

Survival Is Naming the Pattern

When History Isn't "History"**

Dominant culture loves treating every act of injustice as an isolated incident — a one-time mistake, a rare anomaly, a moment of poor judgment by individuals who should "know better." But marginalized communities know better than that. We carry the memory of patterns.

We've seen the same harm repeated across generations, with different packaging and new vocabulary. The faces change, but the logic doesn't. Oppression isn't a series of accidents — it's a system. It's a design.

When we name the pattern, we disrupt the illusion that violence is random. We expose the script that power hopes we'll forget.

Consider how many times we've seen:

- Punitive discipline labeled as "safety."
- Underfunding of communities labeled as "budget constraints."
- Censorship labeled as "neutral curriculum."
- Harassment labeled as "miscommunication."
- State violence labeled as "maintaining order."

Each one of these has a long history. Each has a recognizable shape. Each has been done before.

Pattern recognition is survival instinct.

Your ancestors used it. Your community uses it. Children sense it long before adults admit it.

When we say "We've seen this before," we are refusing to let the dominant narrative reset every time. Naming the pattern stops the cycle of gaslighting — the slow erosion of your belief in your own perception.

Institutions want us to treat harm as exceptional because exceptions don't require structural change.

But patterns demand accountability.

Naming the pattern protects us from blaming ourselves.

Because when harm looks isolated, we start believing we caused it.

We ask:

"What did I do wrong?"

“Why me?”

“What if I had just done X instead?”

But when you zoom out, the picture becomes clear:

It wasn't about you.

It wasn't about your behavior.

It wasn't personal.

It was historical.

It was systemic.

It was predictable.

Naming the pattern is how we prepare, protect, and prevent.

When we recognize the early signs — the rhetoric, the policy changes, the shift in tone — we can mobilize before the harm becomes overwhelming. We can build coalitions earlier. We can intervene sooner. We can refuse to be surprised by things we've seen for generations.

Power thrives on our amnesia.

Survival thrives on our memory.

Naming the pattern is not negativity.

It's literacy.

It's clarity.

It's how we refuse to be fooled by the same tactics again.