

My Grandmother's Hands, by Resmaa Menakem

Review

"A fascinating, must-read, groundbreaking book that offers a novel approach to healing America's long-standing racial trauma."—**Joseph L. White, PhD**, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Psychiatry at UC Irvine, author of *The Psychology of Blacks, Black Man Emerging, Black Fathers, and Building Multicultural Competency: Development, Training, and Practice*

"*My Grandmother's Hands* is a revolutionary work of beauty, brilliance, compassion and ultimately, hope. With eloquence and grace, Resmaa Menakem masterfully lays out the missing piece in the puzzle of why, despite so many good intentions, we have not achieved racial justice. Yes, we need to understand white supremacy, but as Menakem so skillfully explains, white supremacy is not rational and we won't end it with our intellect alone. White supremacy is internalized deep into our bodies. We must begin to understand it as white body supremacy and go to the depth of where it is stored, within our collective bones and muscles. To this end, *My Grandmother's Hands* is an intimate guidebook toward racial healing, one that achieves that rare combination for its readers; it is deeply intellectually stimulating while also providing practical ways to engage in the process of repair, even as we read. I believe this book will change the direction of the movement for racial justice."—**Robin DiAngelo**, Racial Justice Educator and author of *White Fragility*

"Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois put his finger on African American consciousness when he wrote 'one ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body.' But even Du Bois never addressed the process of healing the psychological wounds of the 'two-ness.' In *My Grandmother Hands*, Resmaa offers a path of internal reconciliation for a Person enduring the generational trauma of American racism, and gives us all a chance to dream of a healing from it."—**Keith Ellison**, Member of Congress and Deputy Chair of the Democratic National Committee

"Resmaa Menakem cuts to the heart of America's racial crisis with the precision of a surgeon in ways few have before. Addressing the intergenerational trauma of white supremacy and its effects on all of us—understanding it as a true soul wound—is the first order of business if we hope to pull out of the current morass. As this amazing work shows us, policies alone will not do it, and bold social action, though vital to achieving justice, will require those engaged in it to also take action on the injury, deep and personal, from which we all suffer."—**Tim Wise**, bestselling author of *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* and *Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority*

"Forget diversity. Forget teaching tolerance. Forget white guilt. With clarity and insight, Resmaa offers a profoundly different approach to healing racism in America."—**John Friel, PhD and Linda Friel, MA**, directors of ClearLife Clinic and New York Times bestselling co-authors of nine books including *Adult Children: The Secrets of Dysfunctional Families*

"As a career peace officer I entered this noble profession to serve my community, but I had never received any instruction in the police academy or been issued a piece of equipment that prepared me to recognize or examine community trauma . . . or my own. *My Grandmother's Hands* gave me a profound and compelling historical map tracing law enforcement's role as sometimes unknowing contributors to community trauma. The book gives peace officers tools that can help in the healing of their communities and emphasizes self-care so that the men and women entrusted to be guardians and protectors of our communities are taken care of as well."—**Medaria Arradondo**, Acting Chief, Minneapolis Police Department

"Offers a well needed paradigm shift on how we think, dream, and strategize against white supremacy in our bodies, cultures, and institutions. A must-have for anyone interested in advancing

Racial Justice and healing.”—**Chaka A. Mkali**, Director of organizing and community building at Hope Community and Hip Hop artist I Self Devine

“Resmaa’s book is an intimate and direct look at the way the Black-white dynamic is held, not only in institutions such as policing, but also in the bodies of all of those involved. Building on Dr. DeGruy’s work in *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, Resmaa looks at how history is held and replayed by the body’s survival responses, specifically focusing on the experience of Blackness and trauma, the history and experience of whiteness and the white body, and the creation of and experience of the police force and the body of the police. In addition to providing theory and analysis, this book also offers concrete practices that are part of the work of shifting the violence of [the] original wound.”—**Susan Raffo**, shared owner of Integral Somatic Therapy, bodyworker, writer, and community organizer, The People’s Movement Center

“*My Grandmother’s Hands* is full of wisdom and understanding. In it, Resmaa Menakem offers a new way to understand racism and, more importantly, to heal it. This book lays out a path to freedom and peace, first for individual readers, then for our culture as a whole. A must-read for everyone who cares about our country.”—**Nancy Van Dyken, LP, LICSW**, author of *Everyday Narcissism*

“*My Grandmother’s Hands* is a gripping journey through the labyrinths of trauma and its effects on modern life, especially for African Americans. In this important book, Resmaa’s penetrating insight into trauma is profoundly impactful, but even more powerful and useful are his strategies for addressing it—for healing. A brilliant thinker, Resmaa is able to bring a multitude of research and experience together to guide us in our understanding of how trauma affects our lives; how trauma is a part of all of our lives; and of how the history and progression of trauma has produced a culture in which no one is immune. This is essential reading if we are to wrest ourselves from the grips of trauma and discover the tropes in which our bodies and our minds are free of it.”—**Alexs Pate**, author of *Amistad* and *Losing Absalom*

“*My Grandmother’s Hands* invites each of us to heal the racial trauma that lives in our bodies. As Resmaa Menakem explains, healing this trauma takes courage and a commitment to viscerally feel this racial pain. By skillfully combining therapy expertise with social criticism and practical guidance, he reveals a path forward for individual and collective healing that involves experiencing the sensations of this journey with each step. Are you willing to take the first step?”—**Alex Haley**, Assistant Professor at the University of Minnesota’s Earl E. Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing

About the Author

RESMAA MENAKEM, MSW, LICSW, SEP, has appeared on both The Oprah Winfrey Show and Dr. Phil as an expert on conflict and violence. He has served as director of counseling services for the Tubman Family Alliance; as behavioral health director for African American Family Services in Minneapolis; as a domestic violence counselor for Wilder Foundation; as a certified Military and Family Life Consultant for the U.S. Armed Forces; as a trauma consultant for the Minneapolis Public Schools; and as a Cultural Somatics consultant for the Minneapolis Police Department. As a Community Care Counselor, he managed the wellness and counseling services for civilians on fifty-three US military bases in Afghanistan. Resmaa studied and trained at Peter Levine’s Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute, as well as with Dr. David Schnarch (author of the bestselling *Passionate Marriage*) and Bessel van der Kolk, MD (author of the bestselling *The Body Keeps the Score*). He currently teaches workshops on Cultural Somatics for audiences of African Americans, European Americans, and police officers. He is also a therapist in private practice.

Source: Amazon Reviews