

Homeschool CEO Podcast Episode 41: How to Raise Antiracist Kids with Dr Monea Abdul-Majeed

31:38

SPEAKERS

Dr. Monea Abdul-Majeed, Jen Myers

Dr. Monea 00:03

Mindfulness is about noticing. It's about awareness. Right? And so how can we unlearn racist ideas if we don't even notice them? Right? So, we have to bring that up to the surface so that we can unlearn and change our attitudes, and our behaviors. And so, a lot of that does not look like sitting by ourselves, reading all the books, you know in isolation. It looks like doing work in community.

Jen Myers 00:34

Welcome to the Homeschool CEO podcast, the podcast dedicated to entrepreneurs who want to successfully homeschool their kids while running a profitable business. In this podcast, we'll reveal the truth of what it really looks like behind the scenes of an entrepreneur who homeschools and how to make it all work. If you're an entrepreneur who currently homeschools or you want to start, you are in the right place, my friend, with 16 years experience combining entrepreneurship with homeschooling. I'm your host, Jen Myers, and this is the Homeschool CEO podcast.

Jen Myers 01:15

Do you want to raise an antiracist child? Me too. But if you're like me, sometimes we may not know the exact thing to say or do. Today's guest is a racial equity strategist, executive racial equity coach. She's an antiracism trainer and speaker by trade, as well as a homeschool mom. Dr. Monea is going to chat with us today about what we can do to be authentic leaders, and really take the next steps on how we can raise an antiracist child by first being an antiracist parent and leader. So, without further ado, let's dive in.

Jen Myers 02:02

Alright, ladies, we have an incredible guest here with us today. And I think you're going to be really surprised on some of the things she has to say, to put a little backstory we met online as the result of a Facebook live right. I think it was one of our Meet the Members. I think we were interviewing Jacqueline, and correct me if I'm wrong, I think your sister introduced you to it. Yeah.

Dr. Monea 02:23

Sister in law. Yeah.

Jen Myers 02:25

Yes, I'm super excited. We've done a coffee chat. And I was so inspired by the things that we talked about that I wanted to just bring it to everybody, because I think this is a really important topic. So Dr. Monea, it is such an honor to have you here today. Thank you for joining us.

Dr. Monea 02:40

Thank you for having me, Jen.

Jen Myers 02:43

All right. Can you tell our audience a little bit about you, your backstory, how you get started?

Dr. Monea 02:48

Sure. So, as she said, my name is Dr. Monea, and I'm a racial equity strategist, and antiracism trainer. And I'm also a 500, our certified yoga teacher. And I have just had a many, many experiences in the workforce and out of the workforce, and nonprofit and homeschool mom and stay at home mom. And just recently, I launched my own business where I'm doing racial equity consulting, antiracism training, with a mindfulness twist. And it just feels that all of my worlds are colliding, because I'm doing all of my passions in one swoop, really. You know what I mean? It's like I formed this business model around my passions. And it's a flexible business model so I can still homeschool my children. So, I'm just most grateful for the work I do.

Dr. Monea 03:44

I have a background in organizational climate research. So, I work with organizations primarily, but then I also do trainings for yoga studios, just because that's an easy fit. I've been doing yoga for 18 years, so, a lot of people in that space know me for my racial equity work. And then I just do some long-term consulting gigs, you know, six months to a year with organizations. And then I just do some one-off trainings as well, with organizations. And especially after the murder of George Floyd, I got really, really busy with organizations really wanting to give antiracism

Dr. Monea 04:27

it the attention that it deserves. So that's what I do.

Jen Myers 04:30

It does. It does deserve attention. And that's why we're talking about it rather than shying away from those hard topics. We want to just dig deep into them. That's... I'm so happy that there are people in this world that are doing this type of work that can lead those of us that we're looking for answers and we want help and, you know, we're digging we're looking on Google, you know. I had..... I think after the murder of George Floyd is something that really came out was, and I always want to be I want to be mindful of, you know, everybody that's going to be listening on both, you know, every different skin color, religion, all different diversities. And one of the things was, we just wanted to ask other people, they just give us the answers.

Dr. Monea 05:12

Yeah. Yeah.

Jen Myers 05:15

And that was a hard thing. And one of my, my good friends who is black, she said, "Don't. Don't Ask. Don't ask. Just don't ask a person just because their skin color is one color or another, like, go look it up do the work." Right?

Dr. Monea 05:30

Yeah. Yeah, you know, I agree with that. I think that, you know, oftentimes, white people, they want the checklist. Or, you know, the big question that I got was like, "Give me the best book list, like all the books that I can read". Or after the murder of George Floyd also got random Facebook messages and text messages from white friends, apologizing, and, you know, all these different emotions that were bubbling up for them. And I do believe that it's up to all of us to do the work required for antiracism. Because what we don't understand and when I teach in my trainings is that, you know, white supremacy is the sea we all swim in. You know, just by nature of being born in the United States, you know.

Dr. Monea 06:17

I'm a sociologist, my PhD in sociology, so often talk about, like how we get socialized, right. So, the number one thing, probably not for most of us, because we choose to homeschool, but if you send your children to public schools, there will be a lot of information about history that they will not receive, right? About race and about racism, going back to 1619. And so just by nature of being born here, you know, racism affects us all. And we all have the work of unlearning the racist messages that we are told, because oftentimes, when I teach, you know, implicit racial bias trainings, people are so unaware that they have racist ideas. And so, when people say, "Well, how do you tie antiracism to yoga?" And I say, well, because mindfulness is about noticing. It's about awareness. Right? And so how can we unlearn racist ideas, if we don't even notice them? Right, so we have to bring that up to the surface so that we can unlearn and change our attitudes, and our behaviors.

Dr. Monea 07:26

And so a lot of that does not look like sitting by ourselves, reading all the books, you know, in isolation, it looks like doing work in community. So, any training that I teach, I teach the four R's, which are reflection, relationships, restoration, and resilience. And I believe that all of those are important to doing what I call authentic antiracism work. Right. And that is that is the antiracism work that is beyond just a fancy social media post. It's about the way we live. It's about the way we interact with each other.

Dr. Monea 08:06

And even as homeschool moms, you know, we teach from this place of like, superiority, you know like, "I know, and I'm going to teach you." But antiracism says, it's not about power hoarding. It's about power sharing. And so that is a pedagogy thing, right? And oftentimes, were not even aware that that's oppressive. To tell people what to do, you know, versus trusting their own agency and power sharing, and realizing that even the homeschool mom to child relationship is a relationship of mutual benefit and of teachable moments on both ends. And so, there's a lot of digging, and there's a lot of layers to the work I do.

Jen Myers 08:51

Yeah. And it's hard work. Like, it's not, like you said, it's not a book checklist. It's not, we're gonna follow one social media guru and that's gonna solve all of this, because we're all planted in the seeds.

Dr. Monea 09:05

Yep.

Jen Myers 09:06

That's something that we talked a lot about over the summer in the Homeschool CEO community. And that was some hard conversations. And we just had him and we were open. And we did that in community. And we still have, we all have so much to go, you know, even like you said, the first step is just the reflection, and what is one way that we can become more aware of the things that we're not currently aware of?

Dr. Monea 09:27

Yeah. So, I think the first thing is, you know, this implicit bias thing, and oftentimes, we're not aware, but we can kind of see how implicit bias shows up in our attitudes, and also the way we interpret events. And oftentimes, these are not things that will like come out, you know, sometimes people don't say them, but they're in their head. For example. If you know a white woman walking down the street, man of color approaching, you know, she'll collect your purse. It's just like almost instinctual. But that's just one way of being like, "Hmm, what was I thinking about him? What was I taught?" And then it's like, you have to do a lot of digging, because a lot of times, again, I'm a sociologist, and people will share with me, after we do some digging, that a lot of these messages they inherited from their parents, or their grandparents.

Dr. Monea 10:22

For example, I have another white friend who's actually my yoga philosophy mentor, teacher. He's a white guy. And when we were talking about implicit racial bias, he comes to my workshops. And he just shared how, you know, he said, "You know, I rent an apartment in DC," he said, "because I don't want the, you know, burden of, you know, having to care for my house, and like doing all the maintenance." And so, he said, he was having that conversation with his wife. And then they went out for a walk, and he lives in like, upper Northwest DC. So, this is a very, very rich part of DC. So, he says, he looks over, and he sees a black guy, like working on a house. And then he says to his wife, like, see, like, if we owned a house, then you'd have to hire somebody like him.

Dr. Monea 11:08

But that's implicit racial bias, because maybe that man wasn't hired, maybe that was his house. But because they were in a very, very rich, upper class neighborhood in DC, he assumed that this man did not own this home that he was a hired worker. And he told me, he's, "I just felt so guilty about it." And I said, "But listen, you have come to an awareness of this and it stops there, right? This becomes a problem if you were to approach this man and say, Hey, you know, I want to hire you next." That is when it goes into that crosses the line of a racist attitude, right? Because you're assuming, but if it's in your head, and we all have implicit racial bias. I teach that as well. You know, sociology, we believe that that's normal. You know, that's the brains way of protecting itself. But when it translates to attitudes and behaviors, that's when it's harmful. It will be harmful to that man. It's harmful to my friend, to have such

limited thinking, to not even be open to the idea that this man could own this home or, you know, and so I think that becoming... one way to be aware is, you know, just begin to question and, you know, in yoga, we call it self-study, and we call it self-inquiry.

Dr. Monea 12:39

And in my trainings, we do a lot of journal writing, I one of the things I say is like what you'll need for this training, you know, journal water, open mind, open heart, because you're going to start to question yourself. And I think that that work is extremely important, because what people are calling for, especially white people, they're kind of calling for this external, external mark that says, "I'm not racist." But the internal work is the most important work. The internal work because that shines through, you know. That really does shine through. And so, you know, it's just a journey. I always say it's a marathon, not a sprint.

Jen Myers 13:23

Absolutely. And you said something that I want to kind of touch base on, because I heard it repeated over and over in our community over the summer. Women would say, "I'm not racist. I teach my kids to be colorblind." And for a long time, I said that same thing, because I, you know, I don't, I don't think we talked about this before but I have a double major in psychology and sociology, which my professors always thought was crazy, because I could see both sides. I could see how our, you know, the individual impacts the surrounding environment and vice versa. But can we talk a little bit about why it's, it's not okay to just be not racist, and why we need to be antiracist and be teaching our kids to be antiracist. But, you know, like we talked about, it starts with us as parents.

Dr. Monea 14:11

Sure. So, I think, you know, the issue with, you know, "I'm not racist" is that racism has three forms, which I'll talk about my training - internalized, interpersonal, and systemic racism. And so when people say, "I'm not racist", what they what they're really saying is, they think that on the interpersonal level, they're not racist. So, they say things like, "I'm nice", or the yoga community, "I'm vegan", or "I've never used the N word, so I can't be racist". But we're talking about many different layers.

Dr. Monea 14:45

So we're also talking about systemic racism, where we have policies and procedures in place that maintain racial hierarchy and some people reinforce those policies and procedures in your hiring and recruitment, and many different things like that. So, we have a lot of layers. And it's in the thing about saying I'm not racist, is that it has this implication of neutrality. But again, systemic racism, white supremacy is the sea we all swim in. So, unless we are strategic, and we go against what we have been taught, then there is, there is no, there is no neutral, because the neutral is racist ideas, and ideologies. So, we still won't, that's why we say antiracism because you have to go against that. So, what does that mean?

Dr. Monea 15:35

For example. If you have, you're teaching your child, you know, about history, and then you teach them Christopher Columbus, because that's a part of the curriculum. Right? That will be neutral. You don't have to do any extra work. You just read the curriculum. You just teach them in that sense. But going

against that would be, huh. What really happened is 1619? Let's ask them questions. Let's read a stamp from the beginning, for example, from Kennedy's book about, about history. Let's look at some other sources, is the antiracism is really about critical thinking, which, you know, we say that we stress this in homeschooling, but we need to stress it even more, because what we, what we're taught most of the time, and this goes back to "I'm not racist", we're taught this binary thinking of good and bad, you know?

Dr. Monea 16:28

And so, what is our racism is like, you know, there's this area in the middle where it's full of paradoxes. It's kind of messy, it's not all gonna make sense but we have to go against what we've been taught. And what we've learned, especially from our families, and even in some religious institutions where hierarchy is, is reinforced. And so, I don't think it's enough to say "I'm not racist", because again, it's some neutrality there. But being antiracist is saying that "I'm willing to take a stand and I'm willing to go against systemic racism, interpersonal racism, internalized racism". There's a lot of work there to be done. A lot of layers to it.

Jen Myers 17:15

So where can our moms start? So, you know, maybe they're sitting there, and they're listening to us? And they're like, I want to be antiracist, you know, they have that desire, it's planted in them, but they don't know what the next step would be.

Dr. Monea 17:28

Yeah, sure. So, I will leave my information because I do teach courses. And I have one that started this month. The last day to enroll is January 15. But it's called How to be an Authentic Antiracist Leader. And who is this for? This is for CEOs. This is for business owners butt this is also for parents because we are leaders. We have children that are looking up to us, right. And so, we make decisions for them every single day until they're old enough to make decisions for themselves. And so, when people say, you know, "I want to teach my child how to be antiracist". I say, "Mom, Dad, you have to start with yourself." Because they are like little sponges.

Dr. Monea 18:12

And, you know, even sometimes, you know, we haven't had a lot of gathering this year. But one of the critical times where racism is perpetuated is that Thanksgiving dinner, or Christmas dinner. Someone will make a racist joke. And if little, if the little boy or girl doesn't see mom or dad interrupt that racist joke, then they might think that that's funny, you know. And so, I think that the parents, of course, like mine, I think is unique, because I'm coming also from a mindfulness place. And one of the things that, you know, I'm a PhD, so I'm a professor, so I teach. I really do teach, and I know that a lot of homeschool moms, they homeschool because they love to learn, right. And there will be some self-reflection in that. And I also think that of course, it's important because you're on a journey along with other people.

Dr. Monea 19:09

And so, like when you're sitting there by yourself, like reading a book, you know, you have the same limited mind and the lens that you know, you're reading the book, and I think the books are great. But I

also think that books are great if it's coupled with like a book club, or if it's coupled with some type of community, where you can share, you can learn, you can grow. And maybe you'll even find that some of the guilt, because I've noticed a lot of white guilt. People will have feelings and thoughts, and they think it's just them. And then someone else in the group will say, "You know, that same thing happened to me and I used to think that" and then automatically, they can identify in and they can see that change is possible.

Dr. Monea 19:51

So, I think a great place to start is with community. And I often tell people like if you can't afford a course or to work with or train with someone who's trained in this, then, you know, grab a book, but form a book club so that you can bounce ideas off. And you're not in isolation with this stuff, because a lot of this embodied in experience, right? What I'm teaching in How to be an Authentic Antiracist Leader, is this art of courageous conversation. And when we learn this art of courageous conversations, we can have those with our children, but we have to be able to have them with other adults first, and get comfortable talking about race, because I used to always joke and say, like, talking about race to your kids is like talking about puberty, you know. You know, Mom, parents don't like to do it. But it's a necessary conversation. If we are to prepare our children to be successful in this world, you know, I just think it's, it's a necessary ingredient to personal growth, and as well as a necessary ingredient to re-socializing.

Jen Myers 21:04

I agree. 100%, I have two questions. One, can you give us an example of a courageous conversation? What would that kind of look like?

Dr. Monea 21:13

Sure, so typically, and I didn't make that up, the courageous conversations model was developed in the 90s. So, it's a framework. But basically, any conversation, that's difficult, you, you do this, you start with certain guidelines, and then you guide that conversation through. So, an example could be, so after the murder of George Floyd, a lot of employers didn't even know how to start a conversation with their employees. Right. So, if they were trained on courageous conversations, the day after George Floyd, they might bring small groups together, they might start with the guidelines, and then they might just open it up, and they'll put the topic. So, it's just, you know, "I'm feeling, how I'm feeling after the murder of George Floyd." And then they, you know, just begin to talk about it hold space. And then people say, "Well, I'm tired, I'm grieving." And they might probe and say, "Where do you feel that in your body?" Or "what are you going to do?" Or "what do you need from us in terms of support?"

Dr. Monea 22:15

So, it's, it's a, I know, people say, like, a safe space and it's sort of that model, but it's also a brave space where people feel empowered to really share what they want, you know, share where they are. Another example. And I've done a lot of courageous conversations. I did one on COVID-19. And that one was all virtual, and ended up being really big. So, we did, you know, we talked about the problem. And then we figured out solutions. And we were able to come together in a community to donate to some of the students who didn't have laptops and didn't have supplies. I've done another one on what women want, right? And, you know, do white women and women of color want the same things? Let

me think of some other ones. I did another one in the community, pre-COVID called on the table, and each table at the restaurant had a different topic that they had to discuss. So basically, it's a model of like, getting people more comfortable talking about race, and kind of working through that, that discomfort. So almost any topic pertaining to race is fair game.

Jen Myers 23:29

Why do you think that we struggle so much to have that conversation?

Dr. Monea 23:32

Because we're not we're not used to it in and there's a lot of shame. And there's a lot of hiding. And there's also like I said, you know, when we don't learn about it, so if you think about.... and honestly, you know, the history of race in this country is pretty hurtful. We're not talking about a topic that brings up a lot of good feelings. So just like any topic, that brings up the past, of hurt, of pain, of oppression, of guilt, of confusion. You know, I even have like one of my white friends, she feels she always says, I feel so bad, because you know, my grandfather owned slaves. Right. But I don't know if she knows that my fifth great grandfather owned 74 enslaved people, right. And I'm, you know, and I'm black. So, I think that race is such a difficult topic because it's just, it's just hurtful. It's just painful. And it's inhumane.

Jen Myers 24:42

yeah.

Dr. Monea 24:42

You know what I'm saying? And, and we don't we don't we don't want to talk about that. But here's the thing. It continues to harm because we don't talk about it. So, we have to name it to tame it. And that's why.... Every year, in my career with this, I kind of focus on one thing, you know. And for years, so I really focused on those courageous conversations, and I'm still focusing on that. But now, my focus is on leadership. But those courageous conversations are extremely important. And sometimes people will attend a courageous conversation and just be like, Dr. Monea, I just enjoy being able to talk about that. I've never been able to talk about that with anybody else. You know what I mean? So, it's freeing to be able to release, you know, and be able to talk so that we can start talking about some solutions as well.

Jen Myers 25:38

That's true. Because if we never talk about the problem, aren't courageous enough to deal with like the identify it, how on earth are we ever going to find a solution that that lasts? You know, rather than just putting a bandaid on the problem because we don't go deep enough?

Dr. Monea 25:52

You're right. You're right. You're so bright. Yeah.

Jen Myers 25:58

I was just thinking like, that just caused me to kind of pause for a minute and think, how often we just we just want the solution. Like, we don't want to talk about it. But we then we don't really find a solution that works.

Dr. Monea 26:08

Exactly. Exactly.

Jen Myers 26:11

And I think, you know, I know, you and I have talked about this previously, the... a lot of the homeschooling community tends to be conservative white Christians, that now that is changing. Thankfully, that is not.... But that's a huge part of it. So, we have to go the extra mile. If we want to include diversity in a lot of our, you know, like one of my other friends, we talked about co-op. And we quit doing co-ops a long time ago, mostly because it just didn't align with our time schedule. But in our church, we switched churches, because there was zero diversity. In fact, we watched a black family come to church, when they visited one service. We welcomed them. But they felt so uncom you know, like, as a family, you could just tell like, they were the only black family and they left and I looked at my husband, and I'm like, "No, no, this is not this is not for us."

Dr. Monea 27:02

Mm hmm. Wow. Yeah. And there's been a lot of stories like that. And that is antiracism because that is being strategic, making a different decision, changing churches. I've heard people change neighborhoods. I mean, I've changed neighborhoods. I live in Pennsylvania. And when we first moved to this town, we didn't know you know, where to live. And once we figured out where we were living was predominately white and then we found more diversity, we moved just because we know that that's a part of what we want our children to see, and representation matters. So that's a wonderful example of antiracism, because being neutral would have been like, "Well, I'm not racist, so I can just stay here." But you know, going against the grain and saying, "I want to do something different. I want my children to see something different. And I want a different experience." You know, and being in community, because religious institution is a really big part of how people build community. You know.

Jen Myers 27:58

It is, it's, it's huge.

Dr. Monea 28:00

Yeah.

Jen Myers 28:01

You know, especially in the homeschool communities, because, you know, we're looking to do things like the extracurricular activities, and the, you know, whether we're in a church or co-ops, you know, like, we're looking for those extra things. And I would just challenge all of our parents that are listening, you know, to actively seek out diversity in those programs that you put your kids in, because you're gonna, you're gonna find what you're looking for. And you could, you can do the easy route and say, "Nope, all of these people are just like me", because, you know, like attracts like. So, it takes, you have to go the extra mile to find something that's different from who you are.

Dr. Monea 28:37

Right.

Jen Myers 28:38

Right.

Dr. Monea 28:38

I agree. Absolutely agree.

Jen Myers 28:42

This has been such a great conversation.

Dr. Monea 28:44

Yeah.

Jen Myers 28:45

Tell our parents again, how they can get enrolled in your course so that they can start doing that inner work for themselves so that they're better equipped to lead their kids.

Dr. Monea 28:56

Sure. So we can leave the link in the show notes right, Jen? Okay. But if you want to reach out to me directly, just send me an email. My email is Monea.tamara@gmail.com. And that's m-o-n-e-a-.t-a-m-a-r-a @gmail.com. And my online school is called Authentic Antiracism. And that is Drmoneallc.com. So that's D-r-m-o-n-e-a-l-l-c .com.

Jen Myers 29:30

Perfect. Thank you so much. And yes, we'll put the link on social media. We'll put them in the show notes so everybody have easy access to that. We'll send it out in the emails. Because this is something that if you, if you're serious about doing this, then this is something that you want to look into for sure.

Dr. Monea 29:45

Thank you.

Jen Myers 29:46

All right. Thank you so much for being on the show today. This has been fantastic.

Dr. Monea 29:50

My pleasure.

Jen Myers 29:54

Did you enjoy today's episode? I know I sure did. It really made me pause and think. In fact, if you know any other moms, particularly if they're entrepreneurs, but let's be real, even if they're not entrepreneurs, I think all of us as moms can benefit from today's episode. Would you share this with them? Because how they raise their kids may just change an entire generation. And together we can have impact far beyond just our own families.

Jen Myers 30:27

Also, if you're serious about doing that deep inner work that it takes to really be an authentic antiracist leader, join me as I learned from Dr. Monea starting in January. Her course starts in just a couple of weeks but registration closes this week. To learn how you can join me as I joined Dr. Monea, visit the show notes at HomeschoolCEOpodcast.com/41 to learn more. See you next week.

Jen Myers 31:03

Hey friend, I just want to say thank you so much for tuning in today. If you loved what you heard, please be sure to head over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review. I really appreciate it. And for more information on connecting with other homeschool CEOs just like you, be sure to check out our website at www.homeschoolceo.com and as always team Homeschool CEO, you ladies inspire me. Thank you for always showing others what is possible. You guys are awesome. See you next week.