

Eight Minutes and Forty-Six Seconds

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On Saturday, as I stretched on my living room floor, my one-year-old daughter, in her effort to participate, stepped on my neck. Her tiny toddler foot was only there for a fraction of a second, but I immediately felt breathless under the weight of it. In an instant, the image of George Floyd with the knee of an officer on his neck flashed through my mind. That officer's knee was there for eight minutes and forty-six seconds!

Until Friday, the reality of what happened to George Floyd hadn't sunk in. I don't know if it was because working from home with kids was all-consuming, if I just wasn't paying enough attention, or if I had subconsciously written this off as another Black name that would end up as a hashtag. Whatever the case may be, I hadn't acknowledged what I was feeling until a phone call with a coworker.

Our conversation was supposed to be about a client question, but my coworker, a white male in his mid-20s, started the call expressing that he and his wife had been struggling with how to respond to people in their circle that couldn't see the injustice in what happened to George Floyd. As we talked, he showed empathy even though he realized he would never fully understand the impact of George Floyd's murder because of who he is.

If we had this conversation face to face, he would've seen tears streaming down my cheeks as I listened to him talk. At that moment, I was overwhelmed by his empathy, and every emotion that I hadn't expressed began to surface. I appreciated the acknowledgment of his privilege and hearing how he was processing how he could use that privilege for change. While no solution came from our conversation, I came away with a sense of gratitude, respect, and hope.

The eyes and mouths of many White Americans were opened this week as a result of the eight minutes and forty-six seconds George Floyd suffered. My coworker is only one example. This weekend, I saw White family members, friends, church members, neighbors, and pastors speak up and speak out about the systemic racism and injustice that has pervaded this country for far too long.

There's no denying the heaviness of this past week. People are angry. People are frustrated. People are fearful. As a Black woman, I am angry. I am frustrated. [As a mother of mixed children](#), as a daughter of a Black man, I am fearful. But, I am also hopeful. I am hopeful that we will continue to honor the legacy of George Floyd and the countless other Black men and women that have been victims of racism. I am hopeful that more White people will engage in

conversation with their Black and brown neighbors, friends, and coworkers. I am hopeful that more people will do the work to understand the experiences of those that don't look like them. I am hopeful that our country will begin to dismantle the systems that perpetuate injustice at all levels. I am hopeful that the eight minutes and forty-six seconds that George Floyd endured will not be in vain.