

The Seven Steps

By Rosemary Campbell Stephens

Summary

This work supports the ongoing legacy of nurturing Black conscious educators. It offers a blueprint for beginning to heal ourselves and our communities, with an emphasis on bringing out 'educere' as opposed to 'educare'* putting in.

Rosemary Campbell Stephens, an African Caribbean veteran educator of Jamaican parentage, shares her experience of collectively working with other women to save a historically Black school from closure in the United Kingdom. While a culturally driven sense of collective responsibility and action brought the seven educators together to work in the interests of the community, the deeper work was developing an Afrocentric consciousness to bind them together and see the work through.

Central to the project's success was a We/Us focus, necessitating the beginning of collective healing by a rediscovering, however partial the memory, of their "pristine beingness" before the Maafa (African Holocaust). As a result of centuries of living and working in societies that have and continue to dehumanise, separate and minoritise Black and other people of the Global Majority while seducing all to forget, Campbell-Stephens outlines the necessary seven steps, or stages, for ongoing individual and collective recovery, reframing and restitution.

This project illustrates the importance of using culturally responsive practices, highlighting:

- Creating our own narratives
- Healing for Black educators
- African identity and cultural heritage
- Becoming collectively self-determining
- Strategising from an African perspective
- Exercising cultural agency

Guiding Questions

After viewing the project, consider the following questions?

1. What resonated with you?
2. What did this spark in you or inspire you to think about?
3. What was an Aha moment for you while reading?
4. What is one thing you will do as a result of reading this piece? Explain.

Don't have time to view this project? Here is the synopsis sheet with what we learned.

For Black educators to heal, they must go through a transition process where we move from one state of consciousness to another. The seven steps include:

- 1. Remember that we were “seduced to forget” our Africaness and our roots (Cynthia Dillard, 2020)**
 - a. Black people, wherever they are in the world, are Africans
 - b. There is an African worldview** that does not require external validation
 - c. Who we are individually and collectively
 - d. Black African ways of knowing and being
 - e. The truth and our contributions to modern technology

- 2. Reckon with the truth**
 - a. The depth of the psychosis that led to our dehumanisation over centuries
 - b. Internalized oppression and how whiteness sits within us
 - c. An almost constant state of internal conflict, but also come to the point where you are at peace with accepting that which is irreconcilable and deliberately move away from whatever it is

- 3. Repair and heal**
 - a. Be self-defined and determining
 - b. Decolonising our minds and a laser unapologetic focus on our revival, survival, and interests
 - c. Reclaim our languages, rituals, family and community structures, religious and spiritual practices

- 4. Reimagine new meaning-making dreams**
 - a. Remember, re-examine, and value those things we have been taught to think of as inferior, less than, disadvantaged, under-represented, excluded, minoritised, demonised, and problematised, naive, and unsophisticated

- 5. Recentre humanity**
 - a. Be courageous and confident enough to recentre an African worldview, specifically the concept of oneness of humanity
 - b. Understanding that we are connected and human-beings are relational
 - c. We must develop ethical ways of living with each other while being custodians of planet earth and our brothers/sisters keeper

6. Reset internally in our hearts and minds

- a. Disrupt the deeply embedded current narratives on the Black and global majority
- b. Amplify the narratives of the global majority
- c. Revitalize our priorities and values as conscious full human beings
- d. Reset our why, what, and how in collective interest
- e. Reset to our original default position to create

7. Restore our vision

- a. Black consciousness and African-centered views on what it means to be human
- b. Humanity in its entirety - physical, intellectual, spiritual, ancestral, tribal
- c. Communal ways of being and connections between all people
- d. Love, empathy, ethics, truth, balance and a sense of custodianship

***Educare vs Educere**

Craft (1984) noted that there are two different Latin roots of the English word "education." They are "educare," which means to train or to mold, and "educere," meaning to lead out.

****African Worldview**

A worldview is made up of the conscious and unconscious assumptions and presumptions that people have about how they perceive reality and understand their relationship with institutions, nature, objects, people, and spirituality. Some essential elements of an African worldview are listed below

- interconnectedness of all things;
- the spiritual nature of human beings;
- collective individual identity;
- the collective/inclusive nature of family structure;
- the oneness of mind, body and spirit; and the value of interpersonal relationships.

Tool for Black Educator Healing

Let's get started. Use this tool to help your healing journey.

GUIDE	NOTES
<p>Remember that we were seduced to forget our Africaness and our roots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As a Black person, do you consider yourself to be African? Why or why not? ● What do you know about your African heritage and cultural knowledge, and ways of knowing? ● What is one thing that you can do to start learning about your African heritage? 	
<p>Reckon with the truth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What areas related to racism, anti-Blackness, and oppression do you find difficult to wrap your head around? ● What areas have you internalized racist and anti-Black thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, and actions? 	
<p>Repair and heal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What areas in your life have been defined and directed by others? ● What areas do you want and need to reclaim? These areas may include, but are not limited to, languages, rituals, family and community structures, religious and spiritual practices, work, parenting practices, and etc. ● How can you participate in collective healing? 	
<p>Reimagine new meaning making dreams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What areas of Blackness have you been taught to think of as less than or inferior? ● Using fresh eyes, what might a reevaluation of those areas offer? ● What would a reimagined Black purpose of education look like? 	

Recentre humanity

- What does it look like to recentre the African worldview, specifically the concepts of oneness of humanity, ethical ways of living with each other and being custodians of planet earth and our brothers/sisters keeper?

Reset internally in our hearts and minds

- What narrative on Blackness do you need to disrupt?
- What narratives FROM Black people do you need to amplify?
- What priorities and values need to be revitalized to reflect Black people as conscious full human beings?
- With this reset, what is your why, what, and how in a collective interest?

Restore our vision

What is your vision for Blackness from a conscious and African-centered vantage point?