**Schools Inclusion Alliance: Let's Talk about Race**

[00:00:00] **Helen Semple:** [00:00:00] Okay. welcome. And thank you for joining me in this discussion. It's such an important time. And my name is Helen simple and actually had at Saint Paul's girls' school. And I'm founder of the school's inclusion Alliance. I'm really lucky to be joined today by Marsha Powell and Mark Gervais. And I thought we'd start with some introductions.

So maybe Marsha would like to start and introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about what you've been doing. Okay. So, my name is Masha Powell. I am the founder of a ghost heartache who belly that's B E L E V E. So, there's no, I dispel and aim. and we, what for girls between the age of 8 and 18, and now objective is to support girls in developing the right type of abilities.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:00:46] Leadership skills to be leaders of their own world. What would that sound like? What does that look like? It's about raising your confidence and your self-esteem, making sure you have the right types of opportunities and the right role models to be [00:01:00] awesome women. And that's what we do. Perfect. Thank you.

And could you tell me a little bit about yourself too, please? Yeah. So, hi everybody. I'm Mark Gervais. I'm brought here as a retired police officer, which has quite a saving for what's going on. so, a retired police officer, metropolitan police London for 30 years. mostly in West London and, in my various roles as a police officer, including interestingly, the diversity directorates.

**Mark Gervais:** [00:01:34] in the metropolitan police and their professional standards. So, policing the police. So, I think, in a very poignant and since leaving the police service, so I've continued in the area of, diversity and inclusion. So I'm in a diversity inclusion, inclusive leadership, specialists, consultant, again, it's an organizations, All kinds of organizations from, banks, [00:02:00] in the public sector as well, local authorities, helping, looking at their diversity and inclusion and a lot around it. Their leaders in the organizations, you know, what does inclusion look like for them?

**Helen Semple:** [00:02:13] Perfect. Thank you very much. so, what I thought we would do is, have look at some questions together and then maybe towards the end, sort of have some targeted questions to each of you. we're obviously all painfully aware of the recent incidence in America

and unfortunately, this is one of many such instances that have happened in the recent past. So in a world of fake news and it being really hard for people to understand the current situation and the fact that many people want to believe that it's just over the pond and that there is no racism in the UK. What was your response to that be? And maybe Marsha if we start with you.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:02:50] Okay. So., I think what's happened in America is not an Afro American problem. I think it's a [00:03:00] human problem. We have racism across the globe. and specifically, we're talking about police brutality with regards to this specific case.

And what we know for sure in the UK is we still have issues with stop and search and how young Black boys are treated by police, not all the time, but we have cases and incidents. I mean, you have a recent one that's happened in Lewisham this week when they young Black woman. Treated horrendously by the police. So, it's, it's easy to look at it, the situation and say, it's not our problem.

And I think that's what we did with COVID. We all said its China's problem until COVID came to the UK. What we have to be able to do is look at, the situation, what is the problem? And try as, as, as human beings to find out what the [00:04:00] possible solutions are. And I don't think it's a Black problem, as I said, I think it's a human problem.

**Helen Semple:** [00:04:06] thank you.

**Mark Gervais:** [00:04:10] Yeah, I like it. I haven't heard it quite like that. Marshall. I like that. It's a human problem. I do like that. Absolutely. It's about everybody taking responsibility and everybody has a part to play in it. The idea that, you know, over there, you know, in many ways, I think that's a cop out.

This pretending that well, you know, okay. We're okay. And we look at those, look at those Americans. They're terrible. When we know, we know we've got many, many instances and examples in the UK of similar behaviors that are going on. so, and, and even to the extent, and I'm not, I'm not defending the police as a. retired police officer, but you know, it's not confined to the police and Black people. You know, we look at the whole thing [00:05:00] around systemic endemic, institutional racism, throughout our society. And, I think as I say, I think everybody's got a part to play in that.

One thing. I would like to say nothing's quite important. So, I, as I said, I'm a diversity inclusion consultant. One of the things I do say to people, I'm giving permission in a way is, you will get it wrong. You will get it wrong because I think sometimes that stops people. Intervening saying something because it's sort of like, I do want to get a role, but actually you will get it wrong.

I get it wrong. You know, I'm sure Marsha, she gets it wrong from time to time. Sometimes it's odd, but it's about, you know, engaging. Engaging, and then, you know, and that's how you learn. you know, I, I, yeah, I would say we need to engage, everybody needs to engage

**Helen Semple:** [00:05:51]. Okay, thank you. And that brings really nicely into the next question, because I was going to say, you know, as a white person who doesn't want to offend, it can be tricky [00:06:00] sometimes to know the right language to use.

so could you each tell us a little bit about your own lived experience as a Person of Colour, how you identify and what advice you could give and we'll start Mark, maybe this time with you please

**Mark Gervais:** [00:06:14]. Okay. So, Well, you can look at me. So, I identify as a Black; Black British. My parents were from the West Indies, both my parents, mum from Barbados., dad was from Trinidad., they came over here in the sixties, just sort of just posts we rush, I guess. And, I joined the police at age 20, just before my 21st birthday. Things have changed. Yes. overt racism, even growing up. I remember, things like sort of cycling to school, being called names.

My father was in the Royal air force. So where we were in terms of postings and where we live, we were, our family was usually, [00:07:00] the only Black family on the RAF base, you know, there might be one other Black family on the RAF base and at junior school, I was probably about age nine, cycling to school. So, I come home from school. And, ,#you know, I'm cycling past the secondary school with a puncture and then things that people were saying to me that was said to me with terrible, you know, thinking back, back in back then, it's interesting.

I didn't think that much because to be honest with you, and this sounds terrible, to be honest with you, it was the norm. It was the norm to be. for people to be, racist and abusive. so it wasn't, it wasn't a big deal to me. So, you know, so it's something I've grown up with. and my parents essentially, I remember one time when I was probably eight I'm, one of six kids, and I remember one time we had a cellar in our house in, [00:08:00] in, in Germany, RF Brugen. And my mother took us down into the cellar and spoke to us and said, look, you know, people will be racist. People will say things to you, but you know, don't lash out. Don't let out just, you know, you've just got to take it, you know, come home and tell me. I always remember that, you know, us all being taught that.

So, it's something I've grown up with. even in the police service. So, we're looking at 38 years, 39 years ago when I joined the police. again, you know, the behavior was quite interesting, and people would be racist. And it's weird because it's how they owned or didn't own it. So, I would be in a police vehicle with a bunch of other cops. They would make racist comments about people outside the vehicle. And I go, "hello? Hello. What about me?" And they [00:09:00] would say, "but you don't count. You're now one of us". Yes. So, I did, you know, at first, I think I just acquiesced, I allowed it to happen. Then, you know, I then sort of fought back and said, look guys, you know, you can't do this.

but I, then I think after that quite early on, I always spoke out within the police service around the behaviors that I saw, and I encountered I wouldn't. Cause you know, people got to realize, cause sometimes I think people don't know. Yeah. You know, we say these things because everybody says it, but we actually don't appreciate the impact until somebody says do you know what, that's not acceptable. You know, people do people get away with what they can get away with.

**Helen Semple:** [00:09:44] Perfect. Thank you very much, Marsha. Same question.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:09:55] I'm a short Black woman. I am just under 5 Foot, and that also comes with, [00:10:00] okay, comments. However, I'm going to talk about lived experience in the workplace because this is where racism can sometimes lie, but it is inadvertently there. And sometimes. What happens is people make you feel it's not happening when you know it is.

And, and like, sometimes I don't think it's intentional, but it's becomes a condition. So, it becomes acceptable. So, I joined an organization when I was pretty young. I was, I'm quite confident, young Black woman. I'm very ambitious. And I was often told I'm too outspoken. So, it's microaggression or I'm too aggressive, or I also [00:11:00] told you a bit bolshy.

So those are the things that actually eat away at you as a young Black woman. I'm in eighth in a place where you are. Going to be off service, whatever role you are there to do, but it also starts to form a story in your head. So, the story that you begin to form in your head is you're not good enough. So, when opportunities come up, you don't put yourself forward because you don't believe you're good enough because you're continuously hearing things that are not actually positive about you as an individual. But you will hear very positive things about your peers and you're thinking, hold on, what they doing differently to me? However, how I was able to combat that was finding allies within the [00:12:00] organization. So, people that, but not necessarily, or people who had been exposed to Black women like me, who understood that it wasn't, that I was being outspoken. Actually. I just have a different way in communicating because we have differences. I've been conditioned different and I'm quiet, you know, I use my hands a lot, but that's not about me being aggressive. So I think, you know, How you were conditioned, how you were socialized is really going to have an impact on how you see different people and also how you engage with them.

but you often forget that your actions can have an impact on the person who is not necessarily seen as the majority in the organization. So those who are of my minority can sometimes become quite silent. And feel like they don't have a, a progressive [00:13:00] place in the workplace. So that would be definitely my Lived experience.

**Helen Semple:** [00:13:06] Perfect. Thank you. So, moving on then, many people, feel very uncomfortable in discussions about privilege. why is this such an important concept to understand, and to get comfortable with, maybe Marsha you'd like to start?

**Marsha Powell:** [00:13:21] Okay. So, the concept of privileges is, is a big one. And I think it's really important because it's about bringing a level of consciousness. If you do not know you're doing something, you cannot stop doing it. So, if we do not have the conversation around, do you know Bob to be white is to be privileged. And these are the reasons, then unconsciously, you are being privileged. And why is really important is because, and especially in schools, is because if we want change, we need to recondition [00:14:00]. our thoughts, our attitudes, and our beliefs. If you have never had to engage with someone of Colour, you may not know how to engage with someone of Colour. However, understanding that you do come from a place. of privilege will help you to understand that your privilege exists. But first and foremost, you are human.

So, you are actually having to engage with another human and not necessarily a Black woman. I'm Marsha. And when you get to know me, you understand that I'm very articulate, very intelligent, and I've got something to say and I'm kind. As I come from love. So, it's about engaging in that conversation so that there is a wider understanding because I understand that some white people live in a [00:15:00] vacuum.

Actually, I have, I have a business in Clapham, and I see all the young white kids going to private school and there's no Black kids there. At all. So how do they then learn how to deal with, or speak to, or be friends with someone who's different than them? If their world doesn't consist of anyone other than white people. And that's really what we have to tackle.

**Helen Semple:** [00:15:30] Yeah, absolutely. Which is why and diversity in schools is obviously so important and we need to work harder.

**Mark Gervais:** [00:15:37] Yeah. So I, yeah, that whole, the idea of privilege, I think it's, I think for a lot of people just don't get it, because this idea that, Oh, you know, what's the problem because, you know, they can also apply to do that or they can also, and I think, and it's trying to try and get people to understand that there's more to, how [00:16:00] do you get to where you are?

it's interesting, you know, You you've done well, you know, you've, you were in a school and your parents are in the position that you've done doing well in GCSE is because your parents can afford to get you a tutor. Yeah. Other people that's not the case. So that's a privilege. And it's just going to be.

And I think, you know, I'll often talk to people about privilege and me, and it clearly don’t get it, you know, examples like that, you know? So, you know, people who, who aren't afforded that and can't afford to have the math tutor. All right. That's a form of privilege, the fact that you can do. And that's my thing. It's very, very important because. It's quite easy to go. Well, hang on. I just don't get it because you know, anyone can apply to come to this school. [00:17:00] Anyone can apply for this job any, well, hang on yes, anyone can, but let's have a look at how we get there and what are the things that assist us? And that's what privilege is.

It's those things. And then, and then who is afforded that. And I think that's where we could get people to understand that actually that's what privilege is. It's about those things, those extra little things that I'm given because of where I am and who I am. And that's why it's important because if people get, understand that.

Then they'll get towards understanding, racism and, and disproportionality as well around these issues.

**Helen Semple:** [00:17:44] Thank you. and I think that sort of leads us into the fact that, you know, we often, when we have this, sense of, sorry, Marsha.

Oh, sure. I think you're on mute.

**Mark Gervais:** [00:17:55] You're back now.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:17:56] Okay. Sorry. Yeah. So, I spoke [00:18:00] to my I've got a 19-year-old daughter and she goes to university. And I asked her these questions and we talked about, and she said, mom, you know, there is.privilege that exists and they will, and it's in this way, you know, to go to a good university, you have to have good grades, but if you come from a place i.e. A school that all they talk about and all they condition you to is to go to Eton the probability that you're going to get to Eton it's going to be very high.. However, if I go to another university that isn't, it also. It causes barriers to my employment opportunities as well. So, it's, it's far reaching. It's not just about, it's not just about school, it's not just about climate. It's also about your networks that you think exposed to, but then also impacts on the type of earning potential you have it's it becomes very cyclical.

**Helen Semple:** [00:18:59] Which is why [00:19:00] we've just got to work hard in, in the school, sort of space, from an early age and get people talking about race and talking about privilege. when we have a sense of injustice and we all, you know, as we've seen over the last sort of few days wants to spring into action to do something.

how do we make sure that you know, what we are doing is positive and helpful and maybe Mark would like to respond first to that?

**Mark Gervais:** [00:19:26] Yeah. I, I talk about being politely inquisitive, because it goes back to what I said at all that, you know, we will get it wrong. And I think there is something, you know, it's a human problem.

It's not, it's not, you all have to own this and people need to find what can they genuinely do, because I think one of the things which I can, I, I struggle with myself. some are these hashtag things where, you know, where, you know, someone will post. You know, [00:20:00] hashtag Black Lives Matters to 10 of their friends, you know, with a, with a little tag saying something like how many of you are going to pass this on, you know, well, I'm not convinced around the efficacy.

Of that sort of, posting. so, I think, you know, what can you do? You enrage, you want to, you know, and, and, you know, it sorts of gets you here, so what can you do? And I think it's about educating yourself to a certain extent, because it goes back to her saying that, you know, these issues start with yourself.

You know, where am I in this? And, you know, I think if this spurs people on to have a look at, you know, for example, in this, in the UK, let alone in America, the involvement of Black people in, in, in British English history, you know, and we, we, you know, it was out of English history, literally trying to get ourselves back here.

you know, so that's something, you know, as you think it's about. And being politely inquisitive. So, if we are with [00:21:00] other people. Find out where they stand. If you, if you're able to talk to other People of Colour, be politely inquisitive and asked, you know, where can you really, you know, what is it that I might be looking that I can do? I’ve had some of this conversation with my daughters, I've got three. My youngest is second year at university. And, my oldest is working in London and we've been having this discussion and they often talk about, you know, about, getting enraged and people talking about it. But my challenge to them was okay, what can people do? Because all well and good saying that don't do this. Don't do that, but actually people need to know what they can do. And I think it doesn't have to be huge. It doesn't have to be huge. That thing around the understanding, making the inquiry, educate yourselves and extends, you know, what is really going on will go a long way to make a difference. [00:22:00] I would think just post your Black tile, you know, again, I think that’s sort of ducking issue often, you know, if that's all you're doing, I'm going to post some Black tile, . I've done my bit. That doesn't help anything. What are the conversations are you having that will inform yourself and help inform other people?

**Helen Semple:** [00:22:23] Thank you. And Marsha., same question.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:22:28] So I agree with Mark about the whole education piece, but I talk from a, from a place of supporting young girls in amplifying their voices. Talk about this is making you feel. That's the first thing, in a safe space, because I think if I can get more girls who can, and not just Black girls, or Girls of Colour talking about how we can possibly [00:23:00] bring about change and social change. That’s, the first step. and it's also about calling it out.

So if you have a friend and you see your friend behaving in a particular way, that you feel is inappropriate, being able to pull to one side to say, actually that's not right, and these are the reasons they're not right. and empowering the girls to understand that. That's okay. We get like, like Mark said, we all get things wrong, but it's about how do you rectify it?

Yeah. The problem, whatever it is. And then sometimes an apology is enough. You don't have to overexplain as to why you did it, but it is about taking responsibility and accountability for your own behavior. So, I say, if we work local, it becomes global because as people, what we do is we follow and what we [00:24:00] want people is people to start following good behaviour.

And when they see bad behavior calling out and that, is this bit that we have struggled with.

**Helen Semple:** [00:24:13] Excellent. Thank you. That's really good advice. both for the young people in schools, but also, for the staff, you both talked about, you know, starting with self. but I wondered whether or not there are things that you think schools and the world of education could do better in talking about race.

I know Mark, for example, you mentioned about, you know, sort of Black history within British history, for example, is there anything else that you think again, schools could be doing? And for example, the school's inclusion Alliance should be looking at, in order to get people talking about race?

**Mark Gervais:** [00:24:52] yes. yeah, as I said, about, history. Yes. I think there is, I don't know. [00:25:00] It's you know, where, where schools are, who are your school links with, with other schools, charities and things like that. So that it's, you know, so that it's real, it's not just a theory here, you know? because. There is something around, you know, there was a survey, it's an American, piece of work around, testing people's bias.

And then out of all of this, that the work, they did something little like, and I couldn't do exact figures, but something like, 25% of respondents to this, thing around, bias, in America had an inherent fear, Black men. That's really high, but where does that come from? Most of the people hadn’t spoken to a Black man, you know, there's this inherent fear.

So, I do think there is something around, you know, Exchanges that we have. and I think the schools [00:26:00] could probably, facilitate some of that kind of thing in terms of those charities, other schools, et cetera. So, people can have conversations. It's not, there is something about hearing other people's stories as well.

Cause sometimes it's. It's true. That square box in the corner of your house, in the corner of the living room and is over there. And then you have what, hang on. What really happened to you? What is that? Is that, is that really what it's like for you when you're talking to someone face to face? I think it's very, very different.

Hmm. Yeah.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:26:42] I run a charity and we say, it's the disadvantage girls, but it really isn't the girls who we have in our community have very mixed. and what I, what I've seen is that they learn amazingly [00:27:00] together. Yeah. Two of my girls, wrote a piece on racism and inequality this week. And one is a Black girl and one is a Chinese girl and the piece was beautiful, but they came from the own perspective to do this.

So. Yeah, again, it's about fostering the conversation, empowering young people to, sometimes when it feels scary, say it. So long as you are in a safe space and you that it's coming from a good place. Say it, you know, so it's really about raising their confidence to be able to be inquisitive and ask questions. When they don't have the answers.

Yeah. To be conscious to actually ask those questions. Yes. [00:28:00] Yes.

Like imagine someone asking why to have you got that on your head? it’s a head wrap. The hair underneath doesn’t look too good. However, it's cultural. So instead of staring at me and thinking like why she got that on her head, I've explained it now. It'd be, so now do you feel comfortable?!

**Helen Semple:** [00:28:21] I mean, that's really interesting. Say it's around when people talk about, cultural appropriation, for example, you know, I know from my experience that I've been questioned about as a white person, is it okay? Is it appropriate to speak about race? I wondered if maybe you could talk a little bit about, an explain cultural misappropriation for us and what role you think, why it's a non-Black people should play in this discussion. Marsha may be going back to you.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:28:50] Okay. So I'm going to come from a very basic place and it's annoying when you [00:29:00] feel that your culture is being stolen, but you are not congratulated for it, or you're not even acknowledged in it being a part of and African culture. for example. However, we live in a very inclusive world and we are in, we are all, inquisitive and we all want to try new things and that's fine, you know, but it's when it's, when culture has been taken and, It's not acknowledged that it comes from that place because then it feels like it's stealing.

And I think that's where people then become very, angry and frustrated about, misappropriation. however, I always have to question myself [00:30:00] around what is my role? Because as Mark said, you always have to come from yourself first. And it is really about how do you educate someone? Cause sometimes it's done unconsciously, unconsciously because you know, there was some beautiful elements to, for example, the African culture, with rich the food, whether it's, you know, how they dress, but it's about how do I, how do I educate those who I see. not using the culture in the appropriate way, or how do I educate those who I believe are taking it and not acknowledging where it comes from. So, I think a lot of this does come up from education and conditioning.

**Helen Semple:** [00:30:51] Yeah, thank you. Mark. And could you add to that please?

**Mark Gervais:** [00:30:55] Yeah. And then I think, you know, Marsha is absolutely right. The whole thing around at people not [00:31:00] knowing. And is that education. you know, I think, I think, the whole concept of cultural appropriate appropriations is very interesting because, you know, how does that work to a certain extent in that? So, my, my wife, my wife is white. So, you know, in a multicultural society, you know, and it's quite interesting that I'm, I mean, I don't want to go off on a tangent here about the fact that, you know, my girls self-identify as Black.

but that's a whole other conversation, but when it comes to the it's about the knowledge, it's about the education around, where does this stuff come from? And what really resonated for me when Marsha was saying, it's the whole thing around, you know, these things taken but not acknowledged. So this idea, so there will be people, I guess, being brought up, thinking that, you know, things that have [00:32:00] been appropriated, that they are indigenous in the UK, and this is what were actually, then thinking things come from indigenous culture.

Well, thinking about where the things that have come from, and, and use it well, you know, don't twist useful things in terms of clothes. It could be, you know, implements whatever it is. Don't twist the use because you know, this is what it was for and, and, and be, and being sensitive around that, because there will be things which have a, a very sensitive with it in the other cultural of the culture.

But then we're taking it out and saying, Hey, this is great. You know, it might be, you know, is it sensitive to that culture because it's spiritual, it's whatever it is. And so, I think we need to be mindful of as well.

Great. Thank you. so, we've kind of looked at some sort of the, the general, themes and we've sort of [00:33:00] gone into, some of the discussions around race.

**Helen Semple:** [00:33:03] Maybe if we can look now at some individual questions. So just to put you on the spot slightly, Marsha, could we start with you? Could you tell us a little bit more about BelEve, why it was set up and what impact it has? And possibly also, because I'm sure a lot of the students would like to be involved in helping support, you know, what people could do potentially to support the charity.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:33:26] Okay, cool. So, I set up the charity eight years ago, and it was set up after the death of my mum. My mum died, after 10 weeks of being diagnosed with cancer and I wanted to build a legacy organization. In her name really, but more importantly, what I wanted to be able to do is build, an organization that really supports the girls in bridging the gap between their aspirations and their reality.

[00:34:00] So a girl like me. I come from an estate in Lewisham, but I went to an amazing organization and I, when there we've only GCSEs and left with a degree and a master's and I left with the career that I dreamed of. I Did that because I had the right support and the right networks and the right skills. So BelEve it's really about supporting girls in having the right support, the right skills and the right networks to actualize or realize their dreams because what we know for sure.

Is, if you have a fantastic role model and maybe an amazing mentor you will do so well. All your barriers will become [00:35:00] no barriers. The glass ceiling will not exist. So as a charity, that's what we do. We hold your hand. And like I said before, it's not about disadvantaged girls, actually it's about girls because all girls have the same type of issues and sometimes it's just packaged differently.

One of the things that we do is we do mentoring. So, at the moment we have a mentoring program, we have 55 girls, matched with 55 amazing women across lots of different industries. We do workshops, we do meet ups because one of the things that we've identified and even more so in this time is isolation is a big thing for young girls. Once they go home, their phone becomes their friend rather than communicating with their peers. So, what we do is just foster community, sisterhood and give girls an opportunity to amplify their voice. That’s BelEve. [00:36:00] So in terms of getting involved, you can go to our website, which is www. BelEveuk.org and we have a number of programs you can get involved in or follow us on social media. Cause it's quite active there at the moment, because we're having to do a lot of virtual workshops.

**Helen Semple:** [00:36:23] Great. Thank you. I'm sure you're going to be inundated with now. Just one final question, Marsha view, which is, just adding a little bit to what you've already said, but the current issues that you worry about in respect to the lived experience of, young Black women in the UK today.

**Marsha Powell:** [00:36:42] Opportunities, that is the biggest thing that I worry about. Career opportunities. So, one of the things that we do is we do create insight dates, because if you come from a low [00:37:00] income background and your mum or dad do. a job that is a cleaner or a nurse, and those are important roles in the community. You may not know about being an investment banker. You may not know about being an HR business partner. Because no one talks about that. So, to me, what I want to make sure is that girls are able to make informed decisions about their careers, which in tell, will support them in having more opportunities and fruitful lives.

**Helen Semple:** [00:37:45] Yeah. Okay, thank you, Mark the hotspots over to you now. So, you talked about, being, a Black police officer. when you, hear about the atrocity like George Floyd, [00:38:00] happening, what does it feel like to be, or to have been in the police and therefore often suffer the same reputation, , as well as belong something where there's clear racism in action.

**Mark Gervais:** [00:38:11] Yes. So very, very mixed feelings actually, because yes, I, you know, I know, and I worked with cops who were quite clear racists. But when stuff like this happens, I it's difficult because you know, the police service will get the bad press, you know, metropolitan police has about 30,000 cops in the met police and, , you know, there aren't 30,000 racist cops. You know, most of them are good solid individuals. But that said, you know, there are rotten apples. it's more than that. I'm not just saying that this is just the case of rotten apples. because we can see that there's whole kind of systemic and endemic things that are happening in the police service.

[00:39:00] So it hasn't made me feel mixed and let's say saddened, that, that kind of thing happens. What saddens me even more around the that particular incident. Is when you have, you know, a rogue cop who's who is clearly a behaving in a way that is unbecoming of the office of Constable. but then you've got others cops standing by in many ways for me, you know, those culpable who, , who were standing by, you know, and so that needs to be done with them as well, because how they could just stand by and allow that to happen.

Well, it just beggar’s belief as far as I'm concerned. So, but then I do feel, I do feel for. The thousands of good, the police service, you are a police officer, therefore you are, you know, and that, that breaks my heart, that you know, that there is that, I think sometimes the media doesn't help with the way [00:40:00] some of the stuff is covered because you know, I've been reading on social media, a lot of instances where it's examples, we know that, Cops have been given carte blanche really to deal with these are the riots and the, you know, the fallout from this any way they want to, but there are some, cops in America, for example, who, when faced with protestors have just gone down on one knee and said, we are with you.

You know? so it's not all doom and gloom. I wouldn't like people to think that, you know, all cops are. bad. There is something yes. Around, I think as well around the systems that are in place that, allowed racism to happen. And that's something I was doing in the police service, in terms of the diversity director, trying to look at that, helping the organization, sort of rectify those kinds of things.

So, you know, I think, you know, It's different as well in this country because I do, I really [00:41:00] do believe whilst yes, we have our incidences of, police brutality, et cetera in the UK. I think it's dealt with very differently over here that isn't America. Hmm.

**Helen Semple:** [00:41:13] Thank you. and a slightly broader question. You spoke about, your family and, your wife is, is white. We live in a multiethnic society. I just wondered whether you had any wise words for how potentially we could be more inclusive as a community. given that people are sort of living differently. I mean, interestingly, your children, identified yourself as Black. Do you have any sort of words for the students and staff watching about being a bit more inclusive?

**Mark Gervais:** [00:41:55] Yeah, I think I'm when it comes to the, being inclusive. It's about being [00:42:00] open. It's about, listening to, you know, All sides of the debate. I think there was something about the human condition which is, what I am doing is right. And the way you do is wrong! And like I say to people when I'm training and I'm explaining around inclusion and diversity, is that be very, very careful because reality is that actually, do you know what.

Either you do it different to me, you know? And that actually, I think, you know, interestingly, I talked about school in schools and teachers and whatever, just because Nereus did it that way, but I would do it this way. It doesn't mean necessarily that Mary's wrong because it different to me. And I think there is something around understanding.

This is just for a moment, forget about right and wrong. I'm just saying, you know, it's different. I think if he, you know, it sounds rather Tweed, but if we can accept that actually. People do things [00:43:00] different to me it's not wrong, it's not better or worse, just different. And I think that would get a long way to help him understand each other.

if we can accept, accept that. and if we are talking about my girls w my girls, who identify as Black. I think there is a not a lot spoken around mixed race, you know, we are still in a culture, which. You know, sadly it goes all the way back to slave days that I'm, you know, if you will, if you have got a bit of Black blood in you, you are Black. And that's how you'll see, and that's how you'll be treated. Whereas actually I think, you know, I think the debate will open up in time because I think by 2025, the biggest single, ethnic group, if you like in the UK is going to be mixed race. You know, but we cancel that out. You know, you're Black or you're white, and I think we [00:44:00] need to start, okay. The conversation around that, and don't make people choose as well, because I'll often say to my girls , you know w, your mom's parents, you know, are English and yet you tend to self-identify as Black and then it comes to me, then it gets very more complicated. Cause then we could talk about issues around. Okay. What's the impact of that? You know, because whilst they self-identify as Black, I would argue to all 3 of, them, I would say are what could it be described as white passing so they can, they can play whichever card they want, in terms of their behavior, how they respond to people, you know? And, and I know that for all three of them, you know, they often have that discussion. Around. Okay. What's actually impact on me, be what's it really means to me, you know? And then how do people see me, you know?

**Helen Semple:** [00:44:56] Sure, absolutely. Thank you. I [00:45:00] think we might have lost Marsha, due to her, internet. So, I'm going to ask the last question, Mark straight at you, obviously a difficult one, which is.

You know, given, this discussion is predominantly for young people. Are you optimistic that we will get to a time when these kinds of events that we're seeing over in America are genuinely in the past?

**Mark Gervais:** [00:45:28] Wow! that is a very hard question. I always want to be hopeful. I always want to be hopeful, you know, because, without hope, it’s terrible.

I think it's going to take a long, long time. I think there's a lot of reconciliation that needs to happen. Looking at our history. UK American history, that whole thing around understanding where all this [00:46:00] comes from, because a lot of the behaviors that we see from people stems from stuff that goes back way, way, way back in the past. And I think we need to go back to what I was saying about the education, about looking at our own history and understanding that. And until we do that and actually face up to do you know what? Back in whenever it was, we were terrible! You know, we went over to these places and we massacred people.

We need to almost sort of, admit to that. It's going to cathartic. We need to be comfortable that that much of what was in the past was wrong. And we can't change that, but we must learn from it. So, what do we need to do going forward? And I think that's where then, then we'll start to see change. I think, Yeah. And that's because we meet to deal with stuff, which is very, very, very deep.

What we keep trying to do, I think is dealing with stuff on the surface [00:47:00] and never really dealing with the deep stuff. And that's why that seems to be reoccurrences of these issues.

**Helen Semple:** [00:47:08] Perfect. Thank you. I think that sort of brings us to the end. And in Marsha's absence, I just want to thank you both so much for sharing your experiences, helping us to navigate what can often be quite an uncomfortable conversation. but why, you know, this is so important. And I think as teachers in schools, as students, you know, we want to do so much better in this area. But sometimes we find it hard to know what to say and your ideas and your advice and your guidance are, so beneficial. And I do hope that we can all start to be, coin your phrase, politely, inquisitive, moving forward.

So, thank you very much. Thank you.