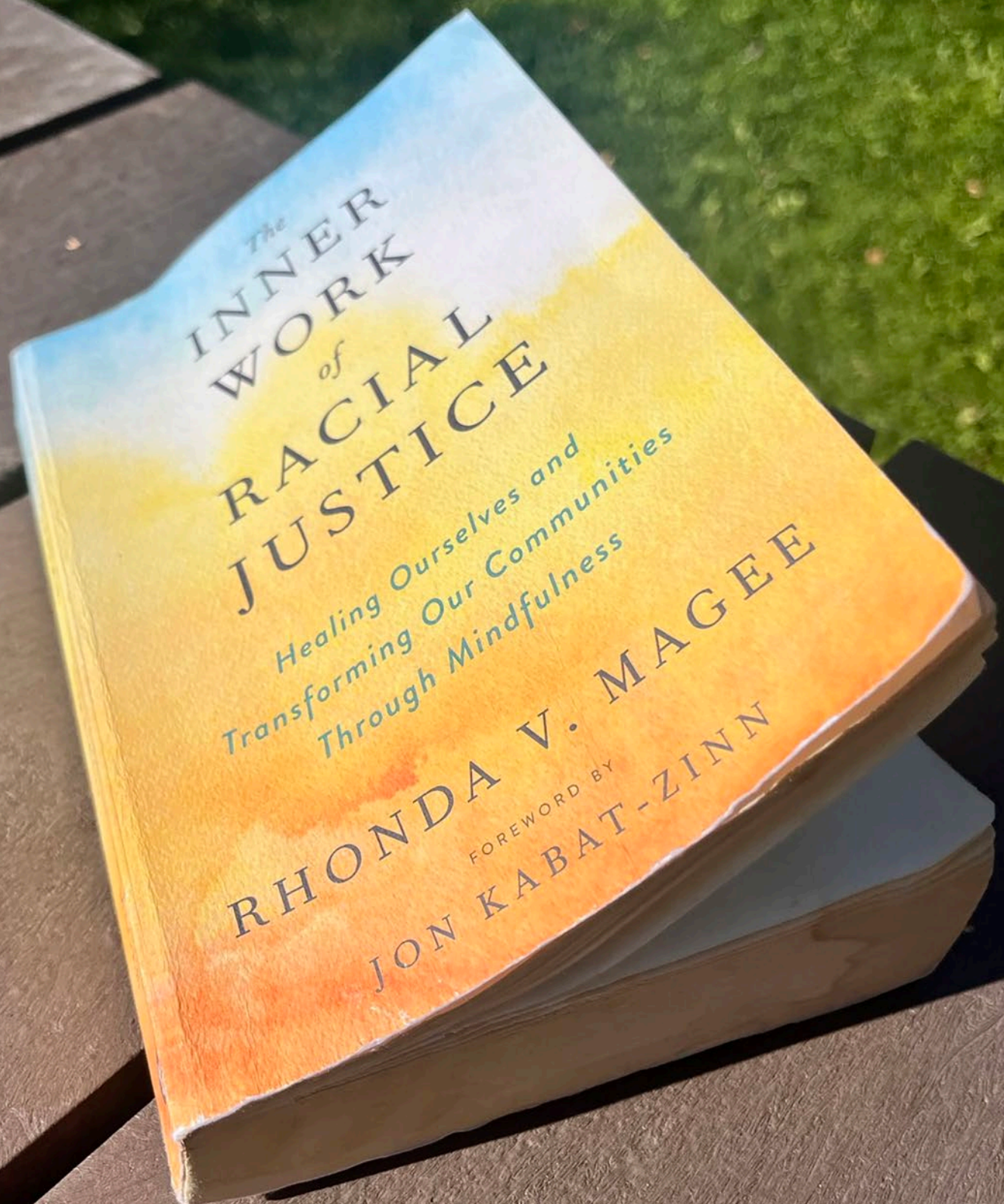


"It is only by healing from injustices and dissolving our personal barriers to connection that we develop the ability to view others with compassion and to live in community with people of vastly different backgrounds and viewpoints."



The Inner Work of Racial Justice: **Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our** **Communities Through Mindfulness**

by Rhonda V. Magee

TarcherPerigee (September 2019)

Reviewed by
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This past summer, I found myself on the shore of Kootenay Lake, against a backdrop of stunning mountains, book in hand. Nelson BC is known for being the “prettiest small town in Canada” - there is no more scenic and peaceful place to read and reflect upon issues of social justice.

Rhonda V. Magee is an author and professor of law at the University of San Francisco who wrote the book *The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming our Communities Through Mindfulness*. I chose this reading to deepen my understanding of racism, while increasing my confidence and ability to act when faced with social injustice. From the introduction, I quickly learned that the book is a very practical read for anyone who wants to better understand the historical context of colonialism, microaggressions, unconscious bias, oppression, and new ways of being.

Magee takes a compassionate approach to her work towards social justice, demonstrating how mindfulness, education, and self-reflection can help individuals approach racial justice work in a caring and supportive way. Throughout this book, systemic injustices are exposed alongside the impact of inequities that exist. Emphasis is placed on the importance of perspective-taking, reflection, inner work, and sensitive approaches to the difficult

and sometimes uncomfortable conversations that are necessary to address issues of racism. Magee believes that through mindfulness, one can create conditions for positive change. Magee also poetically describes the practice of paying attention to your own thoughts and feelings, while recognizing your own biases.

Readers are provided with the foundational tools to respectfully confront the racism that continues to permeate our culture. Magee instills hope that work on oneself, between us, and then towards changing systems, will lead to practices that are more inclusive and supportive of racial justice. Such practices include finding ways to “support the cultivation of the ability to sit compassionately with and talk about our own particular experiences with race, race-related injury, and alienation”. Through story, data, and research, mindfulness is explained as a means to increase empathy, and reduce prejudices and implicit attitudes, not just around race or gender but also around other protected grounds.

This book is sure to resonate with different people for different reasons. For me, the book has further raised my level of awareness around the importance of supporting one another in bringing issues of racism to the forefront, while examining race and racism mindfully and continuously.