



**I am waking up with anger in my belly.** It is familiar. I am painfully aware of all that is going on in the US and in the world. I am Turkish with olive skin and brown eyes. When it comes to being labeled as the 'other' because of things I can't change about myself (and don't want to change), I have experienced my share:

- During my graduate studies, I was yelled at on a bus in Germany by an older gentleman. When he heard that I was Turkish he said on the top of his lungs 'You'll go to hell!'. He continued to yell and yell while I responded calmly. No one said or did anything even though it was clear as day that he had no right to yell at me.
- When I first moved to the north of Boston in the US, during a professional dinner for my husband's work, a woman asked me if I got tan on a recent vacation in the middle of the winter in New England (the answer was no, I hadn't gone to vacation at all)
- My cousins often teased me growing up saying 'They got you from the gypsies!', which hurt deeply because for the longest time I thought I that was adopted as a child because my mom has fair skin and green eyes, and I look nothing like her. In Turkey, fair skin and blue/green eyes are considered beautiful, special, desirable, promotable as well as proofs of European or Balkan ancestry. You are destined to be made to feel less than if you are someone who doesn't look like that. Fair skin and blue eyes are always mentioned as amazing, admirable, beautiful qualities in conversations. People with fair skin and blue eyes often brag about these qualities

and the ancestry these qualities imply.

- I often feel people looking at me strangely when I take my fair-skinned green-eyed child into public or in stores. This happens in the US where we live and in Turkey. Some even comment 'That explains the blue eyes!' when my fair-skinned, green-eyed husband walks in.

**In all of these instances and interactions, people have ignorance, energetic wounds, want to make themselves feel better by labeling the other something less than, or they simply don't think of what their words and actions imply.** This said, I also haven't experienced the degree of otherness

that people in more marginalized groups live through every day. I haven't been denied education or opportunities. I haven't felt like I am in danger every time I step outside because of the color of my skin, the way I look, my sexuality, or religion (well, I mostly feel I am in danger when I step out because I am a woman).

**But that is not all, I do this all the time too.** I have made people into 'others' in my life by:

- participating in racial jokes
- categorizing and stereotyping groups of people
- not reaching out to know, hear, and understand more
- changing the sidewalk or moving my gaze down because I see a homeless person, a person of color, a person of another economic status, or someone showing any other suspicious behavior because I am terrified and unsure of my safety.
- glorifying a certain style, look, clothing, make-up, etc. over another
- judging myself and others
- not initiating conversations or kindness when I could
- not learning, questioning, reading, or supporting enough

**I need to do better, we all need to do much much better.** Today I am listening to my anger. Clearly, she is not done talking. Within my anger, there is much sadness and fear mixed in. Within my anger, there are so many different layers. Today we will have some tea together, engage in a conversation. I will begin

to forgive the parts of me that push out other parts. I will embrace our broken heritage, our togetherness on this strange planet, in this strange time, with all our individual and collective wounds coming up to the surface one by one.

**Here's what I know: unless we tend to our needs and heal our individual energetic wounds, we will always have a tendency to make someone else into an 'other'.** What action will you take today to show responsibility for your own wounding? **I am here if you'd like some support to dive into the energetic wound jungle that is you and begin to love all of it.**

With love,

Damla

**P. S.** If you'd like to get started healing your energetic wounds by yourself, check out my **online healing sessions** and **online courses**.