



STAY W O K E ?

STARLETTE THOMAS

“The American Negro has the great advantage of having **never believed the collection of myths to which white Americans cling:** that their ancestors were all freedom-loving heroes, that they were born in the greatest country the world has ever seen, or that Americans are invincible in battle and wise in peace, that Americans have always dealt honorably with Mexicans and Indians and all other neighbors or inferiors, that American men are the world's most direct and virile, that American women are pure. Negroes know far more about white Americans than that; it can almost be said, in fact, that they know about white Americans what parents—or, anyway, mothers—know about their children, and that they very often regard white Americans that way. And perhaps this attitude, held in spite of what they know and have endured, helps to explain why Negroes, on the whole, and until lately, have allowed themselves to feel so little hatred. The tendency has really been, insofar as this was possible, to dismiss white people as **the slightly mad victims of their own brainwashing.**”

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

WELCOME.

Season six of The Raceless Gospel podcast invites you to fall asleep on every episode of “Stay Woke?” Don’t apologize for yawning and stretching. Instead, get comfortable. Grab a blanket and a pillow. There’s no dress code but you might prefer pajamas or a bathrobe.

Warning: *Don’t listen and drive.* This is the premise of this listener guide. Instead, tune in when you start to rub your eyes. Of course, you didn’t know how tired you were. That’s a testament to the trickery of capitalism.

Come and take a power nap. Get a little shut eye. Rest your eyes or close them tight and enter the “DreamSpace.” Take a load off and be delivered from the “muledom” as named by Zora Neale Hurston.

“Center down” in the words of Howard Thurman. Power down because you are not a computer or an automaton. Rest as resistance to capitalism, patriarchy, racism and white- body supremacy. Nod off in agreement with the Nap Bishop, Tricia Hersey:

“You must resist anything that doesn’t center your divinity as a human being. You are worthy of care.”

Accept this invitation to sleep on it, to slumber like Frederick Douglass said our ancestors desperately wanted to: “on one common bed—the cold, damp floor,—each covering himself or herself with their miserable blankets; and here they sleep till they are summoned to the field by the driver’s horn.” Turn off the alarm clock and sleep in—for them.

Sleep like a log, like a rock, like a baby rather than toss and turn over the “know-your-place aggression named by scholar Koritha Mitchell.

Your Well- Rested Podcast Pastor,

Reverend Dr. Starlette Thomas

SAY YOUR PRAYERS.



God who doesn't miss a beat and yet has downtime, who yawns and stretches in the body of Jesus and mine, who told me to sit this one out, sit my behind down—rather than be nickled and dimed concerning my time, that fighting the system includes regulating my nervous system.

Don't let them work your nerves, sister.

Don't work your fingers to the bone and work yourself into an early grave just to prove you belong, sister.

Don't let them capitalize on your frustration, your exasperation, your desperation, your well-meaning delivery of information.

Instead, breathe in and breathe out.

You don't owe anyone an explanation for your existence. God knows why we are here and Lord knows how tired we are of the push and pull. So, we let go as we would rather fight over covers.

Count us out on discussions of imagined differences; instead, we'll count sheep. Empower others to hit the sack with me, to lay their burdens down, to save some troubles for another day and catch some Z's. Because we can be a light while being out like one.

Good night and Amen.

Episode 1: Stay Woke?

While the expression has been colonized by Republican politicians, “stay woke” remains one community’s reminder to remain aware of social injustices and discrimination. In this episode, we discuss the African American community’s decision to refuse to participate in performative democracy, reclaim the word and embody it in the dream space.

Episode 2: Give It A Rest

African Americans are growing increasingly tired of the narrative of white-body supremacy and refuse to give it anymore energy. In this episode, we discuss why the peddlers of the hand me down talking points of human hierarchy should give it a rest.

Episode 3: Sleep On It

Rather than engage in the back and forth inherent in the oppositional racial identities of black and white, African Americans are choosing to center themselves and resist the drama of white-body supremacy. In this episode, we discuss the “joy of missing out (JOMO)” on manufactured social strivings, strategically choosing instead to sleep on it.

Episode 4: Snooze Button

“Every shut eye ain’t sleep.” While African Americans hit the snooze button on protesting systemic injustice, European Americans are slowly waking up to the reality that racism is bad for everybody and ruins everything. What last year’s U.S. presidential voting results uncovered inspired the community to grab their covers and hit the snooze button on protesting in the streets. In this episode, we discuss rest as resistance and napping as a next step in the social justice movement.

Episode 5: Sweet Dreams

Accepting the November presidential election results as proof the American dream and Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream are perhaps pipe dreams, African Americans said, “Sweet Dreams.” A generational deliverance from grind culture, from capitalism, from white-body supremacy, from patriarchy, they turned inward and granted for themselves what their ancestors were prevented from experiencing: rest. In this episode, we discuss the power of refusal, the divine right to rest and the liberation experienced by closing one’s eyes.

“It can be easier to believe resting is simply about retiring to your bed when you are tired **instead of beginning the messy process of deconstructing your own beliefs and behaviors that are aligned with white supremacy and capitalism.** You must be committed to studying how training under the abusive teachings of dominant culture has you bound and limited. This is healing work. This is justice work. When we are aligned against the ideas of the oppressive culture, we understand we didn’t arrive on Earth to be a tool for a capitalist system.”

Tricia Hersey, *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto*

BEDTIME STORIES.

My ancestors told me, “Every shut eye ain’t sleep.” To stay woke, read a bedtime story:

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*
Native Son
A Blues for Mister Charlie

Ruha Benjamin, *Imagination: A Manifesto*

Edda L. Fields- Black, *Combee: Harriet Tubman, the Combee River Raid and Black Freedom during the Civil War*

Aaron Bryant, Bisa Butler, Michelle D. Commander, Tuliza Fleming, Amy Sherald, Deborah Willis, Kevin Young, *Reckoning: Protest. Defiance. Resilience.*

Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower*
A Few Rules for Predicting the Future: An Essay

Bebe Campbell, *Your Blues Ain’t Like Mine*

Kellie Carter Jackson, *We Refuse: A Forceful History of Black Resistance*

Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*

Lucille Clifton, *Mercy*

W.E.B DuBois, *Prayers for Dark People*

Willie James Jennings, *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging*

Nikole Hannah- Jones, *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*

Rebecca Hall, *Wake: The Hidden History of Women- Led Revolts*

Middleton A. Harris, *The Black Book*

Tricia Hersey, *Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto*

*The Nap Ministry's Rest Deck: 50 Practices
We Will Rest! The Art of Escape*

bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam: black women and self- recovery*
Salvation: Black People and Love
Rock My Soul: Black People and Self- Esteem
Skin Again

Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and
the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*

Tiya Miles, *Night Flyer: Harriet Tubman and the Faith Dreams of a Free
People*

Zora Neale Hurston, *You Don't Know Us Negroes and Other Essays*

Yolanda Pierce, *In My Grandmother's House: Black Women, Faith
and the Stories We Inherit*
*The Wounds are the Witness: Black Faith Weaving
Memory into Justice and Healing*

Tara Roberts, *Written in the Waters: A Memoir of History, Home and
Belonging*

Howard Thurman, *The Inward Journey*
The Creative Encounter
Meditations of the Heart

Alice Walker, *We are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Inner Light in a
Time of Darkness*

Chanequa Walker- Barnes, *Too Heavy a Yoke: Black Women and the
Burden of Strength*

Shelia Wise Rowe, *Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience*