

THE SEVEN STEPS

RCS ROSEMARY
CAMPBELL
STEPHENS



Foreword

The seven steps are a transition process, one where we move from one state of consciousness to another. These 'steps' are certainly not the complete blueprint for every individual, but it is highly unlikely that anyone who carries within their DNA the trauma of being systematically dehumanised over centuries can omit any of these seven steps on a journey back to self, healing, and ultimately being.

The steps are not linear. Within each step, there are further steps. The step-taking is more akin to a nuanced dance; as such, you may have other moves that you need to interject as you ebb and flow in and out, sometimes on a blue note, that you feel rather than hear.

Over the years, these steps have emerged as a process I have engaged in both as a lone traveller and as part of various collectives.

The journeys have rarely been smooth, and this is not promised here.

Relationships that have been gifted by the universe or nurtured by me have brought fellow travellers, some for a time and others for the duration. Individual relationships are precious gifts that, as I move deeper into Junior elderhood, I have learned to treasure more and mourn the passing of less.

They have come in the form of lifetime friends, mentors, students, Griots, creatives, allies, lovers, elders, ancestors, colleagues, travel companions, family, my dear mother and at the other extreme, strangers, at least in this realm.

19th February 1983

Black History

Marcus Garvey.
Steve Biko
Malcom X
Chaka Zulu
Harriet Tubman
Kwame Nkrumah.

Marcus Garvey.

He was fighting for black people's rights and for justice. He was fighting for the things like voting and all the other things that black people couldn't do. He was put in jail for posting things thought to pose, they accused him of fraud and other things. He also set up a shipping line called the Black Star Line.

Steve Biko

1976

Steve Biko died in 1977 after being put up in jail because he helped black people in work and every thing and because he belonged to the P.A.C.M, Pan-African Congress Movement.

Malcom X

He got shot when he speaking, some black shot him. Malcom X's par belonged to the Marcus Garvey Movement. He was in and out of jail for a kinds of things. When he in jail the Black Movement helped him. When he got out he set up hospitals, and and all sorts of things he broke away from the and set up his own thing. He traveled to Africa and Middle East, England then back to America. he went back there was of fighting. He was shot and all sorts of things. government who hated him made some bad things Malcom X. when he was in jail. He is one of the Black Leaders in our

Chaka Zulu.

Chaka Zulu was born in Africa. Before Chaka Zulu were other chiefs. his mother had him when

The people who came together in any given time and space to form an extended family, tribe, or partnership in order to:

- Run a Saturday School
- Develop a leadership programme
- Lead a government initiative
- Create a framework

or save a historically Black school

were all in time, on time.

At the point that we came together, often I, but sometimes others, would become the lead narrator. All would contribute to the narrative weaving, the story around which we could all cohere, even occasionally dance, but through which we would arrive at a higher point of collective consciousness, usually through some painful unlearning.

One would think that the thing that we came together to do was indeed 'the thing', but while collective action was the imperative, it wasn't entirely it.

The process, the journey towards coming together in communion, forging tribes, developing consciousness, and taking action, took us all closer to collective healing and rediscovery of our pristine beingness, resulting in deep-level learning on my part.

Remembering is the beginning of living intentionally with purpose and exercising our agency while being fully human.

Why now?

It was 2014, around fifteen months before my husband and I planned to, in his case, retire and, in mine, enter an early semi-retirement version of same.

We had been talking about going 'home' for years, but few outside of a tight-knit circle had the likely date.

Our days in the sun beckoned, and every aspect of my being was ready, even if the details of my semi-retired life were not.

The clock was ticking and the timing of the request could not have been personally worse.

The Local Authority was under a highly politicised spotlight, capacity was stretched.

Our little school was not a priority.

However, when examining through a different lens, the timing could not have been anything other than it was.

Why me?

A senior associate of mine in the Anglican Diocese who had become a respected friend over the years, approached me to become a troubled school's Interim Executive Board Chair of Governors.

The tiny school in question was a historically Black school close to my heart and that of the Black community that it served.

The clandestine plan of the Local Authority was actually to close the school, although this was never made explicit in the public narrative, it was clear from even a cursory glance of the moves being made.

The counterplan, both from those being approached and our Diocese colleague (who was also approaching retirement and in the process of handing over to her successor) was to bring the school into the Diocesan family, by opening as an Academy while retaining its unique identity as a Seven-Day Adventist School sponsored by the Diocese.

Our plan was to save the school by any means necessary and secure its future.

The sponsored academy route was the best available if most bureaucratically challenging option open to us. At no time did I express to the Diocesan lead that I knew that the Local Authority's real intention was to close the school, but that knowledge guided every single step that I took with others in steering the process.

Unknowingly, I knew the way.

How?

I had been here before, at least partially.

The school in question was the 'sister' primary school to a secondary school that had closed a year prior in London.

I had been approached then to try and pull an emergency team together to save the school, but the approach was far too late, coming as it did towards the end of the Christmas holidays. The local authority took the decision to close the school in March of the following year.

The school formally closed on the 31 August 2013.

Notwithstanding, over that three-month period, we tried to do something to limit the damage, knowing full well we couldn't stem the tide. The community, our community, was heartbroken, but they/we/us had been in part to blame for its demise.

This secondary school in London had been a beacon of excellence, a historically black school of the Seven-Day Adventist faith with some outstanding and visionary leaders over the years. Moving towards pedagogical liberatory practices and inculcating Black cultural values that had nurtured an outstanding alumnus of extraordinary students from London's Black community who made their mark in the world.

Devastatingly, a combination of external politics and internal struggles lead to the school's troubles until the last vindictive act of an outgoing Director of Children's services saw the school closed.

It was critical that the primary school in another city would not go the same way. The learning was almost as deep as the unlearning.



Time then, as indeed now, was of the essence.

I was approached in April 2014, we were due to migrate in September 2015, and I was beyond fully extended professionally and personally. I remember trying to get my head around seventeen months of sleep deprivation and everything that meant ahead of the biggest personal move in my life to date.

I remember 'praying', and I do not do that well, that heart, soul, health and marriage would hold.

Although fifteen months by the time I was officially installed as Chair, was a very short period of time in which to turn the situation around, the head of the Anglican diocese had already begun to identify a key player, a national Leader and local headteacher who had been honoured by the Queen for services to education.

She in turn brought in some outstanding co-conspirators who would form the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and become the turnaround team.

My inclusion as Chair of Governors enabled me to bring in another critical fellow traveller, my Vice Chair and Clerk to Governors, without her governance background, we would not have stood a chance.

Fortunately, weaving a narrative around which we the IEB could cohere was one of my strengths; I left the praying to those among us more qualified to do so, but I conversed with God every single day.

When

We committed to doing whatever it took to complete the job in the time available, I dared not ask the other women what that truly meant for them in real terms, I couldn't carry the weight or the responsibility of it, as I was buckling under my own.

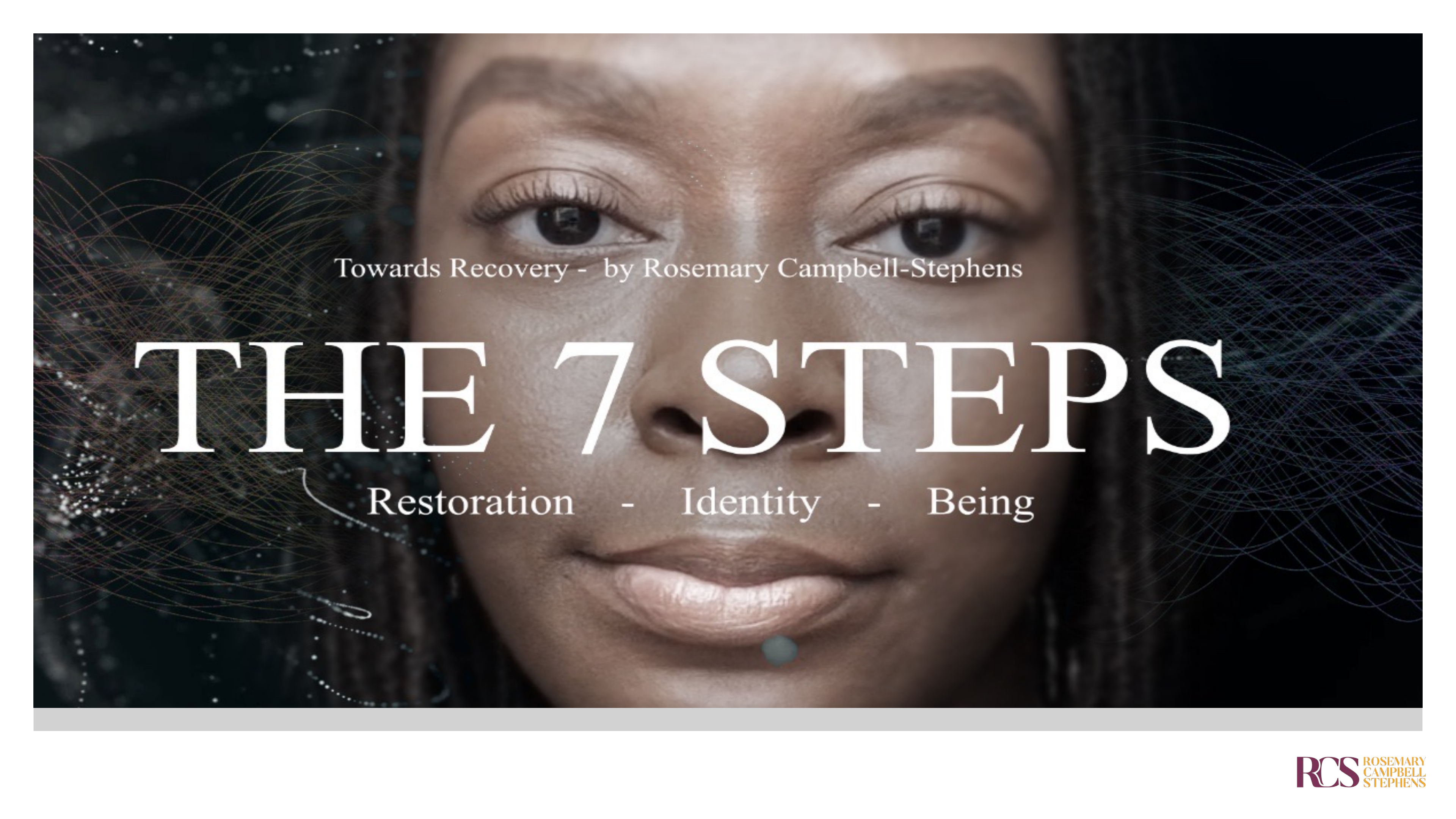
My Vice Chair and I reversed planned from the date that my husband and I were to get on the plane to the date that I was approached, what needed to happen in navigating a school in special measures, out of measures and firmly on the way to becoming a sponsored academy, with autonomy to remain true to its cultural roots and collective responsibility to its past and future. We planned meticulously what, how and when; in some cases, I jest not, to the hour, if not the minute.

When this story is made into a documentary and then a feature film, some very important aspects of the key characters and what I learned from them about working with the principles of Ubuntu in our hearts, are critical to understanding the journey of Ava, Jackie, Paulette, Sonia, Jennie, Sharon and Rosemary, which there is no room to expand on here.

I will say this, three of these extraordinary women among our magnificent tribe of seven would have stood to gain significantly if the school that they worked so hard to save while running their own successful neighbouring school, had closed. They, like us, chose instead to put individual interest not to mention ego aside, and take seven steps, remember, reckon, repair, reimagine, recentre and reset. Each person playing their unique part.

To cut a long and in many ways, beautiful if heartbreaking in parts love story short, we did manage to save the school, at immeasurable personal cost, remarkably within the time frame.

The following, unapologetically from my perspective, is a summary of the seven collective steps that we took together. The seven steps or stages incorporate those that have characterised my own journey over the years towards consciousness, healing and being.

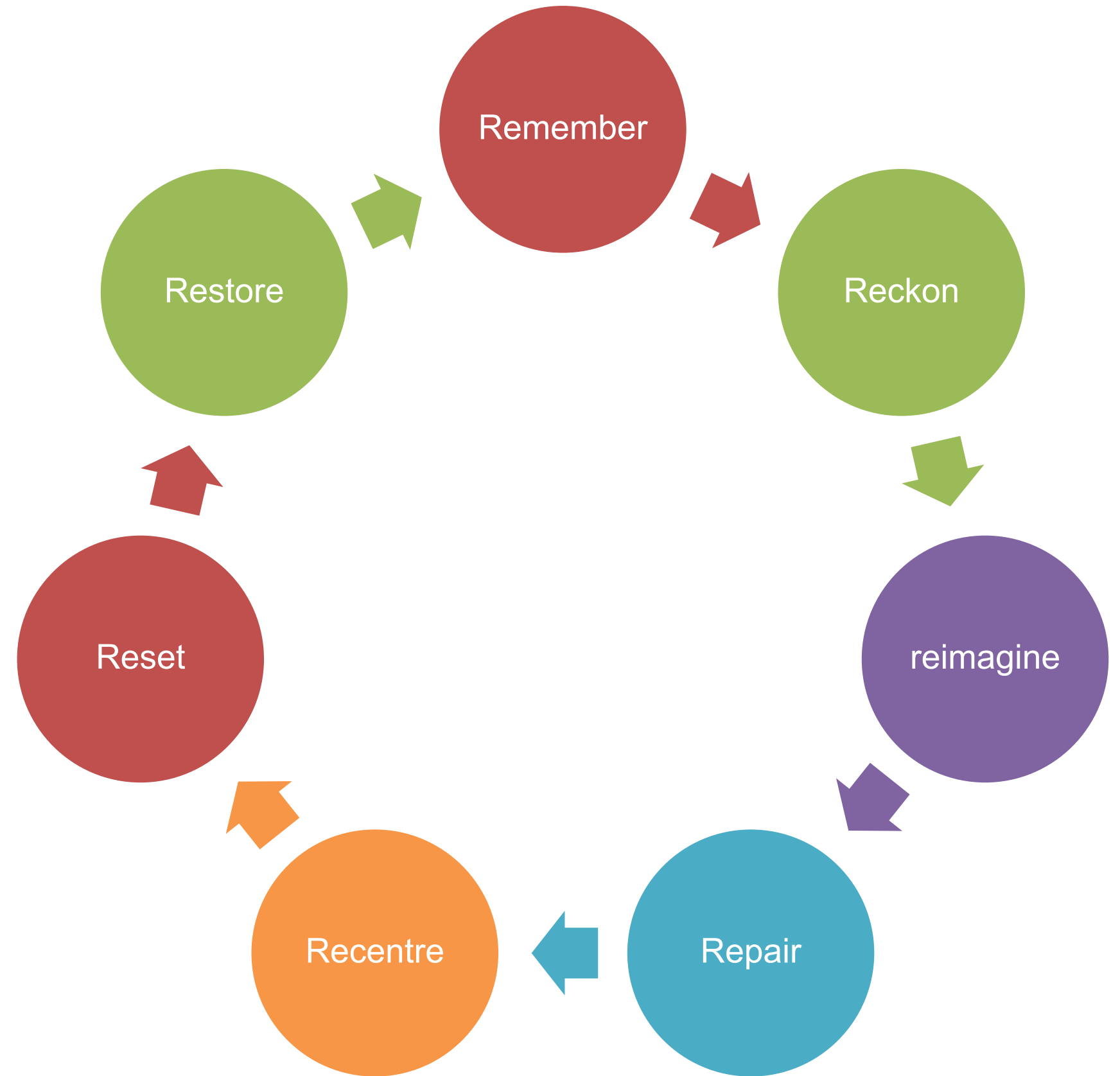
A close-up portrait of a woman's face, looking directly at the camera. The background is dark with some light streaks and bokeh. The text is overlaid on the image.

Towards Recovery - by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens

THE 7 STEPS

Restoration - Identity - Being

The Seven Steps



Step one
Remember





In conversation with Dr. April Warren-Grice, she referenced Dr Cynthia B. Dillard's work "The Spirit of Our Work – Black Women Teachers (**Re**) Member."

Dr Dillard speaks about the steps within remembering, which include:

- Researching
- Revisioning
- Recognising
- Representing
- Reclaiming.

The first thing to remember as African people is that we were seduced to forget.

The second is that this is the perfect time to collectively remember, and the third thing is to remember how to remember.

Remembering that there is an African worldview that does not require external validation. African woman she who birthed humanity carries the Eve gene from which all humankind comes. We are it, Alpha and Omega.

Remembering sometimes requires that we 'return' physically, as well as spiritually, intellectually, and ancestrally to our roots in order to understand ourselves more fully and step into our role in these times.

Remember who we are individually and, most importantly, collectively. Critical to remembering is understanding that it is a multifaceted process; for example, our DNA carries some aspects of memory, forever with us.

Remembering will enable us to step out of the blackness that whiteness created and into the Blackness that is, by remembering way before the Maafa.

Remembering Black African ways of knowing and being and trusting them to be efficacious in the here and now is the charm. Being, we/us requires nurturing back to life cultural contexts and the rituals that sustain cultural identity, including self-love, connection, agency and all that makes us human, on purpose.

Remembering the truth, including our contributions to the modern technological contexts in which we currently find ourselves is key to not relegating ourselves to the past.

Step two
Reckon





“I was almost constantly in a state of internal conflict”

Professor Gus John

Reckoning with the truth takes much.

One of the hardest truths to reckon with, to turn and confront, is the depth of the psychosis that led to our dehumanisation over centuries.

No one wants to be hated that bad.

Another hard truth is our internalised oppression, and how whiteness sits within us.

We have to reckon with ourselves. We must reckon with not only what has happened but our part in it. Reckoning with the internalised oppression of the non-black mindset, which has become for so many of us, the default, normalised position, is soul-destroying.

The assimilated oppression squats like a virus before becoming prominent and neutralising its host.

Although turning and facing the oppressor can be trauma-inducing in of itself, sit with it, but do not dwell there.

You will come to understand that an African mindset **will not** assist you in either understanding or confronting that particular disease. Alien, it has to bleed out; there is no vaccine.

Understand not only the systemic nature of the oppression, but the roots of it. Preoccupation with the fruits of the poisoned tree is futile.

Reckon with an almost constant state of internal conflict, but also come to a point where you are at peace with accepting that which is irreconcilable and deliberately move away from whatever it is.

Step three
Repair



To: Rosemary
We must take the
initiative to define
us by us.
Peace,
Na'im Akbar

Repair – time to heal.

Na'im Akbar in his dedication to me in one of his books that he signed, "We must take the initiative to define us by us."

Being self-defined and determining beings is key to repairing and restoring our humanness.

We are physical, spiritual, intellectual, tribal and ancestral beings, healing, therefore, needs to happen at all levels of beingness

The process of repair required is one of collective healing.

Collective healing cannot occur without reckoning with what has happened, acknowledgement followed by reparations is only the start.

Constant denial prevents repair and ultimately, healing.

Repair requires decolonising of our minds and a laser unapologetic focus on our revival, survival and interests.

Repair also implies reclaim.

Reclaiming languages, rituals, family and community structures, religious and spiritual practices that serve us well.

Repair requires returning to our communal ways of being.

Repair requires reparations.

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, smiling, with a complex, glowing blue and white neural network or fiber-optic overlay. The overlay consists of numerous thin, intersecting lines that create a mesh-like structure across her face. The background is dark, making the glowing lines stand out. The overall aesthetic is futuristic and technological.

REIMAGINE

Step four

Reimagine

Reimagine

Remembering enables us to **imagine**.

The impetus for reimagining is that the current systems and frameworks no longer work and we have to look out of the existing normalised models to more indigenous knowledge.

Reimagining takes us into the territory of creating new meaning making dreams at least part of the way that we reimagine and remember as we process narratives passed down through our DNA.

Reimagining requires unlearning and valuing that which we have been taught to think of as inferior, less than, disadvantaged, under-represented, excluded, minoritised, demonised, problematized, naive, unsophisticated,

Reimagining requires remembering

before reframing and re-purposing.

Step five
Recentre



Humanity

What is urgently required from a new world order in this technological and modern age is a **recentering of humanity.**

Be courageous and confident enough to recentre an African worldview epitomised specifically by the concept of Ubuntu and the principle of the “oneness of humanity, a collectivity, community and set of cultural practices and spiritual values that seek respect and dignity for all humanity.”

(Dr. Ivy Nomalungelo Goduka, 2000, p.72)

It is critical that we begin to centre the needs of the majority over and above the greed of the minority. (Campbell-Stephens, 2021)

As modern human beings connected to each other, ancestrally and tribally, we must develop ethical ways of living with each other and being custodians of planet Earth, as well as our brothers and sisters keeper.



Step six Reset

The reset begins internally in our hearts and minds

Critically, we need to reset those dominant narratives on blackness and white supremacy and amplify the narratives of the global majority.

Deprogramming is a prerequisite to resetting.

In order to deprogram and return to our true default, we need to understand how the current programming has become so deeply embedded in our psyche, how it is maintained and how we can begin with urgency the process of disrupting the programming, particularly for our young.

The process of revitalisation requires that, among the first things to reset are our priorities and values as conscious, fully human beings. In resetting our priorities, we then identify our purpose as individuals and interdependent people.

We intentionally and unapologetically reset our why, what and how in our collective interest.

Reset to our original default position, and only from that position, create decolonised

blueprints
tools
intellectual property
systems
epistemologies

Restore



Step seven

Restore

Restore

Your vision

Restore pristine Black consciousness and African-centered views of what it is to be human.

Restore humanness in its entirety: physical, intellectual, spiritual, ancestral, tribal.

Restore communal ways of being and connections between all people.

Restore love, empathy, ethics, truth, balance and a sense of custodianship.

We saved our school by collectively taking seven steps

Remember
Reckon
Repair
Reimagine
Recentre
Reset

Restore



Timeline

- Approached to become Harper Bell's IEB Chair in April 2014
- **Remembering** John Loughborough March-August 2013, and before, going back to when it first opened in 1980 as an independent school.
- Remembering Harper Bell's beginnings in September 1988.
- Remembering how schools that start out with such hope can close.
- Remembering that we have agency.
- In the process of remembering, pulling together a team fit for the current urgent purpose and getting to know each of them, forging an unbreakable bond.
- Reckoning with the role of the local authority/the diocese/the secretary of state/ the church/ the school/ the IEB
- **Reckoning** with the conflict/ lack of self-belief/loss of faith/ lack of trust/ hypocrisy/ egos and posturing, values, ethos and behaviour out of step
- Reckoning with the politics/LA/Church/Diocese/Staff/Parents/Governors/wider community
- **Repairing** relationships, confidence, conscience, the physical environment, the spiritual decay
- Getting to know the staff/children/governors/parents/church in a different way,
- **Reimagine** what the school could be. How the IEB could change the trajectory, relationships
- **Recentre** – the children, the purpose of schools like Harper Bell, the heart of teaching, the soul of leadership
- **Reset** – proactive, intentional, using agency, planning, policies, practice, processes, ways of being and seeing
- **Restore** - self-determination, working together, efficacy, hope, collective memory, capacity, a future worth living into



For more details about Seven Step retreats contact **Rosemary Campbell-Stephens**

Website

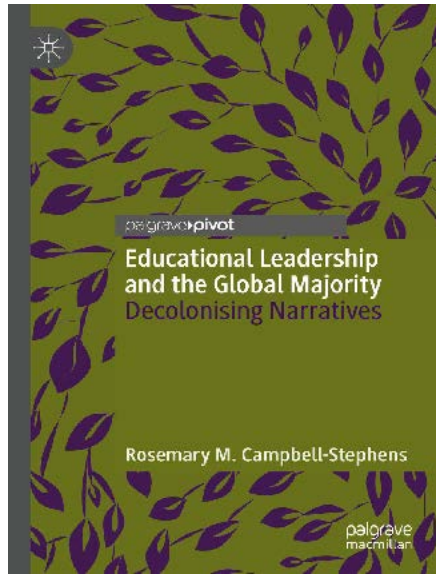
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Rosemary M. Campbell-Stephens

Educational Leadership and the Global Majority

Decolonising Narratives

- **Challenges the minority status attributed to Black and other marginalised groups**
- **Interrogates the concept of a “Global Majority,” within the existing literature on race and leadership**
- **Analyzes the example of a leadership development programme in London schools**

“This book will definitely add to ongoing discussions of global responsibility and the role of leadership in these times of a global reckoning on race, anti-Black racism, and White supremacist logics.” —**George J. Sefa Dei**, Professor of Social Justice Education and Director of the Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, Canada

“This powerful book has arrived at a critical time. Government policy propagates a vanilla meritocracy which is wilfully colour-blind and in denial of the struggles of Global Majority professionals at every level. Rosemary Campbell-Stephens’ book launches into this territory with authenticity, clarity of analysis based on her experience, and intellectual rigour” —**Colin Diamond**, Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Birmingham, UK

This book introduces a term for our times, ‘Global Majority,’ as conceptualised within the context of school leadership. It examines the processes and impact over time of racially-minoritising up to eighty-five percent of the world’s population. The chapters illustrate how a decolonised cognitive reset from a minority to majority orientation moves practice from a place of subordination to one of agency and efficacy. By reconnecting the people of the Global Majority with their narratives and the social and historical linkages that they have always had, the book potentially contributes to a different globality; where interdependence is not driven by the economic greed of the minority, but the social and very human needs of the majority.

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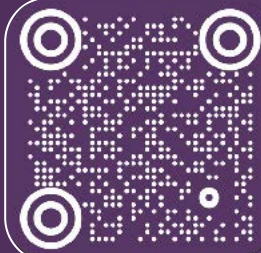
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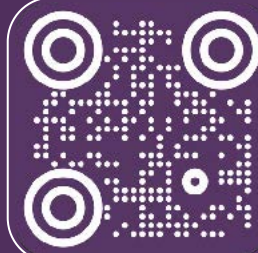
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#Global Majority
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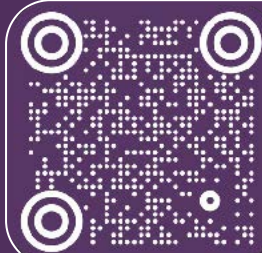


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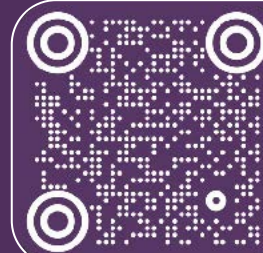


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