

NCC interview with Justan Parker (2)

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [George Floyd killing](#) October 27, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts in the wake of the George Floyd murder* 

The 2020 NCC Peace and Social Justice Conference

October 13-15

Black Lives Matter panel video

So we're doing the Gadfly slow walk again.

Taking advantage of what the NCC conference provided.

Taking our time and listening to the guy who created the local Black lives matter group (but not affiliated with the national organization).

And please do listen. Gadfly's text is only paraphrase, trying to give you the gist.

You must hear tone of voice.

You must hear the human being.

And, again, Gadfly seeks other perspectives on what Justan says.

Please address his specific comments directly rather than employing generalities.

What would you say if you were in a face-to-face conversation with Justan?

What can we do at the community level? What can we do as an average citizen to educate our average neighbors? (3 mins.)

Get to know your neighbor better. Engage with your neighbor. Even if he has a Trump sign. Build better neighborhoods and better communities one relationship at a time. That's an ideal. But some people won't believe that Black lives matter, and then you are in for a big unlearning process,

unlearning what people have been raised with, what they have been taught. It's all about educating. Some people you will not be able to reach.

What do you make of the Blue lives matter slogan? (2 mins.)

When you're the victim and people are rallying around the abuser, that's traumatic. A blue life is a profession, but it's not a life. There are no blue people. As a profession, we want to make sure police officers aren't getting hurt. I don't know anybody who says let's go out and hurt police. They can take that uniform off at the end of the day; Black and Brown people cannot take their skin off. Nor can we hide in any way shape or form. So the response that blue lives matter is traumatic. Saying this without any malice, there is no such thing as a blue life. We have to start calling that what it is.

What do you perceive about the Allentown or Bethlehem police — or about the counter-protestors? (3 mins.)

Based on experience in Allentown and Pen Argyl, not Bethlehem. The police officers are there to do a job. We don't ask permission to protest. We take to the streets to express our frustrations and concerns and to speak to those who want to hear our message. I have a good relationship with the Allentown Chief. We don't agree, but we can talk. The police presence is there to protect people on both sides. I'm not big on counter-protesting — we don't do that. The police officers asked us to stay on the sidewalks. Our beef is with the culture, with how we're treated. There's some bad cops, some bad apples. If you don't call them out, you are a bad apple too. Accountability. Your inaction is action.

Audio player not available in this archive