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Let's Get Back to Grace and Gratitude This Thanksgiving



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by Shawnta S. Barnes

Living through a pandemic is rough. It's an experience that we are all wanting to come to an end. It has caused businesses to shut their doors due to the lack of customers. Schools have had to close again due to rising COVID-19 cases in the community. Hospital workers are exhausted and strained by the demands of caring for the COVID-19 patients in addition to the normal cases they see. People we loved have died. Not being able to say goodbye in-person or attend a funeral is another toll. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Each person's situation is different and, when under so much stress, it can be easy to have tunnel vision and lash out at others. But this week is an opportunity to refocus.

Whether a person celebrates Thanksgiving or not, showing gratitude and giving grace is a place we all need to return to during this pandemic. It is hard for all of us. Lashing out at others during this time does not help.

It is time to take a moment and tell anyone who has been helpful or offered support—"Thank you." Not only should adults do this, but children can participate, too. Giving thanks does not automatically erase the pain and burdens caused by the coronavirus pandemic, but it allows people to step back and take a moment away from those hardships. One aspect of this pandemic has been illuminated: tomorrow is not promised.

People who were healthy are succumbing to COVID-19. Making it to January 1, 2021 will surely be a blessing. Knowing these facts, it is important to show gratitude and give grace because we truly do not know what is happening in other people's lives and what impact it has on them and their behavior.

Thank your family, friends, teachers, first responders, community members, and anyone who has made a difference in your life.

It might even be helpful to thank at least one person a day moving forward as we all move day by day toward the end of 2020.

It can be easy to fall into a negative mindset, so let's shift to giving thanks instead.

Shawnta S. Barnes

Shawnta (Shawn-tay) S. Barnes, also known as Educator Barnes, is a married mother of identical twin boys. She navigates education from not only the educator's perspective but also the parent's perspective. She has been an educator for nearly two decades. Shawnta works with K-12 schools, universities, & education adjacent organizations through her education consulting business Blazing Brilliance. She is an adjunct college professor, supervises student teachers, Indy Kids Winning Editor-in-Chief, Brave Brothers Books Co-founder, & CEO, and Brazen Education Podcast host. She holds five education licenses: English/language arts 5-12, English to speakers of other languages P-12, library/media P-12, reading P-12, and school administration P-12, and she has held a job in every licensed area. Previously, she has served as a school administrator, English teacher, English learners teacher, literacy coach, and librarian. She won the 2019 Indiana Black Expo Excellence in Education Journalism Award. In 2023, she completed her doctorate in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education with a minor in Learning Sciences. She is an urban gardener in her spare time and writes about her harvest-to-table journey at [gardenershicole.com](https://www.gardenershicole.com). To learn more about Shawnta, visit educatorbarnes.com.

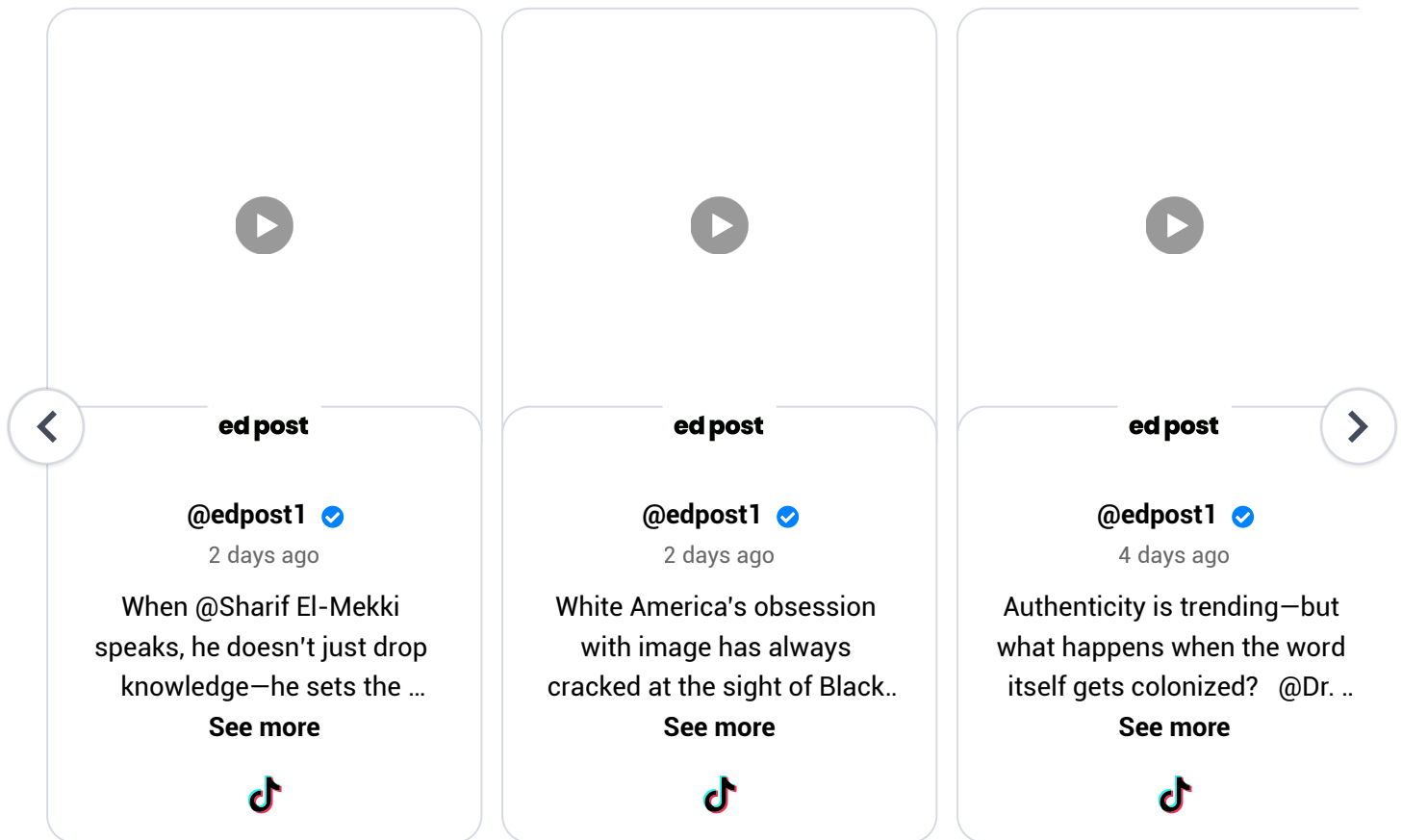
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