

ADVANCING YOUTH OF  
COLOR:  
THRIVING THROUGH  
MINDFULNESS AND CRITICAL  
CONTEMPLATIVE PEDAGOGY

Illinois State University Center for Teaching and  
Learning Symposium

January 9, 2019

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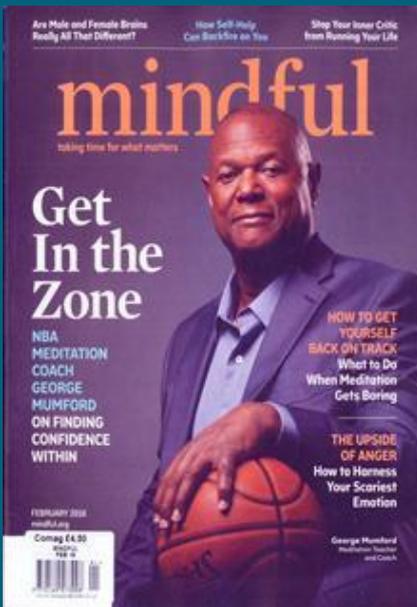
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- Research Fellow, Interdisciplinary Research Leaders Program, University of Minnesota/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Board Member, Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMIND) and the Mindfulness in Education Network (MIEN)
- Facilitator, UDC Contemplative Learning Initiative
- 20+ years expertise in urban education, youth development, program management
- Former volunteer and Coordinator, Youth Leadership Program, The Gambia, West Africa

GOOD MORNING!  
BUENOS DIAS!  
A SALAAM ALAIKUM!  
NANGADEF!



## INTENTION

Consider how we might create and sustain youth of color thriving within higher education through the use of mindfulness and critical contemplative pedagogy.



## Mindful Schools

Integrating Mindfulness Into Education



**Learn Mindfulness**

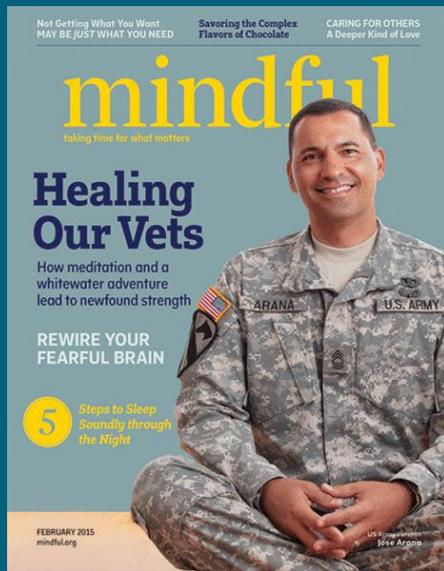


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Lesson parenting is a trip!

## PARENT MAP

finding MINDFULNESS

Good Growing newsletter for inside the childhood Screen violence The latest info on screen saving taking their baby's weight

FOCUS ON HEALTH

WINTER WILDLIFE ADVENTURES: FOUR NATURE-IFIC ROAD TRIPS

NEW UNDERSTAND HOW TO SWITCH OFF SAY GOODBYE TO LOW VITALITY UNCOVER THE PITFALLS OF ENERGY FOODS

# Mindfulness

## BOOST YOUR ENERGY

DESIGN YOUR OWN Exercise Plan Improve your vitality with the right form of physical activity

50+ ENERGY BOOSTING FIXES

Balance Achieve harmony between work & play

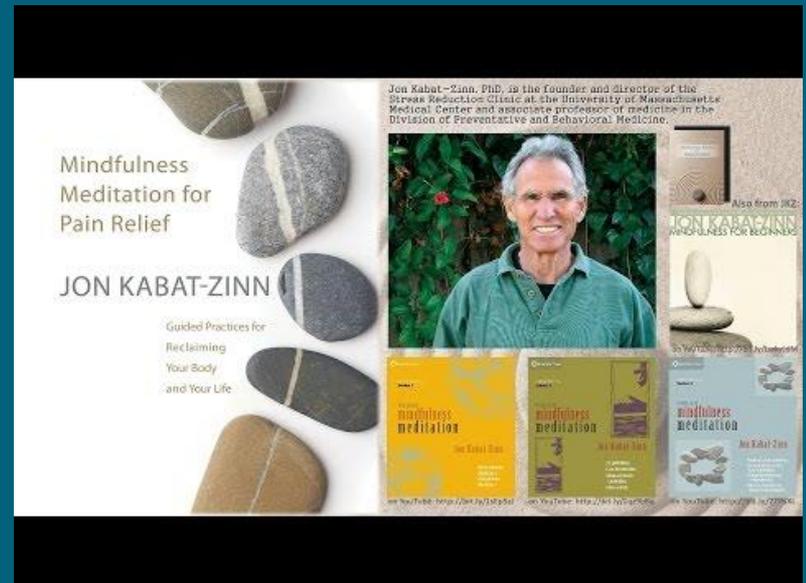
10 Steps To positive thinking

HOW TO ENJOY OPTIMUM LEVELS OF VITAL ENERGY



# WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

- Paying attention in a particular kind of way
- In the moment
- Without judgement



## HAVE YOU EVER??

- Read a passage 2 or 3 times but have no idea what it said?
- Been in a conversation with a colleague but not really present to it (but still nodding your head)?
- Driven to work or home but can't recall the actual commute?
- Gotten caught up in negative cycles of thought or rumination about your workload, a co-worker, or current project?

# WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

- Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVSpzA2BwNs>

# CMind

the center for  
Contemplative Mind in Society

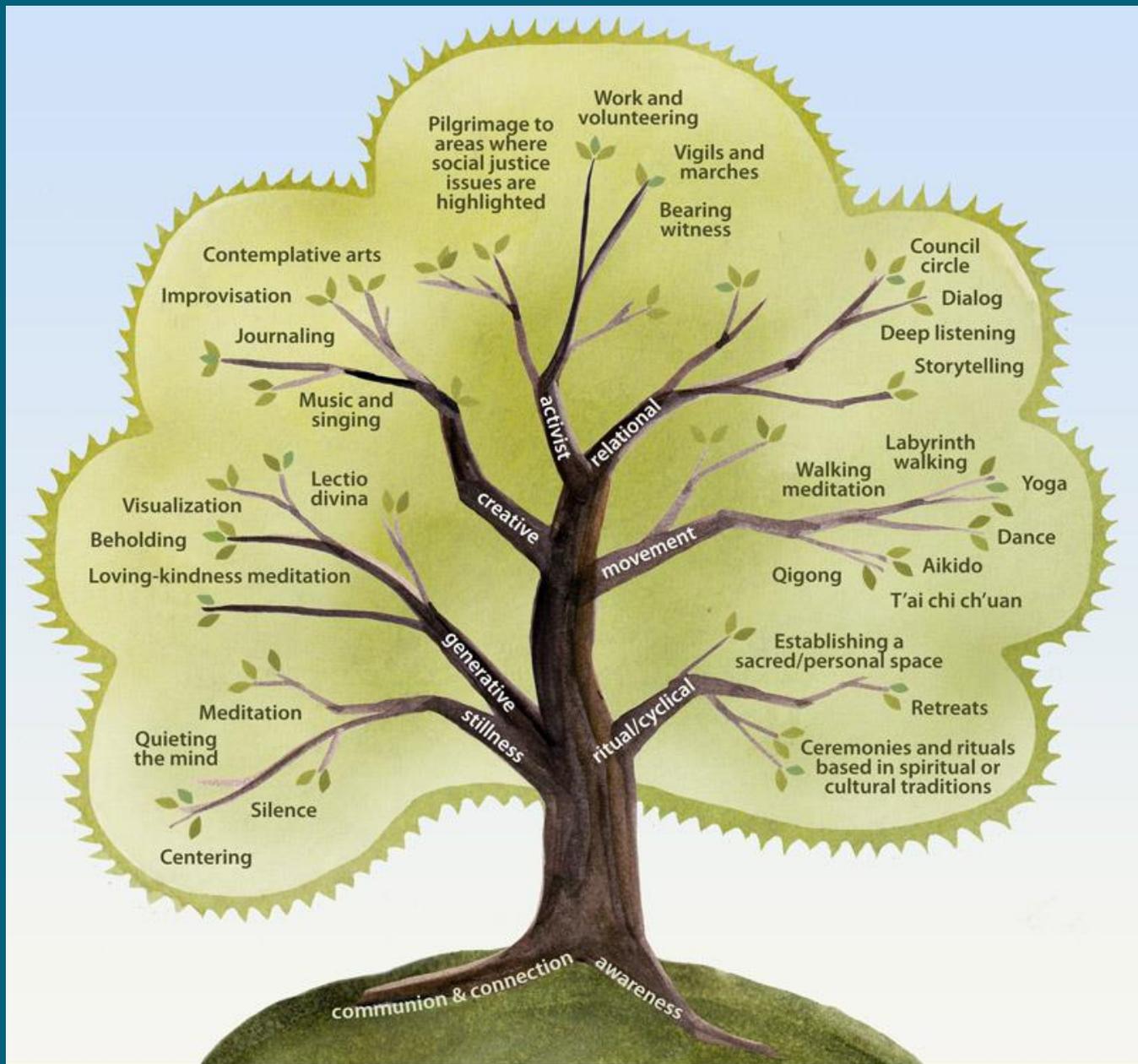


The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society transforms higher education by supporting and encouraging the use of contemplative/introspective practices and perspectives to create active learning and research environments that look deeply into experience and meaning for all in service of a more just and compassionate society.

# CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES & PEDAGOGY

Contemplative practices as those that cultivate critical, first-person awareness. Such practices might include mindfulness, meditation, yoga, rituals, reflective writing, and a range of other activities that when engaged, can deepen our awareness of and connection to ourselves, the human community, and the natural world. Integrated into the teaching and learning environment, contemplative pedagogy (and practices) can transform learning, promote true community, and empower us to a more just and compassionate society and world.

Source: Center for Contemplative Mind in Society



## The Tree of Contemplative Practices

[www.contemplativemind.org](http://www.contemplativemind.org)

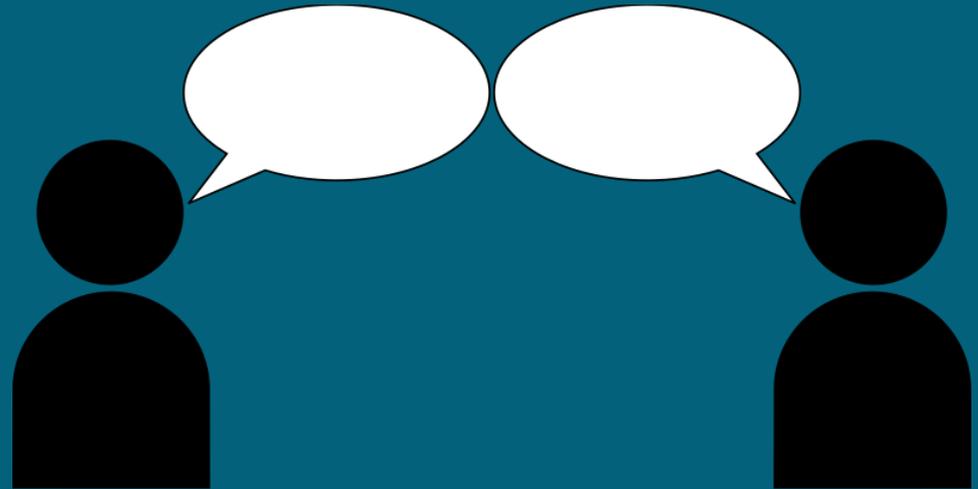
# WHAT INSPIRES MY CONTEMPLATIVE WORK...

- Family & Culture
- African Pilgrimage
- Jazz, Gospel, & Soul Music
- Black Nationalism, Pan Afrikanism
  - Liberation ideology
- Dance, Drums, Celebration
- Orisha belief system (West Africa)



# WHAT IS YOUR CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE?

Family, cultural, or  
spiritual practices?  
Personal practices?  
How often do you  
engage in them? How  
do they support you?  
Think broadly!



5 minutes to share with a  
partner!!

# WELCOME TO UDC NEW FIREBIRDS!

*Aspire. Accomplish. Take on the World.*



## University of the District of Columbia and its role in the community

The only public university in the nation's capital and the only urban land-grant university in the United States, The University of the District of Columbia is committed to a broad mission of education, research and community service. Established by abolitionist Myrtilla Miner in 1851, the University of DC offers Associate's, Bachelor's and Master's Degrees and a host of workplace development services designed to create opportunities for student success. The University is comprised of a Community College, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, School of Business and Public Administration, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences, and the David A. Clarke School of Law.

Check out these sources for local information:

[The Washington Post](#) | [The Washington Post](#) | [The Washington Post](#)



## Experience our Unique Community Study locally, live globally

UDC extends beyond its campus footprint, offering easy access to world-famous monuments, political intrigue and cultural attractions everywhere you look. An education here opens doors to opportunities that can only be found in the nation's capital.

Hop on the [Metro](#) and within minutes you can be touring the [White House](#), kayaking on the [Potomac](#), attending an opening night performance at the [Source](#) or exploring the beauty of nature in [Rock Creek Park](#). Washington, DC may be the capital of the United States, but it is also home to the world's embassies, languages and cuisines; the headquarters of major think tanks, NGOs and non-profits; the heart of American politics and a rich source of inspiration to writers, film-makers, musicians and artists of various backgrounds.

# YOUTH OF COLOR IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Youth of color are more likely to be arrested, prosecuted, sentenced, and incarcerated for typical youth behaviors than are their White peers...**More than 100 years since the youth justice system was founded in this country, vast disparities in system involvement between youth of color and White youth persist.**

James Bell, Director  
The Haywood Burns Institute for Youth and Family Justice



# YOUTH OF COLOR IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



**BURNS INSTITUTE** FOR JUSTICE FAIRNESS & EQUITY

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## New Report from the BI: A Brief History of the Youth of Color in the Justice System

Posted on September 23, 2015 by Angel Jackson

[Repairing the Breach: A Brief History of Youth of Color in the Justice System](#)



**Today, more than 2 million people are incarcerated and more than 7 million are on probation, parole, or other supervision in the United States.** Similarly, we have nearly 1 million young people involved in the youth justice system. The overwhelming majority in both systems are people of color. The national reaction to these numbers covers a wide range of commentary, scholarship, and punditry.

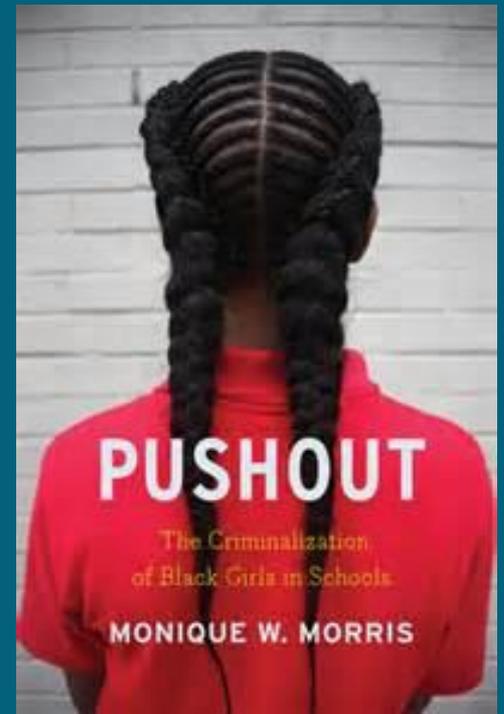
**Too much of the analysis about how we arrived at this situation and what should be done about it is ahistorical.**

Black youth are more than **4 times** as likely as white youth to be incarcerated.

Native American youth more than 3x as likely, and Latino youth were almost twice as likely to be arrested for the same offense as **White youth.**



Dr. Monique W. Morris,  
Co-founder, The National  
Black Women's Justice  
Institute



Black girls must often navigate through a landscape that reinforces multidimensional stereotypes and debilitating narratives that negatively impact how black femininity is understood. Implicit racial and gender bias impacts how we read the behaviors and action of black girls.

- Dr. Monique W. Morris





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## LATEST NEWS

**Judge Decreases Charlottesville Attacker's Sentence From 20 Years to Less Than Four**

3h [HATERS](#)

**Chief Meteorologist Fired After Using Racial Slur in Reference to MLK**

4h [ORGANIZATIONAL MISBEHAVIOR](#)

**Black Parents on Obama Cradling Their Newborn: 'The Most Pivotal Moment' of Our Lives**

8h [GOOD NEWS](#)

**Second Black Man Found Dead at Home of Ed Buck**

8h [ORGANIZATIONAL MISBEHAVIOR](#)

**Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: Trump is a Racist**

9h [ORGANIZATIONAL MISBEHAVIOR](#)

## GOOD NEWS

# Tennessee Governor Grants Full Clemency to Cyntoia Brown

*"Imposing a life sentence on a juvenile that would require her to serve at least 51 years before even being eligible for parole consideration is too harsh," said Gov. Bill Haslam.*

By Sheryl Estrada | 07 January



# IMPLICIT BIAS AND BLACK CHILDREN

Implicit biases — subtle, often subconscious stereotypes that guide our expectations and interactions with people.

**Black children are 3.6x more likely to be suspended from preschool**

PRE-SCHOOL

## Bias Isn't Just A Police Problem, It's A Preschool Problem

September 28, 2016 · 5:00 AM ET  
Heard on Morning Edition

CORY TURNER

A new study out of Yale found that pre-K teachers, white and black alike, spend more time watching black boys, expecting

Source: Yale Child Study Center, Dr. Walter Gilliam, Lead Researcher



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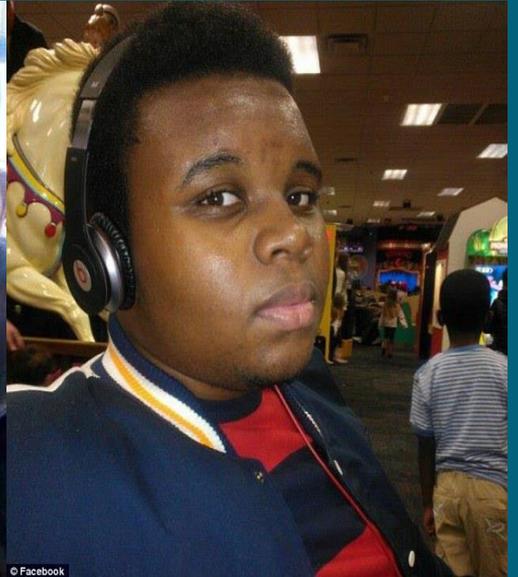
March 6, 2014

## Black Boys Viewed as Older, Less Innocent Than Whites, Research Finds

*Police likelier to use force against black children when officers 'dehumanize' blacks, study says*

The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, published online Feb. 24, 2014; Phillip Atiba Goff, PhD,

# THE DEHUMANIZATION OF BLACK YOUTH



© Facebook



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SILENCE

## RACISM, TRUTH-TELLING, HEALING

Our racial group identities are conditioned and complex. The point of painting this visible picture of our relative reality is to illustrate the need for a more balanced understanding of racial distress. We have ALL been trained to fear, fight, and ignore each other out of greed, avoidance, hatred, or indifference. We ALL have history of wounds, and we all have the capacity to transform.

Ruth King, *Mindful of Race: Transforming Race from the Inside Out* (2018)

# CRITICAL CONTEMPLATIVE PEDAGOGY

The use of contemplative approaches to transform internalized, institutional, and societal/global injustice and oppression.

Compatible with:

- Critical race theory
- Gender /sexuality/feminist studies
- Culturally responsive pedagogy
- Anti oppressive pedagogy

# CRITICAL CONTEMPLATIVE PEDAGOGY

How does our pedagogy, practices, and institutional policies create harm for students of color?

Social Justice & Systems Focused

Culturally Relevant (Diverse, co-constructed, strengths based)

Trauma Informed  
(Who might be harmed? Am I prepared/trained?)

Begins with Self-Inquiry (What are my intentions?)

# ALL PRESENT IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT!

- Institutional & Individualized Racism
- Hidden bias
- Internalized oppression
- Imposter syndrome
- Dominant and subordinate groups
- White supremacy & White Fragility
- Colorism
- Adverse childhood experiences & Trauma
- Poverty, Economic Marginalization



# CRITICAL MINDFULNESS AND CONTEMPLATIVE APPROACHES

- *Critical*
  - Mandates an understanding of historical and structural oppression and injustice
- *Consistent*
  - Constantly interrogates our perceptions and assumptions about youth of color and other marginalized groups
- *Compassionate*
  - Based upon the radical notion that all life matters & that we are all a work in progress
- *Courageous*
  - Demands that we do the inner work, justice/equity, and systemic work

# A YOUTH VISUALIZATION PRACTICE



A guided visualization in which we create a “Grand Vision” for a youth of color.

# CRITICAL CONTEMPLATIVE APPROACHES FOR YOUTH OF COLOR

- Affirmations
- Storytelling
- Jazz Mindfulness
- Acknowledgements
- Touchstone Meditation
- Vision boards
- Black Youth Visualization
- Reflective Journaling
- Family & culture based practices



# THE PROJECT YOUTH M.I.N.D. STUDY (MINDFULNESS INTEGRATION FOR NONVIOLENT DEVELOPMENT)

- Test a novel intervention, designed to promote youth nonviolence through an integrated model of mindfulness, restorative justice, and equity education.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Interdisciplinary Research Leaders Program, Cohort 2
- Community-Based Participatory Research
- 3 Year Health Equity Leadership Development & Research Training

Research Team: Dr. Sharon T. Alston, Ivy Hylton, Youth and Families, LLC,  
Dr. Michelle C. Chatman.

Photo: Courtesy of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



# THE PROJECT YOUTH MIND MODEL



# NOTED SCHOLARS

- Michael Yellow Bird – Indigenous Mindfulness and Neurodecolonization
- Laura Rendon and Vijay Kanagala - Sentipensante
- Angela Rose Black – Mindfulness For the People
- Rhonda Magee – Color In Sight (book forthcoming on Antiracism and Mindfulness)
- Beth Berila – Contemplative Practices for Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy
- Ruth King – Mindful of Race
- Angel Kyodo Williams – Being Black and Radical Dharma
- David Treleaven – Trauma and Mindfulness
- Jennifer Cannon – Decolonizing Mindfulness
- Stephanie Briggs – Be.Still.Move. & Lenz Fellow, Naropa
- Sheryl Petty – Mindfulness for Social Transformation
- Monika Son – John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Lenwood Hayman - University of Michigan, Flint

THANK YOU!

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