

## 2020 Stand Against Racism Content Curator Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum



### Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum

Author and President Emerita of Spelman College

Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, President Emerita of Spelman College, is a clinical psychologist widely known for her expertise on race relations and as a thought leader in higher education. Her visionary leadership as president of Spelman College (2002-2015) was recognized in 2013 with the Carnegie Academic Leadership Award. Author of several books including the best-selling “*Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*” and *Other Conversations About Race* (updated for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition in 2017), she was the 2014 recipient of the American Psychological Association Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Psychology.

## Discussion Content

### [“Is my skin brown because I drank chocolate milk?” by Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum](#)

TEDxStandford Video

#### Brief intro:

We can trace the difficulty many adults have in talking about racism to the silencing of their questions in childhood. You can’t solve the problem of racism in our society without talking about it. Age-appropriate conversations with young children are one way parents and teachers can begin to interrupt the cycle of racism.

## Dr. Tatum’s Discussion Questions

1. Dr. Tatum argues that many adults learned in childhood that they should not speak about race-related observations. Even when they had race-related experiences that were confusing or upsetting, many people learned early in life that they should keep their questions to themselves. The silencing in childhood leads to silence in adulthood, and the pattern repeats itself with their own children.

**Reflection:** Think of your earliest race-related memory. How old were you? What emotion, if any, is attached to the incident you recalled? Did you talk to anyone – a parent, teacher or other caring adult - about what happened? If not, why not?

2. In her TEDx talk, Dr. Tatum provides an example of a conversation she had with her son when he was four, discussing the painful history of slavery in America.

**Reflection:** What experiences, if any, have you had talking to young children about race and/or racism? Do you agree that it is important to help young children understand their race-related observations? How do you approach conversations with children about painful racial incidents, not only in US history, but in contemporary life?

3. In her book, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations about Race*, Dr. Tatum discusses the importance of “raising resisters,” a term coined by Dr. Janie Ward, describing children who can recognize and think critically about the stereotypes to which they are exposed and the inequities they see around them. (p. 126-127)

**Reflection:** What do you think about the idea of “raising resisters”? How can you educate yourself, if necessary, so you are able to respond to children’s questions about racism and other isms in an empowering way?