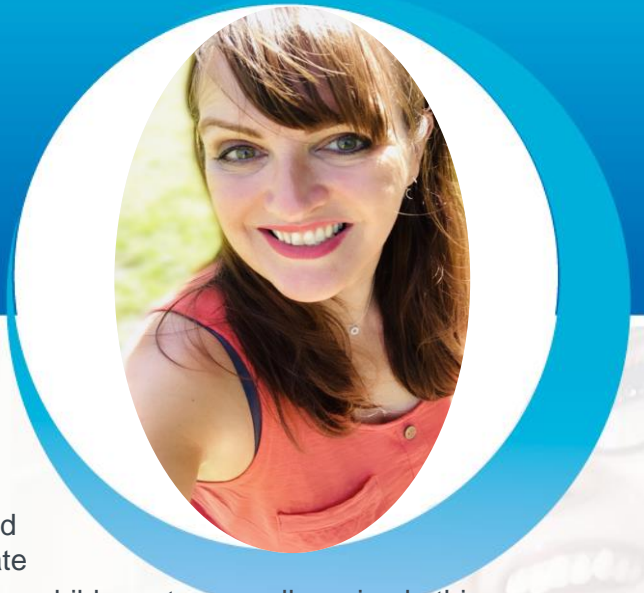


Sarah Emanuel: profile

#take5 series



Sarah, talk us through your experience of being a single, white mother to two biracial children

I don't think I have personally experienced anything especially different as a result of being a single mother, however I am very aware of stereotyping that goes on regarding white women with mixed race children which is hugely frustrating. I feel an increased sense of responsibility to be well-informed and continue to educate myself ie black lives matter, black history, issues that may affect my children etc. as well as simple things like the food we eat and me knowing how to cook Caribbean food! I think I have a heightened sense of protectiveness and responsibility as a single mum to ensure they are treated fairly and not disadvantaged because of their colour. I have always felt strongly about these issues but I am definitely more vocal about their experiences and more aware as they are getting older.

They still see a lot of their dad anyway, so they continue to have significant interaction with the Caribbean side of their family. As the children are getting older and because of the black lives matter movement this year it has meant we are having more conversations between the 3 of us about their heritage, and issues affecting them relating to race.

How do you overcome or educate yourself and your children to manage racial inequalities?

I have always taken an interest in different cultures and being married to someone of colour for so many years meant that I was directly exposed to the stories & prejudice he and his friends/ family have experienced their whole lives. I am someone who will fight for what I believe in and this is no different - my children know that I won't put up with any intolerance or prejudice.

Equally, I continually try to keep educating myself and challenging my own 'whiteness', by listening to podcasts and reading – I am currently reading 'Why I no longer speak to white people about race', but it isn't just about reading books about race, it's also about interacting and being prepared to put to one side the need to defend myself and understand that we all have work to do, we all have biases and this is something I am committed to challenging.

Luka, you are 17 now, what is your view on how #BLM has changed things this year and what more would you like to see happen?

I think #BLM is a really important movement and carried a lot of weight. When it happened some of the police officers responsible for the murder(s) of black people ie George Floyd were arrested and charged – I don't think this would've happened had it not been for #BLM. It was also good to see so many white people speaking out and leading the way to fight for black people. But it also highlighted that we have a lot of issues to overcome, that there is still a lot of racism and a lot of white people don't understand or accept black inequality and do stereotype us, even in my friendship group I had friends who remained completely silent and that made me feel sad & unsupported.

I want it to have a lasting impact and it really showed me that education is so important, so black history needs to be included in the history syllabus in schools as standard, kids need to be able to identify with people in history who look like them. Then also in PHSEE lessons schools really need to start talking about racism, but properly talking about it. This subject was never discussed in my school.

Ruben, how are things different for you as a biracial boy compared to how things are for your sister?

I think other kids my age mention colour more to me as a boy than they do to girls. I have been called different things at secondary school like 'poo' and 'chocolate' but it's only ever by white kids - black kids never mention colour. It makes me think that there is still a lot of racism and that they need educating. It also makes me feel closer to being black than white because black people just see me as I am and don't care about my colour.

What do you love doing as a family?

Sport, music, dancing and we are proper foodies!!

