



The Return of the Visible Man: Self-Acceptance-The Healing Response to Invisibility

“Self-Acceptance is the unconditional embracing of oneself, including strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and imperfections without harsh judgements or self-criticism. It involves recognizing one’s worth regardless of external achievements or failures. This state fosters emotional resilience, reduces negative self-talk and promotes better mental health.”

- Eurocentric Definition of Self-Acceptance

“I feel traumatized, small and inadequate. It’s a real quiet space. It’s an echo chamber. The only person I can hear is myself.”

- “No Name”, Suffering from Trauma of Invisibility

The Trauma of Invisibility

Following an encounter where there is a perceived racial slight, the “assaulted” individual may experience the following “feelings” as he internalizes the experience:

- 1) The lack of recognition or appropriate acknowledgement;
- 2) The lack of satisfaction from the encounter;
- 3) The lack of self-esteem and legitimacy;
- 4) The lack of validation;
- 5) The lack of respect;
- 6) The awareness that one’s dignity has been compromised and challenged; and
- 7) The awareness that one’s basic identity has been shaken.

- Anderson J. Franklin Invisibility Syndrome (2000)

My Dear Reader,

This blog constitutes the fourth writing of the Trauma of Invisibility. In writing these blogs, I shared a recent experience along with experiences of Black men who also encounter the same trauma of invisibility. The common themes of these incidents were of racial motivation, public humiliation ostracization.

In the earlier post, I detailed an experience of micro-aggressive assault. Specifically, after waiting three and half hours in the emergency room for the results of treatment, I had informed the young medical assistant that I, was a healthcare provider and had patients waiting and would ask that the medical provider telephoned with the results. The young man responded ***“this is not a drive through” and “if you were a healthcare provider, you would know that there are procedures in the emergency room.”***

In the first blog i.e. **The Struggle for Acceptance & The Realness of Invisibility**, I explored the human nature of acceptance, defining it as normal need for attainment in the nature of human development. Specifically, acceptance is the process of being received as adequate or suitable, typically to be admitted to a group. However, this can have negative ramifications on an individual's self-acceptance when the individual is denied admission to a group due to the Trauma of Invisibility.

In the second blog writing, **The Festering Injury: The Scarring of the Trauma of Invisibility** addressed the psychological injury created by the “traumatic” arrow. The focus was differing the impacts caused from a physical injury versus one caused by a psychological injury. The difference being the physical injury could be seen, the arrow removed and the wound treated. Whereas the psychological injury although felt and impactful to the individual was unseen and therefore extremely difficult to treat.

In the third blog writing, **The Psychological Terrorism of Invisibility**, the focus was to create an understanding of the intent of those utilizing the Trauma of Invisibility to terrorize those being subjected and to engage in behaviors and actions of victim blaming. In doing so, those who precipitated the abuse seek to hold the victim responsible for the abuse or harm they have experienced, thereby shifting the focus from the precipitators to the victim.

In this blog writing, **Self-Acceptance: The Response to Invisibility**, the focus is on utilizing self-acceptance as the vehicle to heal from the Trauma of Invisibility. We begin with:

Unwanted Suffering

Dear Dr. Kane,

Like you, I also work in the medical field. I am a physician in the emergency room at a largely white institution. As such I have to prepare myself constantly for “change in care-patient

request." I am not allowed to question the patient or the family on the reasoning for my removal from the treatment team. Reasons cited are welfare of the patient, confidentiality issues and my favorite "this is a team effort, don't take it personally."

The young white medical assistant who told you that the emergency room was not a drive through only saw the blackness in your skin and wanted to remind you that the emergency room is not a place to order a happy meal.

And yet what struck a chord in me was in he refused to acknowledged you as a "healthcare provider" he was factually calling you a liar, a fraud and refused to see you. To him, you were invisible, non-existent, for his purposes, you simply could not be what you said you were, a healthcare provider. As you indicated taking the actions of filing a formal complaint, and writing a letter indicating your grievance. Don't waste your time waiting for a response. As for me all I receive is silence. The attitude is move on.

Dr. Kane, in one of your blogs on invisibility, you wrote about belief, faith and trust (BFT) in self. Yet, the question is how to achieve BFT when your confidence is slowly being eroded due to invisibility and rejection? It is extremely difficult to be a black medical provider in this country. I am not invisible yet my psychological pain is either ignored or is invisible to those around me.

*Regarding my complaints to my higher ups, I am being told that my workload is now to be evaluated by a different manager. It seems that I am "lacking in motivation" and being unmotivated is justification for a review from another manager who without doubt will be white. So, the underlying interpretation of the response is that although I am well educated and well trained; and what this amounts to is simple: I am just another lazy ni**er who requires a stricter "overseer" to motivate me and oversee my attitude and progression.*

And the real joke? I have been asked to be the keynote speaker at the medical center's luncheon to give the talk on guess what? Black History Month. It is good to be white in America. Closing your eyes, erasing the truth and like magic, bringing in your token Negro to make them feel that they are doing something good.

It is good to be white and yet not so good to be black, unwanted and invisible. I do have choices; I can drown myself in alcohol, remaining a victim of a system that seeks to use and disregard my pain or I can move into another direction. I have decided to seek an end to both my employment and invisibility. I am going to take time to travel, relax, read and heal myself I will then look for employment where my services are valued and where I can be validated and visible.

And no, I will not be their keynote speaker at the upcoming luncheon.

*Dr. Unwanted Suffering
Pacific Northwest*

My Dear Readers,

“Be Like a duck...let it (trauma) be like water and roll off your back.”

A distinct psychological impact of Trauma of Invisibility is the permanence of the experience of the injury. The experience will never ever go away. The experience may disappear for unknown period only to resurface from being triggered by a new or related experience or observation.

One cannot control the experience from “reentry” however one can learn how to balance the burden of the experience and in doing so lighten the burden of the experience, shorten the duration of the reentry of the traumatic experience and most importantly bring balance to the psychological self.

Fear as Weapon to Create Invisibility

To work on healing the injury of invisibility, one must understand that the basis of the infliction of the injury is fear. The fear of black people, especially black males has been grounded in this country since slavery. An example is in a recent found document written in 1830 by a white overseer. He states:

“I fear this man. I fear him more than any living thing.”

- Edmund Hall, Overseer writing in 1830 about Jabari, a slave, Bowford County, South Carolina.

The goal of enslavement according to Willie Lynch the slave trainer, was to “work their bodies and control their minds.” Today, invisibility has been defined as an inner struggle with the feelings that one’s talent, abilities, personality, and worth are not valued or recognized because of prejudice and racism.” (Franklin 2000).

Using “Dr. Unwanted Suffering” as an example, the objective is to access the black physician’s internal affirmation of acceptance of invisibility and despite his attainment of status i.e., medical doctor, he remains relegated to a position of servitude and inferiority to Whites

Healing the Injury of Invisibility: Running the Race Smarter... Not Harder

Utilizing Dr. Unwanted Suffering as an example, rather than seek healing through a system that ignores his suffering, he has taken responsibility for his own healing. Dr. Unwanted Suffering’s actions indicate the utilization of the **SMARTER Protocol**; specifically

- **Specific**- the remedy is effective in treating psychological injury i.e. relief, pain reduction;
- **Meaningful**-there is a significant purpose, value, and importance of personal fulfillment i.e. recognition or appropriate acknowledgement.
- **Attainable**-the goals, targets or outcomes are realistic and within grasp i.e. employment resignation and relocation

- **Reasonable**- the sought outcomes are fair, sensible, and in accordance with good judgement i.e. the desire for a work environment which brings value, validation and group acceptance.
- **Empowerment**- gaining balance in one's life, fostering autonomy, and building self-worth to achieve personal goals i.e. the assertion of achieving empowerment and balance of self and rejection of power and control by others.
- **Reevaluation**- the action of assessing something again or differently i.e. asking the three **“What’s”** 1) **What was the incident/situation?** 2) **What did I learn?**; and 3) **What will I do next time?** **Understanding there will be a next time.**

Utilizing this protocol Dr. Unwanted Suffering, or learn in the similar position of responding to the psychological injury of Invisibility can develop a strong internal belief in one's capabilities and nurturing self-esteem. In doing so, the injured can developed resilience, self-awareness and the confidence to make independent decisions, allowing the opportunity to bring balance in responding to obstacles and in doing so, take responsibility for healing the psychological injuries being inflicted by others.

Concluding Words

My Dear Readers,

I have gain tremendous insight from my recent experience and from the writings of those also impacted by the trauma of invisibility. In my situation, I filed a complaint through the officially mandated channels and followed up with a written correspondence to seven senior medical center administrators. To date I have not received any responses.

My goal was to bring attention in order that another patient would never suffer the same wounding. And yet as Black man, born and raised during segregation, I know that goal is not obtainable as no supervisory authority can issue edicts that will respond to the hate, fear and insecurity of black skin that lies in another heart.

I did not request an apology nor would one heal the psychological injury that was inflicted upon me. My healing began with the writings of these four blogs. The lesson is simple; as I am walking my landscape and the journey of self-discovery, my healing and the achievement of wellness is my responsibility. I thank my dear readership for accompanying me on this fourth blog journey.

In closing,

It is in that aim I serve... I am here to serve. I am here to be of service.

Dr. Micheal Kane Clinical Traumatologist & Forensic Evaluator

Until we meet again.. I am the Visible Man

Summary: In our earlier discussions, we examined the human need for acceptance, the psychological wounds caused by traumatic experiences, and the way invisibility operates as a form of psychological terror. Today, we turn our attention to how self-acceptance can serve as a powerful pathway to healing from the Trauma of Invisibility.

Summary (150): We've explored acceptance, trauma, and invisibility; now we turn to self-acceptance as the path to healing from the Trauma of Invisibility.