

# my grandmothers hands workbook

My Grandmother's Hands Workbook is an essential companion for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of racialized trauma and healing through the lens of somatic practices. Authored by Resmaa Menakem, this workbook is an extension of his groundbreaking book, "My Grandmother's Hands," which explores how the legacy of racial violence affects individuals and communities, particularly through the body. The workbook is designed to facilitate personal reflection, group discussions, and healing practices that can help individuals connect with their own experiences and the experiences of others. In this article, we will explore the contents, structure, and significance of My Grandmother's Hands Workbook, highlighting its importance in the ongoing conversation about race, trauma, and healing.

## Understanding the Concept of Racialized Trauma

Racialized trauma refers to the emotional and psychological effects that result from the ongoing experience of racism, discrimination, and violence. This trauma can manifest in various ways, including:

1. Emotional Distress: Feelings of anger, sadness, or hopelessness related to experiences of racism.
2. Physical Reactions: Body tension, chronic pain, or other physical ailments associated with stress and trauma.
3. Behavioral Changes: Altered interactions with others, withdrawal from social situations, or engaging in unhealthy coping mechanisms.

## The Legacy of Racialized Trauma

Menakem emphasizes that racialized trauma is not just an individual experience; it is intergenerational. The trauma experienced by one generation can be passed down to subsequent generations, impacting family dynamics, cultural identity, and community resilience. This legacy can be seen in:

- Family Narratives: Stories passed down through generations that reflect experiences of racism and resilience.
- Cultural Practices: Traditions and rituals that arise as a response to collective trauma.
- Community Structures: The ways in which communities organize themselves to cope with and resist ongoing racial violence.

## Overview of the Workbook

My Grandmother's Hands Workbook is structured to guide readers through a series of exercises and reflections that complement the themes discussed in Menakem's original book. The workbook is divided into several key sections, each focusing on different aspects of healing and understanding racialized trauma.

## **Sections of the Workbook**

1. **Understanding the Body:** This section introduces readers to the concept of somatic awareness, emphasizing the importance of connecting with one's body to process trauma.
2. **Mapping Your Experience:** Readers are encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences with racism, using guided prompts to articulate their feelings and reactions.
3. **Cultivating Resilience:** This section provides tools and exercises for building resilience, including mindfulness practices and body-centered techniques.
4. **Engaging in Community:** The workbook emphasizes the importance of community support in healing, offering strategies for building connections and fostering dialogues about race and trauma.

## **The Importance of Somatic Practices**

Somatic practices are at the core of Menakem's approach to healing racialized trauma. These practices focus on the connection between the mind and body, emphasizing that trauma is stored in the body and can be processed through physical awareness and movement.

## **Key Somatic Practices**

- **Breathwork:** Deep breathing exercises can help calm the nervous system and promote relaxation.
- **Body Scanning:** This technique involves paying attention to different parts of the body to identify areas of tension or discomfort associated with trauma.
- **Movement:** Engaging in free movement or dance can release pent-up emotions and facilitate healing.

## **Facilitating Group Discussions**

The workbook is also designed for use in group settings, making it a valuable resource for community organizations, educational institutions, and therapeutic groups. Facilitating discussions around the workbook can create a

safe space for individuals to share their experiences and learn from one another.

## **Guidelines for Effective Group Discussions**

1. Establish Ground Rules: Create a safe environment by setting rules for confidentiality and respect.
2. Encourage Vulnerability: Remind participants that sharing personal experiences is a crucial part of the healing process.
3. Use Guided Questions: Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions related to the workbook exercises.
4. Foster Empathy: Encourage participants to listen actively and respond with compassion.

## **Personal Reflection and Growth**

One of the central themes of My Grandmother's Hands Workbook is the importance of personal reflection in the healing journey. The workbook provides numerous opportunities for readers to engage in self-exploration and growth.

## **Reflection Exercises**

- Journaling Prompts: Each section includes prompts that encourage readers to reflect on their thoughts and feelings.
- Artistic Expression: Readers are invited to express their experiences through creative outlets such as drawing, painting, or poetry.
- Meditation and Mindfulness: Guided meditations help readers cultivate a deeper connection with their bodies and emotions.

## **Building a Healing Community**

Healing from racialized trauma is often a collective endeavor. The workbook emphasizes the importance of building supportive communities where individuals can share their experiences and learn from one another.

## **Ways to Build Community Support**

- Organize Group Workshops: Facilitate healing workshops that incorporate the exercises from the workbook.
- Create Safe Spaces: Establish regular meetings or circles where individuals

can share and process their experiences.

- Engage in Activism: Encourage community members to participate in social justice initiatives that address systemic racism and promote healing.

## **Conclusion: The Path Forward**

My Grandmother's Hands Workbook serves as a powerful tool for individuals seeking to understand and heal from the impacts of racialized trauma. By combining somatic practices with personal reflection and community engagement, the workbook provides a comprehensive approach to healing that is both personal and collective.

As we navigate the complexities of race and trauma in our society, resources like this workbook are essential in fostering understanding, empathy, and resilience. By engaging with the exercises and reflections in My Grandmother's Hands Workbook, individuals can embark on a transformative journey towards healing, not only for themselves but for their communities as well. In a world that often feels divided, this workbook offers a pathway to connection, understanding, and ultimately, healing.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the main focus of the 'My Grandmother's Hands' workbook?**

The workbook focuses on understanding and addressing racialized trauma and its impact on individuals, particularly through the lens of body awareness and somatic practices.

### **Who is the author of 'My Grandmother's Hands' and what is his background?**

The author is Resmaa Menakem, a licensed therapist and a specialist in trauma and somatic experiencing, who explores the intersections of race, trauma, and body awareness.

### **How does the workbook complement the original book 'My Grandmother's Hands'?**

The workbook provides practical exercises, reflections, and guidance to help readers apply the concepts from the original book in their own lives.

## **What types of exercises can readers expect to find in the workbook?**

Readers can expect a variety of exercises including mindfulness practices, journaling prompts, somatic exercises, and reflection questions to deepen their understanding of racialized trauma.

## **Is 'My Grandmother's Hands' workbook suitable for all readers?**

Yes, the workbook is designed for individuals of all backgrounds, whether they are new to the topics of trauma and race or have prior knowledge.

## **What are somatic practices, and why are they important in the workbook?**

Somatic practices involve body awareness and movements that help individuals connect with their physical sensations, which is crucial for healing trauma and processing emotions.

## **Can educators use the 'My Grandmother's Hands' workbook in their curriculum?**

Absolutely, educators can incorporate the workbook into discussions about race, trauma, and healing, making it a valuable resource for fostering awareness and empathy.

## **How does the workbook address the concept of intergenerational trauma?**

The workbook explores how trauma can be passed down through generations and provides tools for individuals to recognize and break these cycles.

## **What is the intended outcome for readers using the workbook?**

The intended outcome is for readers to gain a deeper understanding of their own experiences with trauma, develop healing practices, and foster greater empathy towards others.

## **Are there any community resources recommended in the workbook?**

Yes, the workbook often suggests community resources, support groups, and further reading to encourage readers to seek additional help and connection.

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