



Love Over Hate

One of my COVID SIP heroes is DJ D-Nice. For those who have never heard of D-Nice, in short, Derrick Jones, is a Bronx born DJ, producer, and rapper better known as D-Nice. He was a member of Boogie Down Productions (BDP), a legendary hip-hop group. In 1990, he produced and released his solo "Call Me D-Nice" which made it all the way to #1 on the Billboard Charts. And, then, he kind of just disappeared off the scene. Three decades later, in the midst of the current pandemic, he has resurfaced, using his Instagram feed to stream funk, soul, rock, and hip hop sets from his apartment in L.A -- better known as Club Quarantine. These virtual dance parties have drawn hundreds of thousands of fans, from Michelle Obama to Janet Jackson to my wife and me.

Also in 1990, I was in my first year of college. Every first-year student was required to participate in a semester-long seminar that focused on Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*. It was a pivotal moment in my life for so many reasons. As a biracial man (black Dad/white mom), Spike Lee became an instant hero. His film featured the music I loved and spoke to themes that I recognized. One of the most powerful characters for me was Radio Raheem. He walked the streets of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn with his oversized boombox creating a playlist for the times, including the one and only "Fight the Power" by Public Enemy. His playlist spoke for that generation. And, then, this fictional character was brutally murdered at the hands of white police. Before smartphones existed to capture these countless altercations today, Spike Lee filmed what so many knew happened all too often but had never seen. He put on screen what I had witnessed growing up -- my black grandfather being physically assaulted and jailed by white police officers while simply waiting in his car to pick up family at the Pittsburgh airport.

Honestly, since late March, when I first learned about the murder of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, I have been at a loss for words with regard to how to speak to our SFS community about the racist atrocities that continue to happen in our country. Focusing on COVID has served as a distraction for something I have not wanted to face - a choice which my biracial identity often gives me. It was not until Friday night, as I stayed up way too late texting with some close friends and listening to D-Nice, that a new playlist caught my attention. D-Nice was speaking to our generation as he flowed between Marvin Gaye ("What's Happening Brother"), Snap! ("I've Got the Power"), Sister Nancy ("Bam Bam") and yes, Public Enemy ("Fight the Power"). My emotions included sadness, aggression, anger, hope, and ultimately ended with

love as D-Nice smoothly transitioned to Frankie Beverly's "We Are One" (you HAVE to check this song out!). D-Nice was speaking to us, guiding our emotions, and eventually compelling us to put one step forward -- to put love over hate.

Tonight, cities around the country, including our own, will be shut down by curfews in an attempt to curb the damage being done by radical protests and looting. I so wish our SFS community was together to process this and figure out how to collectively take action. Like so many, I too am sick and tired of being sick and tired! But as Radio Raheem asserted in his famous [Love and Hate](#) speech (please check it out), I have to believe that Love will always conquer Hate, even when Hate seems to have Love on the ropes. And now, with Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and the ridiculous but telling Amy Cooper episode capturing the nation's attention, Hate has Love on the ropes once again.

Even though our community is apart, we can talk with our children, and encourage our relatives, friends, and colleagues to take peaceful action. In particular, I encourage those who are not African-American to speak up. That starts with talking to one's own child, in an age-appropriate way. Consider the fact that your African-American peers (or those adults with African-American children) DO NOT have a choice to shield this from their children. School Counselor, Laura McGourty, will share more resources in this week's TNH, but for now, please consider these:

- For our families with children of color (and in particular, black children), I found [this resource](#) helpful with regard to talking to our kids about interactions with police officers
- For all families with school-aged children, [this resource](#) might lend some insight into talking to children about tragedies

It is my hope that we are one, no matter what we do.

Steve