



## Possible Interview Questions for Resmaa Menakem's Guided Conversation Session

1. What is Somatic Abolitionism?
2. Why do you write about white-body supremacy rather than white supremacy?
3. You begin your book by saying that in order to end white-body supremacy, we need to focus on the human body. You also say that white-body supremacy lives primarily in the body, not the cognitive mind. Why is the body so central?
4. You say that understanding trauma is the key to healing from white-body supremacy. You even call white-body supremacy a trauma response. Explain this for me.
5. In your talks, presentations, and interviews, you have everybody hum together for half a minute. Why?
6. In your book, you say that white-body supremacy can be traced back to Europe in the Middle Ages, where powerful white bodies destroyed, damaged, and forcibly con-trolled other white bodies. Then this pattern of murder and abuse got imported to America and, over time, redirected toward non-white bodies. Connect the dots here.
7. Some chapters in your book are written specifically for white readers. Others are written primarily for Black Americans and other Bodies of Culture. Several are written mainly for police officers. Why?
8. Your book is full of body-centered activities that people can do either separately or in groups. Some of these are very simple, such as slow rocking, or rubbing your own belly. How do these activities make a difference?
9. Several sections of your book discuss what you call the soul nerve. What exactly is the soul nerve, and why is it so important?
10. In your book, you say that most of us—white people, bodies of culture, and police officers—often try to blow our pain and trauma through other bodies. What do you mean?

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11. A key distinction in your book is between clean pain and dirty pain. Explain these.
12. To help people move through clean pain, you offer a set of five anchoring practices. What are these; how do they work; and how can people use them most effectively?
13. In your book, you say that trauma is passed on genetically from parent to child, through the expression of the parent's genes. You also discuss the science that backs this up. How does this genetic process work?
14. Where can people get a copy of *My Grandmother's Hands*?
15. What is your web address?
16. What is the meaning behind your name Resmaa?
17. What is your background? What inspires you to pursue this work?
18. Explain bodies of culture and blue bodies.
19. Can you share the story behind *My Grandmother's Hands*?
20. Explain terminology and vocabulary around trauma.
  - a. "Racial" vs. "Racialized" trauma
  - b. Bodies of Culture vs. Bodies of Color.
21. What is Dirty Pain vs. Clean Pain?
22. What is history's connection with trauma?
  - a. How do you trace trauma to the medieval times?
  - b. Help us make the connection between history and trauma we inherited and passed on.
23. Explain blowing your pain through another.
  - a. Cops, neighborhoods, clash of bodies carrying trauma, what happens?
24. Explain the "soul nerve".
25. Could you do an exercise that you think is helpful for us?
26. How did you figure all this out?
27. Explain Traumatic Retention - Black folks acting out against each other (self-repulsion).
28. Tell us about how one decides not to pass on the trauma (you mentioned your Mom not passing on the negatives to her children).
29. Explain Metabolizing Trauma.
30. What is healing as a practice, and what are the benefits of settling?
31. What's happening Today in 2020? What are you seeing? George Floyd, COVID, etc?
32. What are your thoughts about the election? What are you thinking about what you are seeing?
  - a. 68 Million people voted for Trump
  - b. How does America heal collectively? Is it possible (post-election)?
33. How are you dealing with it, on a personal level? How are you doing?



## ***My Grandmother's Hands Questions***

1. What is white body supremacy and how does it function?
2. Why is your grandmother so important in the writing of MGH?
3. What is racialized trauma?
4. What is the sufferings edge, and do we learn from it?
5. Why do you say that Black People were never slaves, we were enslaved-(we were farmers, architects, Lawyers, doctors, etc. before enslavement)
6. What do you mean by the precipice?
7. What are the 4L's: Lose, Life, Learn and Love?
8. Why do you say that the black and indigenous body are not defective?
9. Why do you use the term bodies of culture?
10. What does the term white advantage?
11. When you say "body" is that the same as Identity?
12. It seems like from your interviews like you don't like DEI.
13. What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?
14. How does HIPPP work?
15. Where do you stand on reparations?
16. What is somatic abolitionism grit development-Thickened Skin, Fortified Mindset, Malleable heart?
17. What do you mean when you say get your reps in?
18. What do you mean by invited, life and primary reps?
19. What do you think of the CRT discussion?
20. What is the role of racialized weathering on the box bod?
21. When it comes to race what is it that the white collective body doesn't get?
22. What is meant by tending the fields?
23. Why do you say that energetic love is primary and trauma is not?
24. Explain white body deference?
25. In the last part of your book, you talk about the reckoning what is it?



## ***My Grandmother's Hands* Questions**

- 50 years after the height of the Civil Rights movement, America is still stuck in a racialized divide.
- This divide doesn't live in our thinking brains. It lives in our bodies.
- The divide is the result of unhealed trauma.
- This trauma is in Black bodies, red bodies, brown bodies, police officers, and other self-deputized white bodies, and especially white bodies.
- Trauma is the body's response to anything too much, too fast, or too soon.
- When the body has been harmed, trauma is the body's way to protect it from further harm.
- Trauma responses take four forms: fight, flee, freeze, fawn and annihilate.
- Trauma gets passed down from one generation to the next—not only through culture and behavior, but through the very expression of the DNA in our cells.
- Before Europeans came to the New World, powerful white bodies abused, tortured, and murdered less powerful white bodies for a thousand years. When white bodies first got here, generations of this trauma were inside their bodies.
- In the New World, white bodies tried to blow their trauma through Black, red, and brown bodies. This created trauma in those dark-skinned bodies but did nothing to heal the trauma in the white bodies.
- This trauma has been passed down from generation to generation in American bodies of all pigmentations. It still lives on in our bodies today.
- Until we heal this trauma, individually and collectively, the racialized divide will continue.
- Healing our individual and collective trauma is the key to a better America—and it is the subject of my book.
- When a police officer shoots and kills an unarmed Black man, it's often a trauma response.
- Police officers often say so afterward. They say, "I was scared to death" or "I feared for my life."
- Your trauma is never an excuse for hurting someone. Each of us has a responsibility to heal our trauma, not to try to blow it through other people.
- If you have HIV, it would be wrong to have unprotected sex with someone and tell them when they get sick, "It's not my fault. It's HIV's fault."
- When you have trauma in your body, it's just as wrong to freak out, kill someone, and then say, "It was a trauma response. I was scared to death." You have a responsibility to either heal your trauma or protect others from it.

