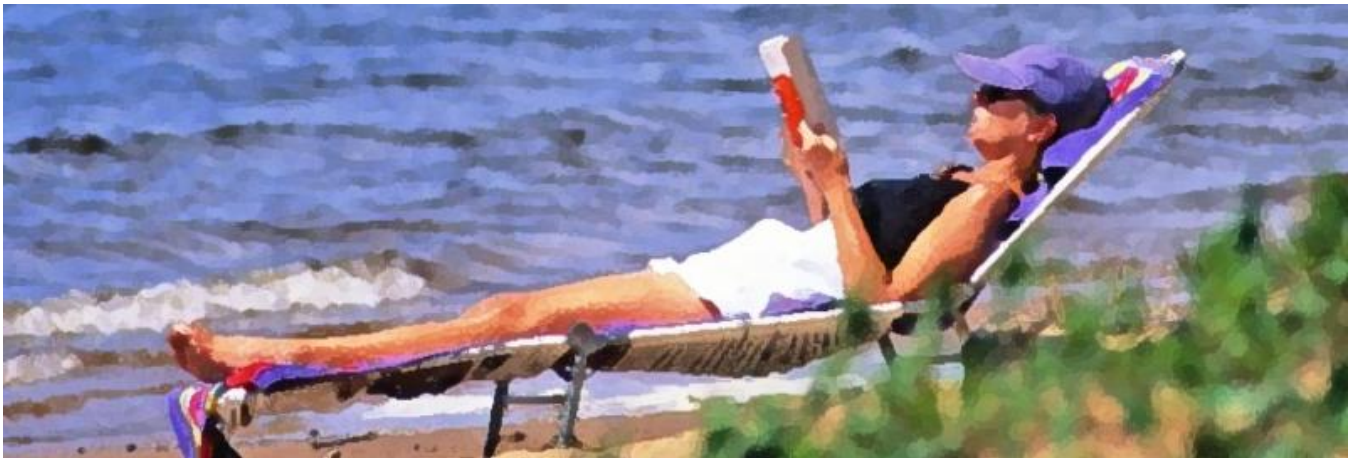




free-range THINKING™

free-range thinking™ is a monthly journal of best practices, resources and generally useful stuff for public interest communicators who want to reach more people with more impact



The 20th Annual Summer Reading List

If you're looking for a novel that will transport you to another time and place, I highly recommend "Washington Black" by Esi Edugyan. The story whisks you away to a plantation in 19th century Barbados and introduces you to an 11-year old slave who will grab your heart and carry you to far-flung places as he searches for something we all hope to find: our true place in the world.

So much for engrossing beach reading. If you prefer some work-related nonfiction, I have four more books to recommend, including two titles specifically for organizations looking to improve their communications around diversity, equity and inclusion. Find capsule reviews [here](#) - and for the twentieth consecutive summer, happy reading to all! *Please note: Apple Mail users may need to scroll down manually.*



Upcoming online classes at The Goodman Center

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Presentations
Happen to Good
Causes**

July 17 & 18
11am - 12pm PT

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on Webinars**

September 20
12pm - 1pm PT

PLAN CAMPAIGNS

**Strategic
Communications:
Cutting Through
the Clutter**

September 18 & 19
11am - 12pm PT

Click on the class title to read more!

The 20th Annual Summer Reading List

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism

by Robin DiAngelo, PhD (Beacon Press © 2018)

As a tenured professor of multicultural education at Westfield State University, Robin DiAngelo coined the term "white fragility," defining it as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves." (To see white fragility in action, check out ["A Brief Recent History of 'I Don't Have a Racist Bone in My Body.'"](#)) DiAngelo's book is both a cogent analysis of why simply *talking* about the issue is a struggle for white people as well as a call to action for those ready to do more than just talk.

In the final chapter, "Where Do We Go from Here?" DiAngelo lays out a path for any reader who, like her, was born with white privilege but now understands how this inevitably makes them part of the problem: "When I start from the premise that *of course* I have been thoroughly socialized into the racist culture in which I was born, I no longer need to expend energy denying that fact. I am eager - even excited - to identify my inevitable collusion so that I can figure out how to stop colluding."

For individuals and organizations seriously working to improve their practices around diversity, equity and inclusion, *White Fragility* is nothing less than a must-read.

So You Want to Talk About Race

by Ijeoma Oluo (Seal Press, © 2018)

Ijeoma Oluo is a Seattle-based author, activist, and self-proclaimed "Internet yeller," and whether she's speaking softly in print or turning up the volume on the web, her voice needs to be heard. With chapter titles like "Why can't I touch your hair?", "But what if I hate Al Sharpton?", and especially "I just got called racist, what do I do now?", Oluo's book makes it crystal clear that if we're going to talk, we're not going to mince words.

Oluo also wants to make sure that, if we *are* going to have conversations, we're defining key words and phrases the same way. She devotes entire chapters to defining terms such as cultural appropriation, intersectionality, and checking privilege. This is time well spent: consider, for example, this excerpt from the chapter "What is racism?"

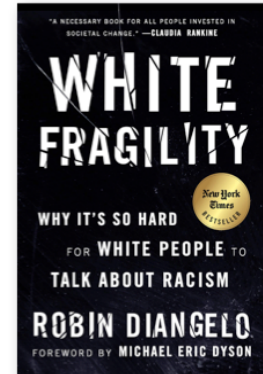
"The most common definitions of racism (in my own summation) are: (1) Racism is any prejudice against someone because of their race. Or (2) Racism is any prejudice against someone because of their race, when those views are reinforced by systems of power. While these two definitions are very close to each other in many ways, the differences between these two definitions of racism drastically change how you look at and address racism in America."

If *White Fragility* convinces you to engage more, Oluo's book is the companion volume to help you successfully conduct the conversations you are most likely to have first.

Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style

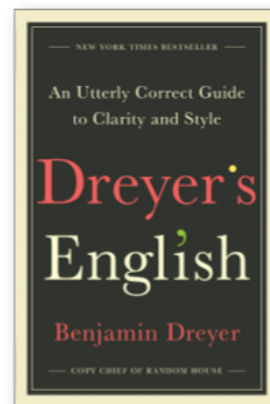
by Benjamin Dreyer (Random House, © 2019)

"OMG," you may be thinking, "not another book with an entire chapter devoted to the proper use of the semi-colon." Fear not: no such chapter exists, although there are three solid pages devoted to that punctuation mark alone. But if you're convinced this kind of book isn't for you, Dreyer isn't so sure, and he makes his case in Chapter One:



"We're all of us writers: We write term papers, and office memos, letters to teachers and product reviews, journals and blog entries, appeals to politicians. Some of us write books. All of us write emails. And, at least as I've observed it, we all want to do it better. We want to make our points more clearly, more elegantly; we want our writing to be appreciated, to be more effective; we want - to be quite honest - to make fewer mistakes."

If that's not you, then skip ahead, but I'm guessing just about everyone would benefit from some of Dreyer's wisdom. Currently vice president, executive managing editor and copy chief for Random House, Dreyer has overseen books by Michael Chabon, Michael Pollan and Calvin Trillin (among many others), and he delivers serious recommendations with a light touch. He's helping me "kill my darlings," as the saying goes, and he can help you write just as mercilessly. (Still not sure? Then try a free sample from the audiobook [here](#).)



A Peace of My Mind: American Stories

by John Noltner (© 2016)

For three years, John Noltner crisscrossed the US, driving over 40,000 miles just so he could ask Americans the same question: "What does peace mean to you?" A photographer by trade, Noltner captured stunning portraits of the respondents and compiled their answers in a beautiful book that reminds us of the power of listening, especially when someone is willing to tell you their story.



A Peace of My Mind will introduce you to people like Hashim Garrett from Brooklyn, who was shot and paralyzed from the waist down at age 15. Garrett's life could have descended into bitterness, but instead he's using his experience to work with high school students and reduce violence. You'll meet Maham Kahan from Palatine, Illinois, a student at Harper College who was serving as president of the school's Muslim Student Association on 9/11. The work she began that day to foster interfaith dialogues continues to this day. And then there's Taylor Bond who lives in Moab, Utah. He worked as an electrician for ten years, but one day it all became too much, and now he finds peace climbing rock towers in the desert.

If, as Emerson said, "we are what we think about all day long," Noltner's book is a timely opportunity to reflect on your own answer to the question. What does peace mean to you? (You can read more about Noltner's book and order copies [here](#).)

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