

How to Care and Help in an Unequal and Unjust World



emRIC Emerging Stronger Keynote
April 2024
Dr. Anu Taranath

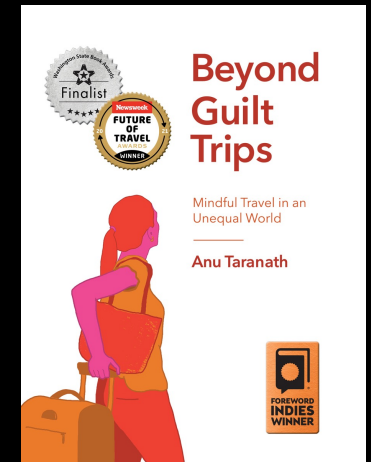
I'm a professor...



University of Washington Seattle professor
race, global literature, gender, identity,
navigating differences, belonging

global education
global reciprocity

Univ of WA Distinguished Teaching Award
Seattle Weekly's "Best of Seattle" designation
Multiple US Fulbright Scholar Grants
Four-time Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau



I'm a racial equity & DEI consultant...



Multi-sector experience:

city & county public agencies
design firms
global health
development field
K-12 and higher ed

nonprofits
businesses
civic orgs
travel industry
clinical care

300+ organizational contexts



unpack our own bags and baggage



navigate turbulence

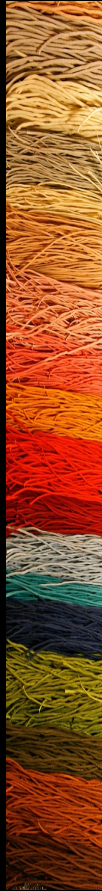


see from and apply a fresh lens

our
overall
plan



1. better understand our unequal and unjust world, the sensitivities embedded in this, and how that plays out in us and between us
2. what makes a sensitive topic sensitive to whom, when and why
3. learn a few tools to better navigate sensitive topics within ourselves.



what we won't
be able to do today...

any kind of equity-compassion work
begins with this premise:

Our lives are unequal. Our world is unequal.

Historical advantages and disadvantages
continue in our present.

Equity-compassion work ask us to pay attention to
these historical & contemporary dynamics,

and to revise how we think & do things
so more of us can enjoy richer, fuller lives.

What do we mean when we say something is a “sensitive topic”?



What fears do we often have when it comes to conversations about racism, patriarchy, homophobia, poverty, unfairness, identity, history, harm and inequity?



I'm a good person,
kind, considerate,
well-intentioned.
I know enough/all.
The End.

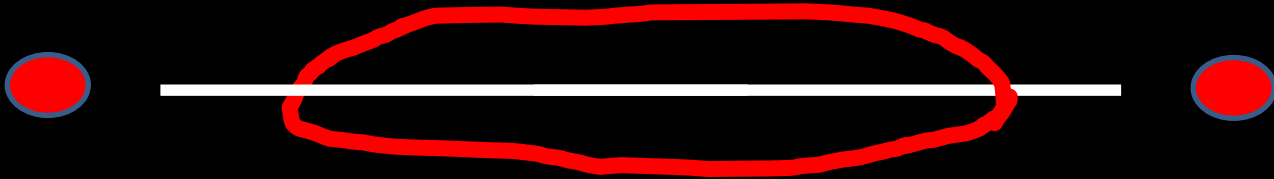
I am short-circuiting!
I don't know enough/ the right words.
I am scared that I'll be told I'm a
bad/racist/sexist so I'll shut down,
be quiet, simmer in resentment
and/or disengage.

How have you felt/seen this dynamic play out in you?
How might this dynamic show up in clinical work?

SCHOOL CONFUSION **WRONG** DISMAY EMBARRASS CHEAT
GUILT ERROR FALSE OMISSION WHOOPS
MISTAKE EMBARRASSMENT
FAILURE **SHAME** EXAMS OOPS MY
SLIP PROBLEM BAD CONFUSED MAN TROUBLE
APOLOGY EMOTION DARN EXPRESSION
TEST APOLOGIZE THOUGHTS REMORSE **FAULT** EMOTIONAL
SORRY ACCIDENT THINKING FAIL REGRETFUL
CHEATER



AND



I am good, kind, and
know all/enough.
The End.

I may indeed be kind,
knowledgeable and well-
intentioned, AND I cannot
know all the social, cultural
or historical nuances of
everyone. How could I?

I am short-circuiting!
I'm out.

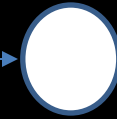
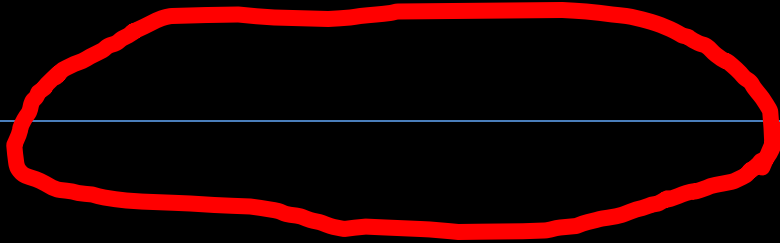
I cannot know everyone's
experience. How could I?

I have some growing and
learning to do. Don't we all?

like me

AND

unlike-me



Discomfort and Shame: somatic and behavioral

How might we feel discomfort or shame
in our bodies?



How does shame & discomfort make us act?

Different for different people.

How does this play out when we seek to help,
care for and aid others?

Our various & intersectional identities,
our histories,
our own woundedness,
and our resilience
all play out when we engage with others.



Add to this the context of clinical care.

How then do we proceed?

Let's develop more emotional literacy



Feelings and emotions... in the workplace? Yikes.

Default understanding of “professional” culture—
stoic, rational, get things done, expert,
hero orientation, fixer.

Emotions map onto us differently:

feminized, raced, less valued, subtle, implicit

in any conversation...

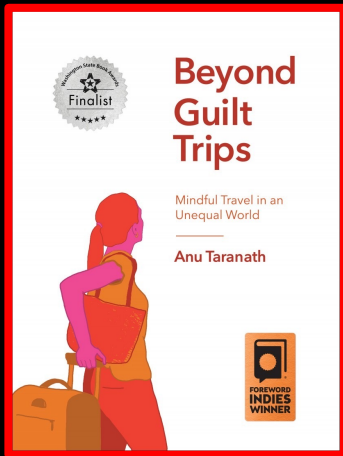
who's in the room
our identities

what's being said/not-said:
explicit & implicit info

what's happened in history,
what's happening now
in society, the context

how is what's being said
landing on people:
intent & impact

I'm an author...

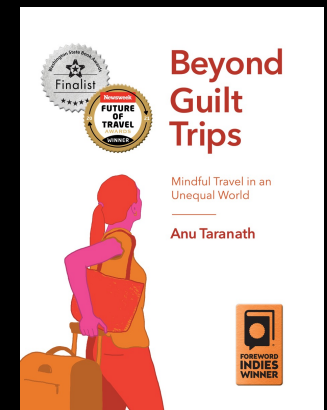


*Beyond Guilt Trips:
Mindful Travel in an Unequal World*

Oprah Magazine's "26 Best Travel Books Of All Times"
Newsweek "Future of Travel Award" Storyteller Winner
Fodor's Travels best "13 Books to Inspire Your Travels"
Washington State Book Award in Nonfiction Finalist
Foreward INDIES Book of the Year Bronze Prize
Wishing Shelf Awards in Nonfiction Shortlisted
Next Generation Indie Award in Social Justice Shortlisted

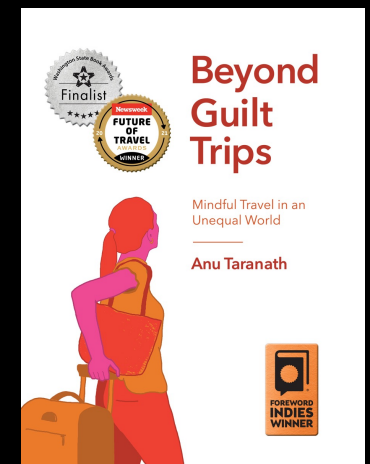
“Mindful travel in an unequal world isn’t about getting on a plane to go somewhere — it’s about paying attention, and noticing positionality in relation to each other.

Mindful travel is also about understanding that we are all living in a much longer history that has put us in different positions of advantage and disadvantage, and equipped us with very few tools to talk about it.”



“Our modern lives are not set up for deep, thoughtful, and meaningful exchanges around sensitive topics like identity and difference, help and inequity. Talk like that requires genuine care and time.”

How might these encounters make us feel?
What stories do we tell?
Can we live better together?



Tools to navigate sensitive topics better:



make it shared & collective; it's not just you

the power of AND, get more used to in-betweens

getting better at holding contradictions & complexity

more familiar with discomfort, ours and other people's

What resonated for you in our time together?

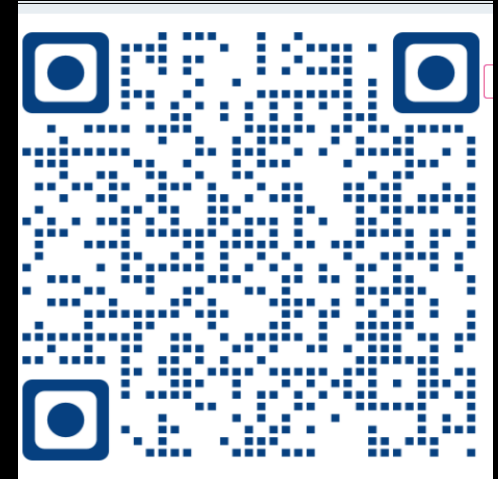
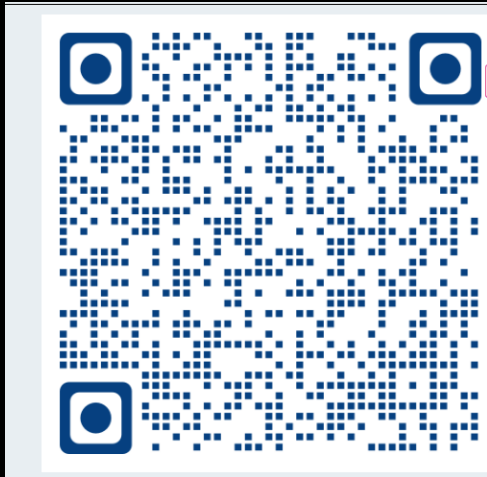


What is one thing you'd like to keep
close to you the next few weeks?

Would you like to connect?



work updates



work updates
& personal pics