

Educator Pledge by Sheela Vemu, Waubensee Community College

I wish to ask for a few moments of your time to read this pledge as a reflection in light of the tragedies of racist behavior and violence against Black people that has consistently torn at the moral fabric of our society.

These are difficult and challenging times and profound words cannot heal the wounds that are eroding the very foundations of the human fabric. Rather than inducing a feeling of helplessness, this pledge is designed to commit my vision for a kinder, wiser, and more compassionate world. This vision is more relevant for me during this time in my life.

As an educator, I must therefore make an unswerving commitment to practice anti-racism. I also have a moral responsibility to redouble my personal efforts as an educator to combat racism in every way we can, at every turn and opportunity that is presented.

We must work together to translate our good intentions into action.

As we know from our science, fear contracts awareness. When our awareness is contracted, we literally do not see, hear, and feel all that is around us. Our perceptual field literally shrinks and our reality becomes distorted so that we end up seeing only that which we fear, and not that which is actually occurring.

When actions result from fear, they are often destructive and sometimes even lethal. "When things get difficult, turn to wonder. If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: "I wonder what brought her to this place?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?" Estrus Tucker calls himself a gentle activist whose influential work and writings honor and extend kindness and compassion as an advocate for the least privileged and most marginalized. I invite you all to come on this wondrous journey of learning with me.