



It is Okay for Children to Feel Shame

By Educator Barnes – October 31, 2021

“My grandparents could not read. Their grandparents were slaves. How are you going to come in here with those grades?”

My father expected us to have As and Bs. When we did not, he would remind us of our ancestors. He wanted us to be ashamed that we were not doing our best with the hope the feeling of shame would motivate us to action. That action was to do better than our ancestors did. This feeling did not damage me as a child. It challenged me to be a better person and live up to my potential and eventually become a productive citizen in society.

For some reason, shame has been demonized and used as a reason to not teach history because white children may feel bad. Don't get me wrong, There is a difference between feeling shame and being publicly shamed and humiliated.

Learning that people who are white enslaved people who are Black is part of history. White children are not the only ones full of feelings when this content is covered. Teaching this does not mean the white children learning this history are oppressors, nor does it mean that the Black children listening are victims of history and doomed for failure.

Avoiding teaching history because some students might feel shame should not happen. If students feel nothing during these history lessons, that is a problem. We all should be ashamed of America's past. Learning about the past can unite students in ensuring their actions create a better tomorrow.

When parents are saying teachers are shaming students and therefore certain aspects of history should not be taught, it makes you wonder what the real reason is and why some of these same parents seemed fine with the curriculum previously.