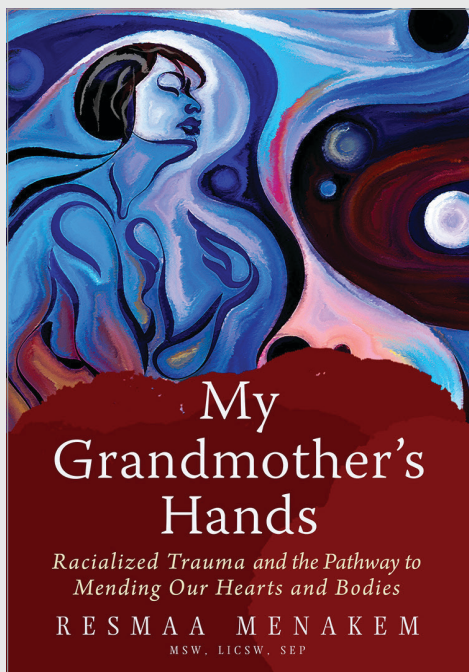


# My Grandmother's Hands

Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies

**Resmaa Menakem, MSW, LICSW, SEP**

The first self-help book to examine white supremacy in America  
from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology



**By Resmaa Menakem, MSW, LICSW, SEP**  
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"Cuts to the heart of America's racial crisis....Amazing."

—Tim Wise, author of *White Like Me* and *Dear White America*

Stop trying to address white supremacy through dialog. Don't expect to change the world by teaching tolerance. Forget about changing attitudes. They all miss the mark.

Racism is not only about the head. It's also about the body. The body is where we live. It's where we fear, hope, and react; where we constrict and relax; and where we fight, flee, or freeze.

In *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates exposed the ongoing destruction of the Black body in America. That destruction will continue until Americans learn to feel the inherited trauma of white supremacy, which is deeply embedded in all our bodies.

This trauma doesn't just affect African American bodies. White American bodies suffer their own historical trauma as well. So do the bodies of our police. We all need to recognize this trauma, metabolize it, work through it, and grow up out of it. Only in this way will we at last heal our bodies, our families, and the social body of our nation.

The process differs for African-American, European American, and police bodies. But all of us need to heal our racialized trauma—and, with the right guidance, all of us can.

*My Grandmother's Hands* shows us how to begin.

"Offers a well needed paradigm shift on how we think, dream, and strategize against white supremacy in our bodies, cultures, and institutions. A must-have for anyone interested in advancing racial justice and healing."

—Chaka A. Mkali, director of organizing and community building  
at Hope Community and hip hop artist I Self Devine

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## About the Author

**Resmaa Menakem, MSW, LICSW, SEP**, has appeared on both *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *Dr. Phil* as an expert on conflict and violence. He has served as director of counseling services for the Tubman Family Alliance; as behavioral health director for African American Family Services in Minneapolis; as a domestic violence counselor for Wilder Foundation; as a certified Military and Family Life Consultant for the U.S. Armed Forces; as a trauma consultant for the Minneapolis Public Schools; and as a Cultural Somatics consultant for the Minneapolis Police Department. As a Community Care Counselor, he managed the wellness and counseling services for civilians on fifty-three US military bases in Afghanistan. Resmaa studied and trained at Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute, as well as with Dr. David Schnarch (author of the bestselling *Passionate Marriage*) and Bessel van der Kolk, MD (author of the bestselling *The Body Keeps the Score*). He currently teaches workshops on Cultural Somatics for audiences of African Americans, European Americans, and police officers. He is also a therapist in private practice.

## Q & A with Resmaa Menakem

### Why did you write *My Grandmother's Hands*?

I wanted to take readers through a step-by-step healing process based on the latest neuroscience and somatic healing methods. I wanted the next generation of Americans of all skin colors to understand that they are not defective—and to recover from the ills of white supremacy.

I wrote *My Grandmother's Hands* for personal reasons, too. I wanted to understand why I experienced a nagging sense of defectiveness. I needed to discover the deeper meaning behind my grandmother's humming. And I wanted to create something to leave my children—and America's children—so they don't have to do what I'm doing at age fifty.

### What makes this book unique?

The book is unique in that it addresses racialized trauma on a somatic and personal level, one reader at a time. It offers a solution to white supremacy that is not just about the head, but also about the body. By finally addressing the root cause of our racialized cultural divide, and by confronting truths contained in the body—in all of our bodies—*My Grandmother's Hands* helps us begin to understand and heal from the trauma many of us have either suppressed or felt helpless about for too long.

## Sales Points

- Introduces a new, body-centered understanding of white supremacy—how it is literally in our blood, our nervous systems, and the expression of our DNA.
- Offers a step-by-step solution—a self-help manual—in addition to incisive social commentary.
- Standing on the shoulders of giants, the book picks up where Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me* and Bessel van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score* left off.
- Resmaa is one of the first mental health professionals to bring recent discoveries in neurobiology and somatic healing methods to bear on the subject.
- Resmaa is the first to also address the historical trauma experienced by European Americans and police officers.
- Examines how trauma passes down through generations of Americans of all skin colors.

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