

## OPINION EDITORIALS

### WHAT RACISTS FEAR HEARING THE MOST

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(1386 Words)



*They are more upset about being called a racist than being one.*

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*Lighten up, buttercup.*

No. That's not it.

I've been living on this glorious, confusing, spinning rock for one, two, three, four...decades...a long time.

I grew up white. I had no choice in the matter.

I grew up in Saskatoon (insular). I had no choice in the matter.

I watch the same television, movies, read the same newspapers, magazines as everyone else. I've been conditioned and conditioned and conditioned.

At the time of my upbringing, there were two kinds of people in Saskatoon, 1) White people; and 2) Those we made fun of.

I don't apologize for typing the last sentence. If you fit into a third category, you'll understand there is no reason to be upset.

What the conditioning has shamefully bestowed upon me is the lifelong struggle of being a recovering racist. *I don't identify as racist*; that would be racist. But I'm self-aware enough to understand alarmingly offensive thoughts have been deeply injected into my self-conscious — *I'm not sure if self is needed in the description* — shall we cancel it?

Anyway, the conditioning has instilled the occasional disgusting mindset in me, crossing the line between stereotype and a false sense of non-existent superiority.

My esteem is intact. Sure, not everything in my life has been hunky-dory, but when someone calls me a cracker or a honky, I have to Google why I should be upset, which loses the impact when your thumbs have to get involved.

Five+ decades into life, I've arrived at crossroads (*it took you a long time*) – a quest for understanding – a potential purge of some people in my life.

*Why?*

Because of the irrationality of people, I know, us, all of us, far too stunted to understand our attitudes and screaming out about: **Cancel Culture** or the **PC Police**, or *anything else is coming for our happiness* – when they are challenged on their deep-rooted archaic attitudes, is abhorrent.

Attitudes expounded by many people I love. Attitudes that occasionally meander through my mind, but I'm happy to say: most of the time, I summons the courage not to share them, accepting I'm someone who will always be recovering.

An older friend cannot make it through a single conversation without sharing a story about two native women; he thinks another friend should...never mind. Or how Malaysian restaurants are usually not...never mind. And then shamefully softening his attitude by saying the Malaysian restaurant he just went to is an exception. This friend cannot make it through a conversation without interjecting how upsetting it is because there is a proposal to change some street names to indigenous ones. Because for him, it's vital to pronounce the name of the streets where he lives.

Disgracefully, because my friend is older, I bite my tongue, and I willfully become part of the problem.

Another friend agrees with him.

*Can't we talk about the weather?*

The same aged friend often talks about penetration, spitting on roasts, shower scenes, bestiality, and more and more and more. I think they are sexual terms. Still, when he hears a story about the first time our 77-year-old friend uttered a word rhyming with Helen Hunt, he becomes profoundly offended and cannot believe a line has been crossed. Once his feigned anger subsides, this friend sometimes breaks into a butchered South Asian accent when describing his latest visit to a convenience store.

This friend asked me where another friend is one night?

To which I reply, *"He's dead."*

My friend lost his mind, *"That's not funny. What if he is dead?"*

If he is, which I'm sure he is not, it would be sad, but I'm sure he wouldn't care.

Another friend blurts out, *"The immigrants have taken over our regular table."* After another look, my friend adds, *"I think they are from Jamaica."*

I'm upset. I say, this kind of talk, upsets me. I'm told to lighten up. I'm told when the stress of the last year passes, I will. I won't.

The company owner I worked for used to tell us, *"Don't bother calling on brown people. They stick to their own kind."*

During a lunch out, one of my godchildren refused to order, because my godchild draws the line at Vietnamese.

Another friend, when challenged while revealing his view that the Chinese are just as racist toward us as we are to them, is the point he's making is it okay to stop evolving.

I suggest to this friend, just because you think someone is racist toward you, you don't have to participate + perpetuate the hate.

Another friend, his eyes dart around a pub, checking to see who's within earshot, comfortable in his surroundings he says, *"I'm going to tell a racist joke. I had to make sure the coast is clear."*

I tell him there is no such thing as a racist joke.

I'm not sure he understood.

I then suggested, if you have to look around before you speak, why don't you keep your mouth shut?

I love most of these people; I don't believe they are racists; I don't even think they realize what they are saying. Some think this type of rhetoric is okay if the people they are talking with all share the same pigment.

I walk down the street with a friend from Korea. Behind me, I hear, *"This is Vancouver, not Hongcouver."*

Down south democracy faces its fiercest challenge after a four-year shit-show <sup>(1)</sup>, created by the disease of entitlement and a presidential performance littered with hate and racist tropes allowing the infection to fester into North America's fragile psyche.

One thing springs to mind, something repeated over and over and over again.

*"How can we ever have a civil conversation when as soon as someone shares their racist opinions, they are called RACIST. Seriously. You heard it. We've all heard it. Racists (even recovering ones) are more fucking offended by someone calling them racist than looking in the mirror and understanding; they are nothing more than offensive dinosaurs. They are more upset about being called a racist than being one."*

*Who put you on your high horse?*

I'm not, I'm trying to be self-aware, and frankly, Helen Hunt doesn't offend me. I don't care if I can pronounce the name of my street. I don't become apoplectic when I hear other languages spoken; I assume the people talking are talking about me—making me relevant.

I make it my daily mission when I walk out into the world to listen to my hateful thoughts, acknowledge them, keep them to myself, and grow a tiny bit more.

I'm not about to purge my friends yet. I'm listening; it's not our job to educate others—it is each of our responsibilities to show disdain and refuse to participate.

A single uncomfortable laugh at a racially insensitive comment goes a long way to

propagate the hatred. Don't be part of the problem.

I don't want to purge my friends. Many of whom I love. I may not have to because they may no longer choose to sit with me if they read this.

- 1) I find the term shit-show to be juvenile; however, it may be the best descriptor to what transpired down south for the last, going on 6-years. And as much as some people get upset at a potty mouth and juvenile terminology, these words don't even come close to sharing the podium with the disease of hate. If you think they do, well...goodbye. <sup>(2)</sup>
- 2) I am happy to say my recovery is helping me feel the same way about misogynistic, homophobic, or hate speak, hate speak, hate speak, of any kind. It's okay to evolve, Ramen is just soup, you don't have to say you hate it, and if you find the things you are saying hurts others, ask yourself why you do it? Why? Why? Why?

| To me when I see comedians complaining about this kind of thing, I don't understand what they are complaining about. If you made a joke that's aged terribly, accept it. And if you don't think it's aged terribly, then say that... Saying terrible things is bad, so if you've said something terrible, then it's something you should confront in some way, shape, or form. I don't think that's cancel culture. That's you saying something terrible if that's what you've done. - Seth Rogen |

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