. I mean, you know, my kind of intention was to, you know, almost kind of create like a little bubble, you know, where they can run down

the sidewalk and (indiscernible) (00:10:58) you know, they are running for, you know, they are running because they have talent.

Yolanda Williams: Listen! Right.

Decoteau Irby: This is basic stuff.

Yolanda Williams: Basic stuff.

Decoteau Irby: That I wanted for them to be able to have is, you know, something like being able to run and being able to, you know, play, scream loud, be loud, you know what I mean?

Yolanda Williams: Be children!

Decoteau Irby: So those kind of things, yeah, that's this kind of things that I think – things that I have felt responsibility and obligation if I could to try to provide for them. And so, you know, I think those are some of the kind of things that like a lot of people in the, you know, they are taking for granted, but those are the things that I am super serious about. It had gotten much more difficult once they started to move into their school years because I have less control over like who's in the school building, right, you know, we just talk very openly with my children, it was – I write some of the stuff down that they say because they help me understand how they are thinking and my goal is always to kind of try to create the kind of situation, where they just think very expansively so I will give you two examples.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: My son at one time, this is how I kind of interact with them. Me and my son, we were out, we were on the bus. We were going to the zoo in Chicago, which is on the north side which is predominantly white. So he was on the bus and we had to do a transfer so at one point, we got on the transfer on the north side and my son saw a white man driving a bus. And he was just like, yeah, he was like, 'daddy', like, 'there is a white man, it is a white man driving the bus,', you know what I am saying.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: And so my response was if white people work hard and stay in school, they can drive buses too. Right, because in his mind like, you know, he's thinking that truck drivers, bus driver, these are things that he is like, oh, this is really cool and so I wanted to – I say things to them that kind of seem ridiculous, but I'm saying, yeah, like, well, they can be what we are too, right?

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: Look things around and then, you know, my daughter, she's a true – some kind of way, she said she had, she is like, you know, I was in my bed and there were some pieces of white people hair on my bed, you know what I mean, so I said, 'really!' and she was like, 'yeah, I don't know how they got there'. I said, 'well, did you play with some white kids at camp?' You know, summer camps, she was like, 'no.' And I just said joking, I said, 'well, maybe it was – maybe, it is tooth fairy hair or something like that', you know what I mean. And she was like, yeah, she was like, you know, 'I have met the tooth fairy white, that's why she would be taking us along to bring me my money.'

Yolanda Williams: You know what.

Decoteau Irby: So I was just like, yeah, probably so. And she was like, that's because she focused on the white kids' teeth. So you know, just those kind of things like, I just laugh, you know what I am saying, but I let them kind of say what they, you know, make sense of the world and makes sense of the things whether it's, you know, an explanation of why the tooth fairy is not bringing them money, you know what I saying. Yeah, the tooth fairy has got to white there, you know.

Yolanda Williams: Right, right.

Decoteau Irby: So you know, I just let them kind of make sense of the things and then I will also just kind of say these little – allow those smart mouth stuff than just always center us, always position us, you know, like the bus driver situation, like whatever, like they can be like us, you know. And so you know, I'm hoping that those kind of things make them think and move through the world in a way where we are doing what we do and everybody else really is trying to get down and be like us.

Yolanda Williams: Well, I mean that they are! That is just calling what it is.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, absolutely.

Yolanda Williams: You know, black people are the cultural icons of this world.

Decoteau Irby: Absolutely.

Yolanda Williams: You know what, I'm learning as I go through my own decolonizing experiences. I started this journey, I realized, I looked back at some of the stuff I wrote on

Facebook, some of it is hell embarrassing, but a lot of it I was trying to figure out, like where do I fit in in this world and figure out my thoughts, and I really get into decolonized until I have my daughter and what I am realizing is how we were sold this idea that black Americans are missing something because of our ancestry that was stolen from us, right. Like we are – there is this hole inside of us that can only be filled if we go, you know, to the motherland and let me tell you all something, while I really want to connect with my roots I did my little ancestry and I am Nigerian, I'm trying to figure out the tribe, all that stuff. I want to also honor the fact that African-Americans have created our own culture that does not, well, like people emulate our culture all day long, and the roots are African in that, but we have a distinct culture of our own that we really need to be proud of and I really want to instill that into my daughter. A lot of, you know, around my house, it's a lot of Afro-centric decorations and everything, you see behind me, you all can see it, but I also really always want to remind her just being a black American, being an African-American that there's a culture there. The music, you know, the clothing, everything, how we speak, everyone is trying to get like us, like all the time.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: And we have to always make sure that we are not saying to ourselves that we are broken, ever, just because, you know, our ancestors – there's something there that we need to explore. I am all four getting back to your roots, but not at the expense of our own culture. Does that make sense?

Decoteau Irby: Oh yeah, absolutely. Absolutely, I agree 100%. I mean, you know, part of like I never have taken the time to do the ancestry work and stuff like that, right, like, and I don't know in a way, I can see the allure of it, but I never have felt really compelled to do so because I feel like I'm valuable as is, you know.

Yolanda Williams: Yes, exactly.

Decoteau Irby: Whether – and my children, you know, even if it's a bit of mystery there, we still know by virtue of us being here that we come from like greatness, right.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: And we have so much to review, and so you know, yeah, I agree with you a 100%, you know, I oftentimes have like, you know, no debates with people about, you know, the wide spectrum of black Americans, black people in America in the United States and I mean there's beauty everywhere, you know. And that's one of the things that I always have just realized and I think it is a decision that you have to make to see beauty, to see you know, genius.

Yolanda Williams: Genius!

Decoteau Irby: All that kind of stuff and that's what I'm always looking at and looking for and so it leads me to even interact and love us in a way that is difficult to do when you think that people are void of something because they don't know like specifically –

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: You know where they came from and so on and so forth, yeah, yes.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: Yes, I totally agree. So when it comes to that kind of stuff, I guess for me, I am trying to really instill a sense of self. I want to – I think about it like an armor. We know when our kids leave this house, whiteness is everywhere and I am trying to build up an armor, so when she is released into this world, she'll be able to resist and really not let that stuff pierce that armor. But I am just like always thinking like am I doing enough, because I guess you won't know until they are really out, she is only four and she's autistic and she is also nonspeaking, so all I can do right now is just to do the build, build, build. When it comes to your own children, like, how do you sort of, the other ways you build up that armor?

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, you know, it's interesting because you mentioned that you asked the question, are you doing enough. And I have recently, you know, started to ask myself the question, am I – have I been doing too much.

Yolanda Williams: Oohh!

Decoteau Irby: Because, you know, I mean the sad part is and I think that you'll find this too is that this world has a deep disdain fear of black people, who have a deep sense of self.

Yolanda Williams: Uhh, yes. Anti-blackness.

Decoteau Irby: Potential, so you know, yeah, I have tried to really instill that and it's a challenge because as my children move to the world, it gets interpreted as though like their sense of self, that gets interpreted as, you know, disrespectful...

Yolanda Williams: Oh yeah.

Decoteau Irby: You know, bigheaded, you know, that kind of stuff and really understand...

Yolanda Williams: Even like black people.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, by black people, by white people it is.

Yolanda Williams: By white people, by everybody.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, by everybody.

Yolanda Williams: Because we are not supposed to be confident ourselves, especially not black children.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, you are not supposed to ask no questions. You are not – you know, how I grew up, so you know if you think about like the parenting decolonized, right, how I grew up is that you are not even supposed to look a certain way.

Yolanda Williams: Listen!

Decoteau Irby: When you are upset.

Yolanda Williams: No feelings.

Decoteau Irby: And so my thing is it is like no feelings, no expression, fix your face, it is very hard to fix your face, you know what I mean, I have realized that now that like, you know.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: That's a miserable thing for us to try to fix our face. It took a tremendous amount of emotional and physical effort to try not to – to try to, you know, fix yourself into so you wouldn't be hit or something like that.

Yolanda Williams: Be harmed, yeah.

Decoteau Irby: So you know, I try to – and so they do have in our household their range of expressiveness, right, where it is like, you know, they can get attitude, you know.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: And that sort of thing, and we try to work with it and talk through it, but that's part of what I want them to learn because that's going to be important when they go out into the world. And I see so many people who didn't have the opportunity to engage in that practice at

home and then they go out to the world, they are in workplaces where people are abusive to them, they are in relationships where people are abusive to them, and all this is a consequence of not having an opportunity to learn and the most important learning space in the community that you have in your formative years is with the people who are care taking for you.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: So I want them to know to like if something is not right, then you can say something to me about it, right. Not only can you, you should say something to me about it.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: But now when you put them into another context whether it's the school or whether it's the interaction with, you know, anybody else, that is to interpret it in a way that they're not supposed to do that. But white children get to do that all the time, you know what I mean.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: And so it gets interpreted in a lot of different ways so the question that I am always wrestling with now is have I done too much because, you know, to be honest and to be straight up the beat, you know, makes myself go vulnerable like it creates problems, you know what I mean.

Yolanda Williams: Oh, it's scary.

Decoteau Irby: Like in a broader world. Yeah, you know what I mean and this is like –

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: Okay, well, if I have a child who is going to determine for their self that they are not going to let something go and they are not going to be quiet about something, what does that mean for their safety as they moved to the world, you know what I mean. And so that kind of stuff as apparent really worries me, but I know that this is something I am doing because we have been intentional about cultivating a space at home, where you can learn how to debate, you can learn how to negotiate, you can stand up for yourself, you know. That kind of thing and we always are not only doing it one on one, we do it for one another as well in our house. You know, like my wife will saying, you know, she could finish talking, right.

Yolanda Williams: Yes. Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: I am just like, okay, me listening, I am going to be listening, you know what I mean. And then, you know, my daughter with – how she is raised, she will be like thank you. You know, she will say thank you in a way just like, you know, okay, mommy said you can let her finish, she is like thank you, and then she will continue on. That same thank you is the kind of thing that could easily get a child like removed from their classroom, could escalate a situation.

Yolanda Williams: Oh yeah.

Decoteau Irby: In things they're being disrespectful.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: But I mean it's just like, you know, so those are the kind of different kind of things that I try to do is really create a household space, where they are able to practice the things that they are going to need as they moved to the world if they are not going to be taken advantage of, abused, belittled, disrespected, and the place to practice, the safest place to practice is at home.

Yolanda Williams: I mean you need to (indiscernible) (00:23:10) a better word. Because this is a lot of black parents, we start talking about conscious parenting, because that is what you are talking about here, is conscious decolonized parenting, which is allowing your child – not even allowing because I hate that word, they have agency naturally, right. So being able to advocate for yourself, like encouraging that is how we protect them, but it's also scary. A lot of black parents understand that, you know, historically, the way that we were parented was protection against white supremacy, against whiteness in a world that can get you killed if you spoke to someone wrong, looked in their eyes, I mean, we know that.

Decoteau Irby: Right.

Yolanda Williams: But now, it's about are we going to be the oppressors, just to try to protect them from being oppressed and even though it's so scary for us as black parents in a world that's filled with anti-blackness, to raise black children who are outspoken, who are confident, who will advocate for themselves and know their worth, that is just scary because we know that they could become targets at school and on the streets, by adults who see children, especially black children as people that need to be – that need violence in order to be controlled. It's a scary process and it really requires us to let go of a lot of fear, like it's there, it's valid, right, but I can't let that fear be the thing that drives my relationship with my children. In the day I want her if she ends up getting detention at school because she told the teacher how she felt, okay, we will

go and get ice cream and I am cursing that teacher out, you know what I am saying, like I am going to always be on my child's side.

Decoteau Irby: Right, I agree.

Yolanda Williams: If she advocated for herself. So as long as she – I think as long as our kids understand that they're not in this alone and that's where community comes in. Everyone around my daughter, you don't have to necessarily be a conscious parent or practice conscious parenting. But what I require in order to be around her is that you respect the fact that this is non-violent over here, that we are not calling kids bad, that we are not talking about her hair, her skin color, in order to be in community with us, and so my family I was born into had to get on board rather with that, but because of social media I have found an amazing community of people who think just like me and want to raise our kids together and actually we are going to be forming a collective and getting lands together and raising our kids together. Because we want to be in community, have a farm and everything, you know what I am saying? Like grow our food, there is sustainability, single moms and our kids and be able to like raise our kids in this bubble, like you said, of safety, of protection.

Are you a burned out parent or educator hanging on by a thread? Has this pandemic turned you to the parent you always told yourself you wouldn't want to be? Are your kids showing signs of stress, anxiety and acting out more than ever? Well, friend, same, I am in the same boat as you and this weed is taking on water, we need help. That's why I decided this year's Parenting Decolonized Conference be a remix of my first one. The Rona, Racism and Radical Parenting Conference, the Remix, happening on Sep 23rd to 25th is a multi-day fully virtual conference focused on a parent to parent (indiscernible) (00:26:28) to recalibrate from chaos (indiscernible) (00:26:30) in order to form deeper connections with their kids. I have lined up 20 plus educators, parent coaches, mental health professionals, and social justice leaders to help you get your mind right and parent with intention and for liberation. My past conferences have helped over 3000 people become the conscious parents they have always wanted to be. You are not only, have more grace and patience for your kids, and for yourself too. Click the link in the show notes for early bird registration and save \$40 off your ticket today.

So let's talk about community as far as being able to – because I feel like community is so important when we are raising these decolonized kids.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, it is. You know, the approach that I've taken is, you know, really relying on like you know being present. I really don't try to get my children to be like involved in anything specifically, but I try to involve myself and be very present so they can like see how I move myself, you know. Shortly after my daughter was born, I formed a cooperative, a consulting cooperative and because, you know, I wanted her to see me work in a different kind

of way, in a different kind of institution than, you know, the institutions that we are – that you know, there are in abundance in the United States, not everywhere. But so we work in a cooperative, you know, like I mentioned in my introduction am active in my community garden and so they always see me planting, growing food, I try to take care of like plants and, you know, there's a plant that, you know, some people would have counted out and I will like well, our roots are not dead, so a little combat, you know, so I try to do those sorts of things. You know, involved in my like neighborhood park, active in the school and so I really want them to see me present and I also bring them a lot of places with me because, you know, I want them to see themselves, I want them to see possibilities and so I really try to walk the walk and give them access to walk alongside me or just to sit back and watch me, so you are not taking them to meetings, like important meetings, people will be like, you know, you are going to bring your kids, I am like, yeah.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: You know what I mean. I was in a meeting about two weeks ago, so the Magical Black Tears book we were working to create a traveling museum exhibit based off of the book.

Yolanda Williams: Oh wow.

Decoteau Irby: It teaches children the power of protests and the relationship between protest and direct action and racial justice. So we have been having these meetings, we had a partnership meeting in Milwaukee, so we are in Milwaukee, we had a meeting, and you know, I am present and my colleagues are almost around the table and my daughter, she is listening to us, she's off on the side and then she like slips me a note, you know what I mean, like I have missed something during the meeting, so I like look at the note and she had drew out something that she wanted me to kind of like share with everybody, you know. So you never know what they are soaking up, where they feel like they can contribute and so they have to be able to have access to the spaces, to the garden and to, you know, whatever the league is, you know, we take them to, you know, we are on the Park Advisory Council for our local park in Chicago. Basically, these are community groups of residents who come together and volunteer to care take for our park, and for green spaces. So you know, we are on that Park Advisory Council so we take her to that, so you know, and take both of our kids and so people know our kids through that just by being present with us.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: But the other important thing is that they are learning how to be in community by watching us and it is not something also that you could just assume that people are going to

know how to do community, like we can go to a meeting within a community, we can go to a meeting and they can disagree with people and then after the meeting, we are talk and it will be okay.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: Right. So they have to see that to learn it, and so those are the kind of things that I think are really important is to have them in multiple different kinds of settings to learn what it means to be in community, to work with people and to show up and be present. It has been interesting, my son plays baseball and probably about like a third through the season, he didn't want to go to no games anymore and I was, like, well, you know, I understand, but like you know, you remember the last game when you made that run, like, you came through for the team, like, your team needs you, you know what I mean. And so he was just like, okay, you know, he kind of got it and then he kind of got back into it, because I was like it's about you, yes, but it's about your relationship with your teammates, you know what I mean. You bring something special when you show up, everybody who is on your team brings something special when you all show up. You all are a team, you are all stronger when you are all together, you know what I am saying. The game is better we you are all together and, you know, so being able to put them in experiences where they are able to see that and so like, you know, he makes a run and somebody else bats and I mean, you know, he gets on base and somebody else bats him in, you have these concrete age-appropriate experiences that allow them to understand how a community works. And then sometimes like you might not want to show up, but it's okay to show up for the team. I tell them I don't only want to get up to make you all cereal?

Yolanda Williams: (Laugh)

Decoteau Irby: You know what I mean? Like I would rather lay here, you know what I am saying? I know you all can (indiscernible) (00:31:44) your cereal.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: I get up, I am part of the team you know what I mean.

Yolanda Williams: Listen!

Decoteau Irby: We have to model it. We have to model community and I don't know if you have seen, oh, I didn't want to get into all of it, but I'm sure you have seen that whole social experiment that was, that McDonald's conversation around a father bringing only his child to McDonald's and not the other children in the house.

Decoteau Irby: I didn't see that.

Yolanda Williams: Oh, thank you Jesus, I am glad you didn't because it was terrible.

Decoteau Irby: I didn't see it.

Yolanda Williams: Because what I have learned, you know, as I decolonize is just how deep the indoctrination goes into this white capitalist patriarchy. It's so deep the indoctrination from the moment we come out the womb and until we are buried because it is just around us all the time. We don't even really understand how individualistic we are indoctrinated to be, and so for me when I saw, like all these people were just like those are not his kids, he is bringing his child food, those are not his kids and I might had have him thinking like we feed children, period!

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: It's not about – we just, I see a child and they are hungry and I feed them, and it doesn't matter if they're not mine, I am going to feed the children and I feel like we've gotten so used to this oppression that we don't even see how it's affecting us collectively as black people because it's so much individualism and a lot of that was cultivated, I just saw this amazing thread, he was just like he pinpointed it. A lot of it was cultivating in the 80s because in the 60s or 70s, there was a lot more community-oriented, right. That's when all the Black Panthers and, you know all the civil rights were, a lot of people were collectively organizing. When the government killed all those people off and then introduced drugs to the community and it was in the 80s excess, everybody was just on board with just making money and that was the focus and it stopped being about community and now we are seeing the effects of that and how people are able to have conflict. No one is able to speak to each other with empathy and respect.

Decoteau Irby: Right.

Yolanda Williams: We see that on social media and in person just the lack of self-awareness, but also a lack of empathy towards the person that you're speaking with and the need to be right is so ingrained in us. The white supremacy culture traits are everywhere and if we're not careful, and a lot of us are aware, we will be modeling to our children how to basically maintain system of oppression, just by being, just by refusing to be a model. And on top of that, you are also modeling that they matter too when you bring them with them. I think a lot of us forget that children matter, that children should be a part of the conversation.

We keep talking about black liberation, but for a lot of us black liberation does not even include children, because we all here still want to whip them and yell at them, and want the freedom to

do whatever the hell we want to on them. So if your liberation movement does not include children and they don't have a say in it, it's not true liberation. It's harmful to me still because children are the most marginalized and oppressed group of anyone and they have zero power like we do collectively. They can't raise themselves, so we always have to be inviting them into spaces that are age-appropriate and allowing them to have a say, and I love that you, you know, you weren't just like, go over there and sit down, leave me alone with these notes, you read the note! Which is like, okay, okay, yeah, you read, I forgot that, you know what I am saying. Like that's how we need to treat our children like they matter because then they grow up and they feel like they matter and that their voice matters and that they are able to make a change.

Decoteau Irby: No, I mean what you are saying as armoring is very true and I think it's good opportunity for me to talk about this because I think a lot of what I do I just, you know, I'll never explain the why, but yeah, like I bring my children to stuff, and sometimes when people ask me all that, like I want them to be in a room I think one of the challenges is, is that I find that children do not have enough opportunities to be around adults that is doing and modeling things, right. So they are often told, but they don't have the chance to walk along, walk behind, they had very few chances to walk ahead off and in front of us, but a lot of times even out, so my children like, you know, we are going to XYZ, like you lead the way, you walk, you know, we are going to walk around the neighborhood, I know when they were pretty young, I would say, you know, do you all know where we are at, they will be like, uh, and I will be like, you all lead the way. I am going to follow you. Go get us back home. You know what I am saying. And if they took well, all kind of different routes, I just went where they went, you know what I mean?

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: And it instills the kind of, so my son – one of my good friends visited from North Carolina and he said that he, you know, he wanted to walk around the neighborhood and my son at the time was five, and he was like, I am going to show you around. You know what I mean. He's walking him around and everything. I mean of course he made his way to the coffee shop and got him a baker or whatever you know what I mean. And a hot chocolate, but he was just like, yeah, he was like he ran into some (indiscernible) (00:36:46) and he was just like, you know, they stopped the talk and he was like, yeah, my friend's son is giving me a walk in to around the neighborhood and he's five. But I wanted him to have that sense of like, you know, I can kind of lead, you know, adults. You know what I mean?

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: He could lead a friend through his community and that sort of things so I think that that confidence to be able to do something like that doesn't grow unless they have a parent, a caretaker in their life that says okay, I am going to let you leave me home.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: Now he knows he is confident and somebody else is, you know, a visitor to our community and he's five or six, but I can lead you around, I can show you where you need to go, you know what I am saying. And so those are the kind of things that I think are important and you know, I can remember my daughter was very young, I would do these professional development sessions and a lot of people they would say like, you know, I don't have – which by the way, this became more difficult with two children, but if I could take one, it's very easy to take one with me and I will take her to stuff with me, but before we will go, I would tell her what I am going to be doing, what we are going to be doing, and I will give her little things to do. You are going to hand out the papers, you are going to hand out the pencils and so I would introduce her at the beginning of their presentation, like I'm here to present, you know, my daughter, you know. I tell her introduce yourself, she introduces yourself, I would say she is going to be helping me today. Now, it would take a long time because when I tell her to hand out the papers, she is not going to give like five to the table, she is going to do each one. But I always wanted her to do it her way.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: And people loved it, you know what I mean. And it would be interesting because at that time, and she was probably about three or four at this time and people were writing evaluations of the workshops, a lot of we thing like she could be involved. You know, and I will be like, alright, Kayla is going to circulate and collect the papers now. You are going to put them on the edge of your table where she can come around and get them. She will come around and get the papers or XYZ. But I intentionally say she is going to be there, I don't want her to just be passive.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: I want her to be actively involved, a solid plan for her to be actively involved and if we thought about our children as people who are going to walk alongside, behind, and sometimes in front of us...

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: We will plan out our lives and plan out our days and plan out our work in a different way, that allows them to actually be there and be present.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: So I think that those kind of things, those – so I am mentioning this because those are the experiences that taught her that she can be in a meeting with me two weeks ago, and as a 9-year-old now and slid me a note. You know what I am saying.

Yolanda Williams: She found – she was like I can contribute.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah. You are in it.

Yolanda Williams: You are in it. Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: You are in it.

Yolanda Williams: I am not just here as a bystander, like I'm listening and I have something to contribute and what's weird when we start thinking about adults and how they generally view children as like empty vessels and I hate when people say that. It's weird because children are the ultimate resistors, they teach us about resistance. They are like, you told, especially younger children, let them lead because they are going to show you how to resist. They are going to show you – they naturally are – they naturally are like no, don't tell me what to know, I don't want to do that. This is my body. Like I don't want to go here. I don't want to eat that. And we, because we are taught that we have to impose upon them, our will we beat out of them or yell out of them, or gaslight that out of them and then we wonder why – then they get older and we are just like why didn't you stand up for yourself? Or why didn't you speak up. This is kind of like we may have to do that. When? We have got to just allow them to lead sometimes, like you said, or at least walk alongside us. And you know when Gia is older and, well, now, she will let me a while, but what I have been noticing is that I needed to check my ableism in regards to her autism, right, because in my mind, I'm still thinking of her as someone who is not capable of doing certain things. I have started to assume competence at all levels.

Decoteau Irby: Right.

Yolanda Williams: I looked up one day and I looked at – when I gave – I usually give her a little food and I have been letting her just carry it into the – from the kitchen to her little table. She will sit down and eat, blah-blah-blah. And I was to myself and I was like where the hell does she put this plate. And I will start to get irritated because I am just like where is this plate (indiscernible) (00:41:04) eating stuff, she had put that plate in the sink. I just didn't see her do

it. I am just like she puts her plate in the sink now. You know and I just was like I am noticing that she notices pattern, she notices me doing things and she's modeling them. So I really need to be more careful about what I'm doing and always assume competence for her to be able to do the things that I'm doing because she is watching. The girl wants to make eggs now all the time. I just – I try to do as much as I can because she can't be touching the eggs, but she will grab the salt and pepper and she will want to – she wants to grab the olive oil, for me to make the little eggs and I'm just like this child is watching me. She is watching me.

Decoteau Irby: Oh yeah.

Yolanda Williams: She is watching me and I assume that she wasn't because she's autistic. But she is watching me. And that was my internalized ableism, that's my strength ableism and a lot of parents with autistic kids, we need to check it all the time, we need to check our ableism because – and we could check our adultism. I guess that should be childism because that's the ism right there. Our adult supremacy is that we can only do things right, and they need correction all the time, when really they are teachers just like we are. We just need to be able to see it. So I'm so thankful for like the tips that you already gave. You know I love what you said about modeling, how to be in community. Are there any other ways that parents can do this?

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, I mean I think you know thinking about whatever household configuration is as a community, right, thinking about the different groups that you are in and how you show up and how you interact and how you talk about people after the meeting, you know, after...

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: You talk about people when, you know, you're away from their presence, all of that is, you know, modeling and they pick up on all that stuff. I think the other thing is just, you know, just asking a lot of questions. I mean I'm a person, and I used to ask them questions and just not expecting an immediate kind of like answer or you know, but just let them sit with ideas and to sit with curiosities. I tend to do that a lot, you know, one of the things that I always like to remind people, like, even if you think about something like math, the way the students like learn math is that people tell them like these are the steps, this is the procedure. Well, if everybody had only learned steps, we would have no mathematical theory, right. We will have no formula, like somebody actually in human history had to make this up.

Yolanda Williams: Right.

Decoteau Irby: So I'm always saying that like, you know, whether it's a particular set of steps and procedures, somebody developed that. So even math and that kind of thing is actually a

creative undertaking that is possible when people are curious about how to solve a problem or answer a question. And so I'm always giving them like, you know, they ask me or XYZ and, you know, we always try to flip it back around to them and ask them a question about it and then I just kind of hold it in my head and ask them, you know, even a week later, hey, have you been thinking about that? You know, problem with our (indiscernible) (00:44:07) you know, just like, yeah, I have and that we might talk about it and then another week might go by and I might bring it up again, but I really try to resist giving them answers to everything...

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Decoteau Irby: Because I want them to be able to develop and think about ways of solving problems, of answering questions without me always having to get them an answer and I think that again that builds like the strong capacity for who I want them to be as they move to the world because everything is not going to be solved in a day or a month or sometimes a decade, you know what I am saying.

Yolanda Williams: That's critical thinking and I feel like that's what's missing from a lot of the conversations that we're having, is to be able to have nuanced critical thinking. Yeah, that's a skill.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, and it just takes time.

Yolanda Williams: It does.

Decoteau Irby: I mean competent to think and to wrestle and, you know, that sort of thing. So I really enjoy doing that. I've had to learn to do it. I mean the easy thing is like, especially when you don't know the answer to some is to just tell them what it is, you know. And it is open.

Yolanda Williams: That's white supremacy culture trait since emergency.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: It is.

Decoteau Irby: And so you know, now (indiscernible) (00:45:17).

Yolanda Williams: And since emergency, we got to slow down.

Decoteau Irby: Well, yeah, you tell me. You tell me, right, which would be 'oh', and then they come back, and I am like 'ah, maybe that's one way to think about it', there's a lot of ways to

think about it. That is not how I think about it and then there will be certain things where I would be like I want you to tell me how you think about this thing, or this issue or problem from, you know, give me three different ways that you can think about it, give me four different ways that you could think about it. I don't want, I am less interested in what the actual landing point answer is, and I am more interested in the multiple different ways you could think about what this is, which is an essential part of being able to operate in a healthy community, is to accept that there is five particular different ways to get to an answer, recognizing though that those five particular ways for ways have different implications in terms of the efficiency, collectivism, XYZ, all of it might have different characteristics associated with them, but none of them are like absolutely wrong, right.

Yolanda Williams: Yes, I love it.

Decoteau Irby: So just helping them think about stuff like that, like I love to be like, yeah, well, you know, okay, give me, you know, four-five ways that you could address this and then I will talk about which one works the best.

Yolanda Williams: Do you know as I am listening to you do you understand that you are essentially helping your children to not internalize white supremacy culture traits? Like do you understand? Like because one right way is also a white supremacy culture trait that a lot of us don't even realize that we perpetuate because it's – like it's the wider not the short way.

Decoteau Irby: Right, yeah.

Yolanda Williams: So like as you have your kids do this, they are learning basically so this is their – this is the way they are going to think – think that, it doesn't have to just be this binary of right or wrong. It's a spectrum of ideas and we could figure out what collectively is going to work based on, you know, like you said the outcome. You realize you will be doing that, and it is probably not on purpose

Decoteau Irby: Well, I mean kind of sort of, but no, I wouldn't have put this example into that language, but I mean I think because of my work and like cooperatives in particular, you know, I do a lot of stuff around organizational leadership and antiracist – in creating antiracist practices within organizations. So I'm aware of a lot of it and I've been in a cooperative for, you know, and in several different kind of cooperative spaces and you can't believe in one right answer if you know.

Yolanda Williams: You just can't!

Decoteau Irby: If you are going to be in a cooperative (indiscernible) (00:47:46).

Yolanda Williams: Right, right. You are not cooperating.

Decoteau Irby: You are just going – you are not going, you know. You are just not going to last long, you know what I am saying. So yeah, so it's a little bit of, kind of just like, you know, I can see why that way works. I could also see why this way works, which doesn't mean that you can't have a particular answer or approach or a way that you think works best.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: But it's just that other ones can work too and do work.

Yolanda Williams: Yes. Right.

Decoteau Irby: Not just can't, but they do, yeah.

Yolanda Williams: Both and. That's non-dualistic thinking and, you know, I'm always asking my audience in my – the people who are following me on social media to try to break out of the binary of one right way, you know, of the – because that's just, it's a box and it's a trap and it really does keep us from the radical re-imagination of this world being a more applicable place because when you're in this box, there is no way how do you – there can only be one way out, right. No, ain't doing that here. I love this conversation. I want to ask you before we wrap it up, what does decolonizing parenting mean to you?

Decoteau Irby: I think about it as being willing to let go of parenting practices and approaches that are doing more harm or have the potential to do more harm than good, to both not only children, but more like to the relationship the children have to the many people who are in their village, right. So I even think about, you know, it might kind of seem like selfish, I tend to think a lot about like not only like what would a particular action a thing or a decision or way of being, how does that impact my child, I'll also think about how it impacts my relationship to them and then by virtue of thinking about it in relational terms, how it actually will ultimately impact me too. So I will be thinking about basic thing, like I want my children to talk to me and come to me if they have a problem because I have wisdom that they don't have, right. They know things, I know things, but I also have wisdom, right. And so I am always thinking about like if I keep doing this thing, does it diminish our relationship such that I wouldn't have the opportunity to learn to grow to understand them better in a way that I can actually help them. So I think that when I think about it, it's not just the break from a past, in terms of like, you know, some of the things that I experienced when I was growing up, but it's also my ability to let go of some of the things that I've done, that I do, right and that I have done in the past that don't work anymore, because of the child's development or because we lived in a different

place, or they are just at a different stage in their life and so you know I think about how my parenting was different, when they weren't in, you know, formal school settings and how it has adjusted, how I have had to make adjustments and let go of some things and adapt to new things, you know, as I moved to, you know, as they are school age now and I think the biggest piece of it is really trying to think about, you know, the white supremacy and the anti-blackness and really try to let go of those things and embrace things in adopt things that are going to be affirming and are going to bring joy and that are going to bring connectedness and rootedness to black culture and those sorts of things. That's kind of how I think about. I know this is a very broad...

Yolanda Williams: No, I love it.

Decoteau Irby: Answer, but yeah. Yeah...

Yolanda Williams: No, you know, wrapping all that is just basically ego death and self-awareness, you know, being able to let go, but also be aware of your own – like conscious parenting really is just self-awareness. It is really just like – and I center myself all the time, so you said it was (indiscernible) (00:51:46) because in order for our kids to be good we have to be, in order for our kids to grow up with a true sense of self and with confidence, we have to figure how to cultivate that within us and project that out to them and model it for them, right. So yeah, we have to think about ourselves sometimes selfishly in order to be good parents, in order to model the things that we want to model for them and in order for us to be able to deal with parenting in general because parenting is freaking hard.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: I don't know how anybody has more than one kid!

Decoteau Irby: Well, I will tell you it's the trip because, you know, my daughter one time – so I play guitar and for years, I had stopped playing and she remembers growing up hearing music in the basement, me and all my homies will come together, we will play like every Friday night. So she always heard music in the basement and she will come down there and she is like little and everybody, you know, she's like, you know, to say good night basically on Friday nights.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: So I remember one time, when I was waiting in a car for her to go to a school because I used to drop her younger brother off and his school started 30 minutes earlier than her, so we would sit in the car and one time, we were sitting in the car and she was like, you know, you know daddy, you know, why you don't play your guitar no more? You know what I am

saying. And I was like, yeah, you know, life's different, I'm busy, da-da-da-da and she was just like, you know, 'well', you know, like, 'yeah, by the time you all go to bed, you know, I got to do the dishes, I got to XYZ', she was like, 'well, mommy can't help', and I am like mommy do help, we are both doing it, you know what I mean.

Yolanda Williams: Right (laugh)

Decoteau Irby: So she is like, oh, she was like 'well', and then she sat quite for a while and she was like, 'do you want to be a rock star?' And I said, like, 'sometimes, I dream about that,' you know what I mean and she said, 'well, how are you going to be a rock star if you don't practice.'

Yolanda Williams: Oh my gosh!

Decoteau Irby: And I was like, 'okay', and it's the trip because that's what helped me pick my guitar up the very next week. I got my guitar out of the case and went to an open (indiscernible) (00:53:48).

Yolanda Williams: Oh my God, I love her!

Decoteau Irby: But I mean she tried to really help me.

Yolanda Williams: (indiscernible) (00:53:52). I love it though. Like absolutely like how you are going to do this if you are not doing that.

Decoteau Irby: And you know, the scary thing about it is that like, her, like (indiscernible) (00:54:03) and how she was talking to me, was (indiscernible) (00:54:05) is how we talk it about.

Yolanda Williams: Listen. She is just like, I want you to think about this for a sec. (Laugh)

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Yolanda Williams: I love it.

Decoteau Irby: I am not telling you to play, but I am telling you are not going to be a rock star if you don't practice, which is going to – you know what I mean.

Yolanda Williams: I love it!

Decoteau Irby: So you know I said, you know so that's the kind of stuff that I think and so why I am mentioning that is I think they are like getting caught up in, you know, the work, in you know, the career and everything, and really, you know, putting down, you know, something that brought me a tremendous amount of joy, she got me to think about that and so I had to be like, okay, why am I – how am I letting all of these other things like squeeze out, something that I have loved and I used to have his other kind of practice and routine in my life and she's the person who could see that and reminded me about it and encouraged me to jump back into it, because if I cared about it, you know, I mean then I will make time for it.

Yolanda Williams: Yes. And to me, it is like she was like thinking probably like this was a strong memory of her childhood and she wants to hear it again, and I – you know, when I am listening to you speak about how you and your kids interactive, it really makes me think about that whole, I'm not one of your little friend things and your kids are your friends, like you all are – you have developed a friendship with your children and that's why you can never convince me that you not being your child – like you saying to your child, I am not your friend to me is not a good thing. I don't believe that, I feel like of course it's a different friendship, but in order for our kids to know what friendship really is, they have to experience it and they have to model it and the fact that your children are able to be so open with you and you to them and you include them like that is friendship and they are going to take that with them into every friend-partnership, relationship that they are going to have, they are going to take what your sowing into them, into those relationships and it is going to set the tone for the fact that they are not going to let nobody oppress them and they are going to ask their friends questions, they are going to challenge their friends and they are going to have people around them, that aren't just yes people, but you know want them to think critically and I think it's a beautiful thing.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, I appreciate the affirmation. You don't always feel like that.

Yolanda Williams: Of course not. So it's hard. Yeah (laugh).

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like all that, you know what I mean.

Yolanda Williams: You know, to be this type of person and you know every day is a struggle for me because I wasn't raised that way. So I am always like fighting against an urge inside of me, to do the stuff that I don't want to do. It's a constant fight because it's not a habit for me yet. But it sounds like you have practiced and so it's more – I don't know if it's a habit for you, but I know for me, it's not yet. I am still working on it becoming a habit, for me to be nonviolent as a habit, I have to fight against the urge because it's all I knew growing up.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: Whereas for some people, they continuously like, you know, when I was only four, so I still have a lot of decolonizing and healing and trauma work to do, but I think as I continue this work and as she gets older and as we start to have a different relationship, it will be easier for me. I am not going to say easier, I am going to say different. I don't want to say easier, because it might present a whole another case with the tweens and teens, but still I would rather this and its difficulty than the alternative, which is abusive.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, absolutely.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, I mean, that's why, you know, the top of the segment, you know, the segment when I was saying that sometimes I would be feeling like I've done too much...

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Decoteau Irby: You know what I mean. Because you know, like I said, you know even as they get older and you know their arguments become more sophisticated, they become more determined, you know what I mean, it really is being a test for me and especially my advocacy for them with other people, where certain things I am just like, you know, (indiscernible) (00:58:04) like, I don't understand the system. I don't understand, like, how can I go to the school and, you know, advocate for you if you don't give me the whole truth and if you are not explaining the XYZ, you know what I am saying. So that's why I say it's not always like, sometimes, I would be feeling like I have done too much and there is oftentimes where people might be like, you know, even I have to fight against this, you know, like given them the kind of freedom and leverage, you know, wealthy white kids or something like that get. But I'm like, kids, you have this, you know what I am saying.

Yolanda Williams: In general.

Decoteau Irby: I have to always check myself with that, that I am just like, you know, excuse my language, but you know like, 'was this the white (profanity) that I was doing,' right for them, or something like that.

Yolanda Williams: Listen.

Decoteau Irby: And even thinking about it. Now, this is just what kids need to grow into healthy human beings. And so you know, that's something that I even have to wrestle with because a lot of some of how I interact growing up in the South. Well, I grew up in South

Carolina, black people, I have spent so much time around black people saying that some of the things that they wish, they probably see me doing now...

Yolanda Williams: (Indiscernible) (00:59:10)

Decoteau Irby: (indiscernible) (00:59:11) you know what I mean and that sort of thing so...

Yolanda Williams: Yeah, it's an indoctrination too and so I actually just wrote about this on Twitter about how the way – the way that we are talking about raising our children is actually very ancestral and it has been before colonization, how indigenous people raised their children with autonomy, with agency, with collective and village around them, like there's discipline, but a lot of it was natural consequences and what is now rebranded to gentle parenting by white people is really just ancestral ways of parenting that was stripped from indigenous people through colonization and enslavement. So we ain't new to this, but we are true to this, okay, it's in our blood, and I reject anything that says that this is some white people's (profanity) because white people are the ones who stripped us from this ancestral practice of raising our children this way and also whiteness is inherently violent and that's why we have the type of parenting that we have had for so long, is the protection against whiteness and then they just worked it into a cultural thing. So I appreciate you saying that. Because I know it's a fear, but it's a fear – like I don't talk about that all day. We are having a – well, you know. And that's why I don't use the term gentle parenting, I either use conscious parenting because I believe that gentle parenting is – that's some white people's (profanity) because it's rebranded parenting, into this word and I feel like for the black folks, it turns them off, turns all of us off because we are just like what the (profanity) is gentle, what are we talking about here? We are – really, we are talking about being conscious of ourselves, and that's why I call it conscious parenting, being mindful of our mood, our mindset, our socioeconomic status and how that impacts our parenting and how we then project that onto our kids. That's just consciousness. It's all it is.

Decoteau Irby: Yeah.

Yolanda Williams: And I'm more comfortable with that. I am not comfortable with the term gentle parenting, I don't like it. And I don't like it because of its origins, not because of what it is talking about. The origins have been rebranded and repackaged because of, you know, and then, workshops sold off of how indigenous people have been doing things since millennium like, I don't like it.

Decoteau Irby: Right, right.

Yolanda Williams: Anyway, because you got to give me that tangent. Thank you so much Decoteau for joining me today. How can people find you on social media?

Decoteau Irby: Yeah, so I am on social media, I am on Twitter, @decoteaurby and I am on instagram @decoteablack. The easiest way to gain access to all of my social media, to learn what's happening with my music, my community activism, my writing, my university work is to visit my website which is www.decoteaurby.com, that is D-E-C-O-T-E-A-U-I-R-B-YES dot com. Thanks so much.

Yolanda Williams: You are welcome. And I will make sure to link all that in the show notes. You all please go check out this brother's work and by his books, and if you're listening to this and you have an organization, go ahead and hire him for a workshop and pay him, I am not playing with you all. Thank you all so much for joining us for this conversation. Please make sure to leave a rating and review and let me know what you think in the comments on social media. And until next time, keep it conscious! Bye you all!