

The conversation no parent wants to have with their black teen

She dabbed at her eyes as she shared that her 16-year-old daughter is obsessed with flags flown at half-staff. The recent mass killings and police killings of unarmed minorities has her daughter polarized, wondering when she or her brother might be a target.

My friend also commented that when she and her husband adopted their 16-year-old black twins they knew the day would come that they would have to have the conversation that no one should have to have.

It is a conversation I have heard African Americans say on news reports and even in work meetings at times. Yet, I did not want to believe that it was a thing.

Not that I doubted any of the news accounts or individuals who shared that they had had that conversations with their black children.

It just was more than my



A SLICE OF LIFE

Linda Wilk



brain wanted to comprehend. I want to believe that we are past the racial profiling of young black men and women or any Black man or woman. I want to believe that racism is a thing of the past, yet I know better.

The conversation I speak of is the one where the parent of a black teen tells their

children to be careful around the police. How if you get stopped for a traffic violation to make sure your hands are raised and out the window. Always be respectful and realize that there may come a time that you are profiled just because you are in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Now, locally, Marion Police Chief Angela Haley wants to do all she can to change the narrative. In talking with her about my friend and her daughter, Chief Haley set up a meeting with the family to help reassure the teen and her parents about the police.

As I have begun researching the topic more, and attended workshops, and even had ZOOM calls about the issue, it continues to open my eyes to how what you say in casual conversation can be so misconstrued or misunderstood when your in-

tentions were not even close to how it was intended.

I remember giving a speech as I left my role as president of the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence at the annual conference years ago.

As part of my speech, I was supposed to introduce the incoming president – a Black man who I had worked with on the board of director’s and had gotten to know.

What I did not know or realize was how impactful he believed my introduction of him to the mainly female white audience would be. So, when I accidentally forgot to introduce him, he took it as a slap and an insult. He later told me he believed my not publicly endorsing him left him undermined.

It has always bothered me that my innocent lapse of memory had caused such anguish to another colleague. I do not tend to write out my

speeches, not wanting to focus more time reading what I want to say, than connecting with the audience. In that situation, I know now I would have been better served by at least having an outline of what I needed to cover.

Then there was the time I was attending a workshop on racism and participated in a breakout session. As one of two white women in the group of Black men and women, I found myself feeling targeted and bullied. It seemed that no matter what I said or a question I asked, I was told it was inappropriate and insensitive. I was told I should not ask someone I do not know well about their heritage or upbringing. I was not sure if that was intentional on the part of the presenter to show me how it felt to be in the minority or if I was somehow being disrespectful.

As a result, it can at times make me nervous to have a conversation with anyone other than those I know intimately and who know me.

That, I realize also is not the answer. We must have more conversations, not less.

We must challenge ourselves to learn more about those who are not like us, those who did not grow up with the same circumstances as we did.

As I continue to try and grow my awareness of racism and re-tool my thinking, I would encourage each of you to do the same.

If we are to truly live in a place where each of us are respected, loved and cared for, we must do our best to learn how others live in our community, and the best way to do that is to have those conversations, even if sometimes they are awkward and uncomfortable.

Local schedule

May 6-13

Friday, May 7

5 p.m. – First Fridays Gas City, Hutchins Commons Pavilion, 211 E. Main Street, Gas City. Bring the family to Gas City and enjoy fun activities, browse some amazing local vendors, and have a great family night out. Games, music, and terrific food. We’ll see you at Hutchins Commons by City Hall along Main Street.

6 p.m. – Walk of Hope, Virtual Event. Sponsored by Cancer Services of Grant County. Join us for this virtual walk – all money raised stays local to benefit people battling cancer. The Walk of

Hope is to support the fighters, celebrate the survivors, and honor those that we’ve lost. Get your team together and walk to win against cancer. This year’s walk is a virtual walk. Register Online.

7:30 p.m. – Gas City I-69 Speedway Season Opener, Gas City I-69 Speedway, 5871 East 500 South, Gas City. Non-Wing spring cars, USAC Midget Cup Series (open midgets, Speed2 midgets and 1,000cc mini-sprints), modifieds, street stocks, hornets. Adult General Admission \$15, Children 12 & Under Free, Pit Pass \$30. Special event night prices range from \$18-\$25 for adult general admission. Pit Gates open 3pm, GA

Gates open 5pm, Hot Laps 6:30pm, Racing Starts 7:30pm. Tickets available at the speedway ticket office the day of the event. Concessions available. Free parking. Check our website, social media or call the track for current weather-related updates.

7:30 p.m. – Taylor University presents “Harvey,” Taylor University Mitchell Theatre, 236 West Reade Avenue, Upland. Presented by the Taylor University Theatre Department. Sunday matinee 2pm only. Harvey is the story of Elwood P. Dowd who makes friends with a spirit taking the form of a human-sized rabbit named Harvey that only he sees

(and a few privileged others on occasion also.) After his sister tries to commit him to a mental institution, a comedy of errors ensues. Elwood and Harvey become the catalysts for a family mending its wounds and for romance blossoming in unexpected places.

Saturday, May 8

9 a.m. – Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale, Matter Park Gardens, Marion. Plants galore available for purchase including multiple varieties of peppers, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, and herbs including basil, cilantro, lavender, rosemary, sage, etc. Each plant \$3. Masks required due to COVID-19.

10 a.m. – Mother’s Day at Bliss Barn, 8271 South 100 East, Fairmount. Join us for a special Mother’s Day pop-up event at Bliss Barn. Bring the special mothers in your life to Fairmount to shop

with local vendors, indulge in sweets, and treat them all to some blissful quality time.

5 p.m. – Gas City Saturday Night Cruise-In, Gas City “Beaner Linn” Park, 718 South Broadway. Join us at the Gas City Park and make cruising great again! Various vendors and a DJ playing great tunes.

7:30 p.m. – Taylor University presents “Harvey,” see May 7.

Sunday, May 9

2 p.m. – Taylor University presents “Harvey,” see May 7.

Tuesday, May 11

10 a.m. – Quilters Hall of Fame Exhibit, Quilters Hall of Fame, 926 South Washington Street, Marion. Hollis Chatelain: A Retrospective Quilt Journey. Through her work that addresses challenging social and environ-

mental themes, Hollis reflects 12 years’ experience living in West Africa and working with humanitarian organizations, as well as 35 years’ experience as a professional artist. Admission \$4, \$3 for seniors and students, \$1 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under 6 years of age. Exhibit open Tuesday – Saturday.

5:30 p.m. – Taylor University Wind Ensemble Concert, Taylor University Boren Center, Wheeler Stages, 236 West Reade Avenue, Upland. Join us for this Spring Concert with the Taylor University Wind Ensemble. The concert is free and the public is invited to attend.

Wednesday, May 12

10 a.m. – Quilters Hall of Fame Exhibit, see May 11.

Thursday, May 13

10 a.m. – Quilters Hall of Fame Exhibit, see May 11.

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1652 W Euclid Ave., Marion, IN

765-668-7055

Tue.-Fri. 9 am-5 pm, and Sat. 9 am-1 pm