

BEST QUOTES ON MINORITIES

I stationed myself by the side of the road, along which the slaves, amounting to three hundred and fifty, were to pass. The purchaser of my wife was a Methodist minister, who was about starting for North Carolina. Pretty soon five wagon-loads of little children passed, and looking at the foremost one, what should I see but a little child, pointing its tiny hand towards me, exclaiming, 'There's my father; I knew he would come and bid me good-bye.' It was my eldest child! Soon the gang approached in which my wife was chained. I looked, and beheld her familiar face; but O, reader, that glance of agony! may God spare me ever again enduring the excruciating horror of that moment! She passed, and came near to where I stood. I seized hold of her hand, intending to bid her farewell; but words failed me; the gift of utterance had fled, and I remained speechless. I followed her for some distance, with her hand grasped in mine, as if to save her from her fate, but I could not speak, and I was obliged to turn away in silence.

--Virginia slave Henry
Brown (1816-1897)

Today in downtown San Diego, I watched a blue collar Mexican man get harassed for being Mexican. It was a blatant act of discrimination. And the man actually began crying. As he left the office building, he took off his jacket. His t-shirt underneath read, 'I love the USA!'

—Unknown

The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people.

--Martin Luther
King, Jr.

I am an invisible man...I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.

--Ralph Ellison
(1913-1994)

Race prejudice is not only a shadow over the colored—it is a shadow over all of us, and the shadow is darkest over those who feel it least and allow its evil effects to go on.

--Pearl S. Buck

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?...
Or does it explode?

--Langston Hughes

We're all here from somewhere else. America, Mother of Exiles.

—Jeff MacGregor

Sometimes I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me.

—Zora Neale Hurston

We are all descendants of Adam, and we are all products of racial miscegenation.

--Lester B. Pearson

It is not healthy when a nation lives within a nation, as colored Americans are living inside America. A nation cannot live confident of its tomorrow if its refugees are among its own citizens.

--Pearl S. Buck

Diversity without unity makes about as much sense as dishing up flour, sugar, water, eggs, shortening, and baking powder on a plate and calling it a cake.

--C. William Pollard

Let me tell you about prejudice. It starts in the home, and that's in all cultures, all races, all creeds. The only thing we can do, as educated people, is understand that we do have these feelings and say to ourselves, 'Hey, that's racist, I don't have to think that way.'

--Edward James Olmos

The fear I heard in my fathers' voice...when he realized that I really believed I could do anything a white boy could do, and had every intention of proving it, was not at all like the fear I heard when one of us was ill or had fallen down the stairs or strayed too far from the house. It was another fear, a fear that the child, in challenging the white world's assumptions, was putting himself in the path of destruction.

--James Baldwin

I vividly remember seeing a dozen black men and women chained to one another, once, and lying in a group on the pavement, awaiting shipment to the Southern slave market. Those were the saddest faces I have ever seen.

--Mark Twain

You can't expect white kids to be the same after they get to be 12 and 13.

--A Black Mother
preparing her
daughter for the
reality of racism in
America

Many Anglos have told me personally that they admire our way of life. I am sure others have confessed such. What is it that they admire—our poverty, our misery? No. They admire the way we cope with life and enjoy it. They admire our capacity to suffer and to enjoy. In a way they admire our freedom to be not so concerned with the damn future and with all these material possessions and trinkets which abound. The sense of loyalty to our families and to friends. Even the rascal qualities we seem to have are at times admired, because we can be dishonest with flair rather than in the dark.

--Abelardo Delgado

Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Racism is taught in our society, it is not automatic. It is learned behavior toward persons with dissimilar physical characteristics.

—Alex Haley

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.

—Audre Lorde

It is very sad that the general view of American history makes it seem as though the settlers landed in an empty region, when the fact is that the land was occupied by Indians who, on the whole, welcomed the newcomers in friendly fashion—in fact more friendly fashion than the Europeans would have welcomed any intruders landing on their shores, but then the Indians were 'savages,' you see.

—Isaac Asimov

He who allows oppression shares the crime.

—Desiderius Erasmus
(1466-1536)

There is nothing more painful to me at this stage in my life than to walk down the street and hear footsteps and start thinking about robbery, then look around and see somebody white and feel relieved.

—Jesse Jackson

It is never too late to give up your prejudices.

—Henry David Thoreau
(1817-1862)

One of the things that history can do for people is give them a sense that the struggles against segregation and discrimination are all in the past. It's painfully obvious that they're not in the past. All you have to do to see the continuation of segregation, if you happen to be a Northwestern student, is take the Red Line from Howard down to its end point at 95th Street. You'll watch segregation roll by you.

—Kevin Boyle

In Ireland, you go to someone's house, and she asks you if you want a cup of tea. You say no, thank you, you're really just fine. She asks if you're sure. You say of course you're sure, really, you don't need a thing. Except they pronounce it 'ting.' You don't need a 'ting.' Well, she says then, I was going to get myself some anyway, so it would be no trouble. Ah, you say, well, if you were going to get yourself some, I wouldn't mind a spot of tea, at that, so long as it's no trouble and I can give you a hand in the kitchen. Then you go through the whole thing all over again until you both end up in the kitchen drinking tea and chatting.

In America, someone asks you if you want a cup of tea, you say no, and then you don't get any damned tea.

I liked the Irish way better.

—C. E. Murphy

Why is it that the United States child whose family can send him to Spain for a year to learn Spanish is a genius, but the little Korean kid who doesn't speak perfect English but already knows a second language has something wrong with him?

--Samuel Betances

Discrimination is a disease.

—Roger Staubach

The notion of a small but clamorous section of Americans, who blazon forth their fancied claim to superiority over the rest of their countrymen by calling themselves the ‘Anglo-Saxon race,’ is as absurd as it is unsound. Yet we often hear that the Anglo-Saxon race should dominate our country. There is no Anglo-Saxon race....An overwhelming majority of our white population is a mix of all white races of Europe—Teutonic, Latin, Slav. And where would you place the ten million colored people who live among us?

It is important to prepare against a possible foe abroad, but more against the domestic foe who may, unrecognized for years, appeal to our prejudice, our love of riches, our political ambitions and our vanity....Let us, therefore, abolish all distinctions that may lead to ill feeling and let us call ourselves, before the whole world, Americans, first, last and all the time.

—Philadelphia Mayor
Rudolph
Blankenburg
(1915)

I can say anecdotally that every kid I knew who was chronically truant came from a home in chaos. I had a student last year who was absent about half the time because his father had been shot and his mother, who had lost her job, cried every night because she didn’t know how she would pay the rent. My student walked the streets day after day looking for a job, even though no one would hire him because he was only 15. His mother begged him to stay in school and graduate, assuring him she would figure something out. Our counselor referred the family to public services, but because my student’s mother was undocumented, she was afraid to seek them. And my student continued to be absent about half the time.

—Ellie Herman, Teacher

The white, the Hispanic, the black, the Arab, the Jew, the woman, the Native American, the small farmer, the businessperson, the environmentalist, the peace activist, the young, the old, the lesbian, the gay and the disabled make up the American quilt.

—Jesse Louis Jackson

Most of the people at the top were always going to be the people at the top—they had uncomplicated access to opportunities that women and people of color and other minorities simply don’t.

—Rob Markman

Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.

—Maya Angelou

When African-Americans sought to move their families to more favorable conditions, they faced a hardening structure of policies and customs designed to maintain racial exclusion. Restrictive covenants, introduced as a response to the influx of black people during the Great Migration, were clauses written into deeds that outlawed African-Americans from buying, leasing or living in properties in white neighborhoods, with the exception, often explicitly spelled out, of servants. By the 1920s, the widespread use of restrictive covenants kept as much as 85 percent of Chicago off-limits to African-Americans.

At the same time, redlining—the federal housing policy of refusing to approve or guarantee mortgages in areas where black people lived—served to deny them access to mortgages in their own neighborhoods. These policies became the pillars of a residential caste system in the North that calcified segregation and wealth inequality over generations, denying African-Americans the chance accorded other Americans to improve their lot.

—Isabel Wilkerson

Understanding the past was more than an abstract obsession. History became a way for me to understand the challenges within my own life. I grew up in a town in New Jersey where there were very few black people. Race shaped my life at an early age. I remember a time from elementary school, when we were playing ball and it was really hot. We lined up on the steps in back of one kid's house, and his mother came out and started handing out glasses of water. And when she saw me, she said, 'Drink out of the hose.' As I got older, I wanted to understand why some people treated me fairly and others treated me horribly. History, for me, became a means of understanding the life I was living.

—Lonnie G. Bunch III

There's not one way to be black. There's a multiplicity of ways....With 40 million African-Americans in this country, there are 40 million ways of being black.

—Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness.
But still, like air, I'll Rise.

—Maya Angelou

Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shore, the scar of our racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles over racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it. Our children are still taught to respect the violence which reduced a red-skinned people of an earlier culture into a few fragmented groups herded into impoverished reservations.

—John Kennedy

Share our similarities, celebrate our differences.

—M. Scott Peck

To separate (Negro children) from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone....We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal....To separate black children from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.

--Chief Justice Earl
Warren
(1891-1974)

America faces a racial fracture whose severity is not sufficiently recognized. It is not the country we thought it would be when America elected its first black president. That is the stark truth. Let us be depressed about it.

--Tina Brown

I am free of all prejudices. I hate every one equally.

--W. C. Fields

America is not a melting pot. It is a sizzling cauldron.

--Barbara Ann Mikulski

When you get up in the morning, you merely put on your clothes. When a colored man gets up in the morning, he puts on his armor.

--Kristin Hunter

America does not seem to remember that it derived its wealth, its values, its food, much of its medicine, and a large part of its 'dream' from Native America.

--Paula Gunn Allen

Being a black man in America is like having another job.

--Arthur Ashe

If folk can learn to be racist, then they can learn to be anti-racist.

--Johnetta B. Cole

I was raised in what I consider to be not a melting pot, but a salad bowl. The onion stayed the onion, the tomato stayed the tomato, the lettuce stayed the lettuce, with maybe a little Russian or Italian dressing. And it tasted real good. No one lost their identity, and I thought that was what life was like.

--Edward James Olmos

I personally am sick of being a 'minority,' sick of seeing meaningless statistics lumping me with Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics, and other folk on the idiotic basis of not being white (why not lump us together on the basis of not being birds or reptiles?)...I cannot even recall God naming me man. If He or She did, I have forgotten because it happened so long ago.

--Gerald Early

This country was settled by people who found themselves to be minorities, for one reason or another, in the lands they came from.

--Unknown

A minority group has 'arrived' only when it has the right to produce some fools and scoundrels without the entire group paying for it.

--Carl T. Rowan

Discrimination is a hellhound that gnaws at Negroes in every waking moment of their lives to remind them that the lie of their inferiority is accepted as truth in the society dominating them.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

One of the recurring success themes in the African-American community is the frequency with which being a victim actually drives ambition.

--Audrey Edwards and
Craig K. Polite

One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

Just being a Negro doesn't qualify you to understand the race situation any more than being sick makes you an expert on medicine.

--Dick Gregory

To be a Negro is to participate in a culture of poverty and fear that goes far deeper than any law for or against discrimination.

--Michael Harrington

Time will draw a veil over the white and black in this hemisphere, and future generations will look back upon the record of strife as it stands revealed in the history of the people of this New World of ours with wonder and incredulity. For they will not understand the issue that the quarrel was about.

--Branch Rickey

I do not think white America is committed to granting equality to the American Negro....this is a passionately racist country; it will continue to be so in the foreseeable future.

--Susan Sontag

To like an individual because he's black is just as insulting as to dislike him because he isn't white.

--e. e. cummings

The Negro says, 'Now.' Others say, 'Never.' The voice of responsible Americans...says, 'Together.' There is no other way. Until justice is blind to color, until education is unaware of race, until opportunity is unconcerned with the color of men's skins, emancipation will be a proclamation but not a fact.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

We destroyed slavery but not racism.

--Henry Steele
Commager

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood...that one day even the State of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice...that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

The haughty American nation...makes the Negro clean its boots and then proves the moral and physical inferiority of the Negro by the fact that he is a bootblack.

--George Bernard Shaw
(1856-1950)

We have allowed death to change its name from Southern rope to Northern dope. Too many black youths have been victimized by pushing dope into their veins instead of hope into their brains.

--Jesse Jackson

Injustice always breeds fear...the main difficulty of the race question does not lie so much in the actual condition of the blacks as it does in the mental attitude of the whites.

--James Weldon Johnson

You can't hold a man down without staying down with him.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

There are two ways of exerting one's strength: one is pushing down, the other is pulling up.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.

—Abraham Lincoln
(1809-1865)

Separating Negro children from others of similar age and qualifications because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.

--Chief Justice Earl
Warren
(1891-1974)

If Negro freedom is taken away, or that of any minority group, the freedom of all the people is taken away.

--Paul Robeson

No Negro American can be free until the lowliest Negro in Mississippi is no longer disadvantaged because of his race.

--Ralph Bunche

Segregation is the offspring of an illicit intercourse between injustice and immorality.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

The problem of justice for the Negro has gnawed on the national conscience ever since this nation was founded. It is, in an important sense, the American problem. If any problem is especially and peculiarly ours, with roots in our history and scars in our memory, this is it. No other modern problem touches more profoundly the values we profess to cherish. And history has handed our generation the task of solving it.

--John W. Gardner

We are a distinct cultural group, proud of our culture and our institutions, and simply want to be left alone to lead our good, black lives. In the new world, as in this one, I want to be known, not as a man who happens to be black, but as a black man.

--Julius Lester

Sometimes it's like a hair across your cheek. You can't see it, you can't find it with your fingers, but you keep brushing at it because the feel of it is irritating.

--Marian Anderson

One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, the two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.

—Abraham Lincoln
(1809-1865)

Ten years ago, Negroes seemed almost invisible to the larger society, and the facts of their harsh lives were unknown to the majority of the nation....In this decade of change the Negro stood up and confronted his oppressor—he faced the bullies and the guns, the dogs and the tear gas, he put himself squarely before the vicious mobs and moved with strength and dignity toward them and decisively defeated them.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

When laws cease to have usefulness to society, they should be changed, not enforced. All one has to do is to think of the jimcrow laws of most states in the South not so many years ago to know what I mean.

--Coretta Scott King

Jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America: the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul—the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, a world of subway trains, and work, work, work; the tom-tom of joy and laughter, and pain swallowed in a smile.

--Langston Hughes

The rage of the southern poor white against the Negro suspected of some dereliction is preferable to the hate he feels inwardly at having been, like the Negro, unwanted. The same is perhaps true in the case of Germans and Jews and in many other situations which give the opportunity for the expression of hatred in the denial of the feeling of being rejected.

--Dr. Karl Menninger

Black is beautiful.

—Cultural Movement
Slogan

A ghetto can be improved in one way only: out of existence.

--James Baldwin

It is only in his music, which Americans are able to admire because a protective sentimentality limits their understanding of it, that the Negro in America has been able to tell his story.

--James Baldwin

Aunt Jemima and Uncle Tom are dead, their places taken by a group of amazingly well-adjusted young men and women, almost as dark, but ferociously literate, well-dressed and scrubbed, who are never laughed at.

--James Baldwin

The Negro revolt is not aimed at winning friends but at winning freedom, not interpersonal warmth but institutional justice.

--Harvey Cox

Having despised us, it is not strange that Americans should seek to render us despicable having enslaved us, it is natural that they should strive to prove us unfit for freedom; having denounced us as indolent, it is not strange that they should cripple our enterprises.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

If you are black the only roads into the mainland of American life are through subservience, cowardice, and loss of manhood. These are the white man's roads.

--LeRoi Jones

Only in the case of the Negro has the melting pot failed to bring a minority into the full stream of American life.

--John F. Kennedy

I didn't know I was a slave until I found out I couldn't do the things I wanted.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

Cannot the nation that has absorbed ten million foreigners into its political life without catastrophe absorb ten million Negro Americans into that same political life at less cost than their unjust and illegal exclusion will involve?

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

Race prejudice decreases values both real estate and human; crime, ignorance and filth decrease values.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

No one has been barred on account of his race from fighting or dying for America; there are no 'white' or 'colored' signs on the foxholes or graveyards of battle.

—John F. Kennedy

The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states.

--Mohandas K. Gandhi

Unless man is committed to the belief that all of mankind are his brothers, then he labors in vain and hypocritically in the vineyards of equality.

--Adam Clayton Powell

The Lord so constituted everybody that no matter what color you are you require the same amount of nourishment.

--Will Rogers

The taste of democracy becomes a bitter taste when the fullness of democracy is denied.

--Max Lerner

I am a Negro:

Black as the night is black,
Black like the depths of my Africa.

--Langston Hughes

Rest at pale evening...
A tall slim tree...
Night coming tenderly
Black like me.

--Langston Hughes

Goddammit, look! We live here and they live there. We black and they white. They got things and we ain't. They do things and we can't. It's just like living in jail.

--Richard Wright

Wear it
Like a banner
For the proud--
Not like a shroud.

--Langston Hughes

The destiny of the colored American...is the destiny of America.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

The relation between the white and colored people of this country is the great, paramount, imperative, and all-commanding question for this age and nation to solve.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others....One feels his two-ness—An American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

It is obvious that the urban crisis stems in large part from the failure to resolve the problems that confront the Negro.

--Whitney Moore
Young, Jr.

We are not fighting for integration, nor are we fighting for separation. We are fighting for recognition as human beings. We are fighting for...human rights.

--Malcolm X

Black power...is a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society.

--Charles Vernon
Hamilton

What does the Negro want? His answer is very simple. He wants only what all other Americans want. He wants opportunity to make real what the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights say, what the Four Freedoms establish. While he knows these ideals are open to no man completely, he wants only his equal chance to obtain them.

--Mary McLeod Bethune
(1875-1955)

If we accept and acquiesce in the face of discrimination, we accept the responsibility ourselves and allow those responsible to salve their conscience by believing that they have our acceptance and concurrence. We should, therefore, protest openly everything...that smacks of discrimination or slander.

--Mary McLeod Bethune
(1875-1955)

I really hope no white person ever has cause
to write about me
because they never understand
Black love is Black wealth and they'll
probably talk about my hard childhood
and never understand that
all the while I was quite happy.

--Nikki Giovanni

The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.

—John, Lord Acton

The black encounter with the absurd in racist American society yields a profound spiritual need for human affirmation and recognition. Hence, the centrality of religion and music—those most spiritual of human activities—in black life.

--Cornel West

I cannot fight prejudice in America and paint at the same time!

--Henry Ossawa Tanner

The Blues has been the foundation for all other American music since the beginning.

--Willie Dixon

There's no idea in the world that is not contained by black life. I could write forever about the black experience in America.

--August Wilson

The individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of his race.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

Our elevation must be the result of self-efforts and work of our own hands. No other human power can accomplish it. If we but determine it shall be so, it will be so.

--Martin R. Delany

I have discovered in life that there are ways of getting almost anywhere you want to go, if you really want to go.

--Langston Hughes

It would be against all nature for all the Negroes to be either at the bottom, top, or in between....We will go where the internal drive carries us like everybody else. It is up to the individual.

--Zora Neale Hurston

Because I want every kid to be viewed as a person rather than as a member of a certain race does not mean that I'm not black enough....Do they want me to be positive just for black kids and negative for everybody else?

--Michael Jordan

We realize that our future lies chiefly in our own hands. We know that neither institution nor friends can make a race stand unless it has strength in its own foundation; that races, like individuals, must stand or fall by their own merit; that to fully succeed they must practice the virtues of self-reliance, self-respect, industry, perseverance, and economy.

--Paul Robeson

The only protection against genocide is to remain necessary.

--Jesse Jackson

We blacks look for leadership in men and women of such youth and inexperience, as well as poverty of education and character, that it is no wonder that we sometimes seem rudderless....We see basketball players and pop singers as possible role models, when nothing could be further, in most cases, from their capacities.

--Arthur Ashe

Every race and every nation should be judged by the best it has been able to produce, not by the worst.

--James Weldon Johnson

We ain't what we want to be; we ain't what we gonna be; but thank God, we ain't what we was.

--African-American Folk
Saying

Violence is black children going to school for 12 years and receiving 6 years' worth of education.

--Julian Bond

Stop using the word 'Negro.' The word is a misnomer from every point of view. It does not represent a country or anything else....I am an African-American....I am not ashamed of my African descent....After people have been freed, it is a cruel injustice to call them by the same name they bore as slaves.

--Mary Church Terrell,
(1949)

It's not what you call us, but what we answer to that matters.

--Djuka

Too many of us are hung up on what we don't have, can't have, or won't ever have. We spend too much energy being down, when we could use that same energy—if not less of it—doing, or at least trying to do, some of the things we really want to do.

--Terry McMillan

Education is the primary tool of emancipation and liberation for African-Americans in our fight for true equality in this country.

--Earl G. Graves

I find it hard to deplore these percentages of blacks in the military because they represent blacks rushing through a door that some of us opened with great work and risk.

--Carl T. Rowan

This is our country. We don't have to slip around like peons or thieves in the middle of the night, asking someone for open sesame. Knock the damn door down!

--Harold Washington

We have to give our children, especially black boys, something to lose. Children make foolish choices when they have nothing to lose.

--Jawanza Kunjufu

In the South they don't care how close you get, as long as you don't get too high. In the North, they don't care how high you get, as long as you don't get too close.

--African-American Folk
Saying

What the small boy needs to know is that there are men in this world who are like him, black men, African-American men, who read and write and find the whole process of academics something valuable....The epidemic of academic failure in the African-American male population is not going to stop unless we, African-American men, begin to do the job that we can do.

--Spencer Holland

But what of black women?...I most sincerely doubt if any other race of women could have brought its fineness up through so devilish a fire.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

No white person knows, really knows, how it is to grow up as a Negro boy in the South. The taboo of the white woman eats into the psyche, erodes away significant portions of boyhood sexual development, alters the total concept of masculinity, and creates in the Negro male a hidden ambivalence towards all women, black as well as white.

--Calvin Hernton

When you're a black woman, you seldom get to do what you just want to do; you always do what you have to do.

--Dorothy I. Height

Living in a society where the objective social position and the reputed virtues of white women smother whatever worth black women may have, the Negro male is put to judging his women by what he sees and imagines the white woman is.

--Calvin Hernton

The Negro was invented in America.

--John Oliver Killens

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?

--Sojourner Truth, (1851)

The basic tenet of black consciousness is that the black man must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity.

--Steve Biko

The fact is that American whites, as a whole, are just as much in doubt about their nationality, their cultural identity, as are Negroes.

--Harold Cruse

I want to be black, to know black, to luxuriate in whatever I might be calling blackness at any particular time, but to do so in order to come out on the other side, to experience a humanity that is neither colorless nor reducible to color.

--Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

A climate of alienation has a profound effect on the Black personality, particularly on the educated Black, who has the opportunity to see how the rest of the world regards him and his people. It often happens that the Black intellectual thus loses confidence in his own potential and that of his race. Often the effect is so crushing that some Blacks, having evidence to the contrary, still find it hard to accept the fact we really were the first to civilize the world.

--Cheikh Anta Diop

The African, because of the violent differences between what was native and what he was forced to in slavery, developed some of the most complex and complicated ideas about the world imaginable.

--Amiri Baraka

As legal slavery passed, we entered into a permanent period of unemployment and underemployment from which we have yet to emerge.

--Julian Bond

Here, equal justice under the law is prescribed only for the corporate rich and powerful. There are literally thousands of people imprisoned solely because of their race and poverty.

--Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

It grew on me that we, black men especially, were expected to be subservient even in groups where ostensibly everyone was equal.

--Shirley Chisholm

Let racism be a problem to someone else....let it drag them down. Don't use it as an excuse for your own shortcomings.

--Colin Powell

When they approach me they see...everything and anything except me.

--Ralph Ellison
(1913-1994)

I'd continue to teach my children what I had been taught: that they needn't see a black become president or win the Indy 500 on television before they could do it in real life.

--Eric V. Copage

Self-help isn't enough in a milieu of institutionalized racism.

--Carl T. Rowan

Different doesn't mean inferior.

--Cornel West

Aunt Jemima is the black woman who cooked and cleaned, struggled, brought up her own family and a white family. And if I'm ashamed of Aunt Jemima—her head rag, her hips, her color—then I'm ashamed of my people.

--Maxine Waters,
Congresswoman

Not everyone likes chocolate ice cream.

--Nipsey Russell

There is in this world no such force as the force of a man determined to rise. The human soul cannot be permanently chained.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

America's greatest crime against the black man was not slavery or the lynching, but that he was taught to wear a mask of self-hate and self-doubt.

--Malcolm X

I am opposed to enforced separatism and I am opposed to enforced segregation. The first freedom for all people is freedom of choice.

--Jackie Robinson

You may not have been responsible for your heritage, but you are responsible for your future.

--Unknown

We've been brainwashed. Everything good is supposed to be white. We look at Jesus, and we see a white with blond hair and blue eyes. We look at all the angels; we see white with blond hair and blue eyes. Now, I'm sure there's a heaven in the sky an it colored folks die and go to heaven. Where are the colored angels? They must be in the kitchen preparing milk and honey. We look at Miss America, we see white. We look at Miss World, we see white. We look at Miss Universe, we see white. Even Tarzan, the king of the jungle in black Africa, he's white. White Owl Cigars. White Swan soap, White Cloud tissue paper, White Rain hair rinse, White Tornado floor wax. All the good cowboys ride the white horses and wear white hats. Angel food cake is the white cake, but the devils food cake is chocolate. When are we going to wake up as a people and end the lie that white is better than black?

--Muhammad Ali

I don't hate nobody and I ain't lynched nobody. We Muslims don't hate the white man. It's like we don't hate a tiger; but we know that a tiger's nature is not compatible with people's nature since tigers love to eat people. So we don't want to live with tigers. It's the same with the white man. The white race attacks black people. They don't ask what's our religion, what's our belief? They just start whupping heads. They don't ask you, are you catholic, are you a baptist, are you a black muslim, are you a Martin Luther King follower, are you with Whitney Young? They just go whop, whop, whop! So we don't want to live with the white man; that's all.

--Muhammad Ali

As for the notion that black children can learn only from black teachers and about black things—that is very dangerous because it really means that racism is in the ascendancy and that we're all going to be living in groups of haggling, competing, name-calling separatists.

--Jacques Barzun

Being a Negro in America means trying to smile when you want to cry. It means trying to hold on to physical life amid psychological death. It means the pain of watching your children grow up with clouds of inferiority in their mental skies. It means having your legs cut off, and then being condemned for being a cripple. It means seeing your mother and father spiritually murdered by the slings and arrows of daily exploitation, and then being hated for being an orphan.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Of all the injuries inflicted by racism on people of colour, the most corrosive is the wound within, the internalized racism that leads some victims, at unspeakable cost to their own sense of self, to embrace the values of their oppressors.

--H. Jack Geiger

Of my two 'handicaps', being female put many more obstacles in my path than being black.

--Shirley Chisholm

Governments exist to protect the rights of minorities. The loved and the rich need no protection—they have many friends and few enemies.

--Wendell Phillips

Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.

--*National Advisory
Commission on
Civil Disorders,*
[1968]

The difference of race is one of the reasons why I fear war may always exist; because race implies difference, difference implies superiority, and superiority leads to predominance.

--Benjamin Disraeli

If you put together enough minorities, you have a majority.

--Unknown

Men are not superior by reason of the accidents of race or color. They are superior who have the best heart—the best brain.

--Robert G. Ingersoll

There are three constant issues that have run through American politics, ever since the founding of the Republic...war and peace...bread and butter...and black and white.

--Theodore White

The history of most countries has been that of majorities—mounted majorities, clad in iron, armed with death, treading down the tenfold more numerous minorities.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

Though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; the minority possess their equal right, which equal laws must protect, and to violate would be oppression.

--Thomas Jefferson

If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might in a moral point of view justify revolution—certainly would if such a right were a vital one.

—Abraham Lincoln
(1809-1865)

No democracy can long survive which does not accept as fundamental to its very existence the recognition of the rights of minorities.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

There are two kinds of minorities—those that the majority sets apart, and those that set themselves apart.

--Unknown

In every minority there are two groups—those who take pride in being different and those who differ with that pride.

--Unknown

A nation that doesn't have minorities manufactures them.

--Unknown

We may have come over on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now.

--Whitney Young, Jr.

I believe the life of the Negro race has been a life of tragedy, of injustice, of oppression. The law has made him equal, but man has not.

--Clarence Darrow

The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section or the state in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby, born in the same place, on the same day; one-third as much chance of completing college; one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man; twice as much chance of becoming unemployed; about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 a year; a life expectancy which is seven years shorter and the prospects of earning only half as much.

--John F. Kennedy

And whereas, the having of slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences; Be it, therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all and every person and persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach, or cause any slave or slaves to be taught, to write, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe in any manner of writing whatsoever, hereafter taught to write, every such person and persons shall for every such offence, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds current money.

--*The Statutes at Large of
South Carolina
(1740 A.D.)*

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she kindly commenced to teach me the A, B, C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point in my progress, Mr. Auld forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world....As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in rage almost all the time.

--James Baldwin

Though the colored man is no longer subject to be bought and sold, he is still surrounded by an adverse sentiment which fetters all his movements. In his downward course he meets with no resistance, but his course upward is resisted at every stop of his progress.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

I want to be the white man's brother, but not his brother-in-law.

--Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.

A black person never leaves the ghetto.

--Sammy Davis, Jr.

If any man claims the Negro should be content...let him say he would willingly change the color of his skin and go to live in the Negro section of a large city. Then and only then has he a right to such a claim.

--Robert F. Kennedy

The myth of the strong black woman is the other side of the coin of the myth of the beautiful dumb blonde.

--Eldridge Cleaver

Education remains the key to both economic and political empowerment. That is why the schools which are in charge of educating African Americans have, perhaps, the longest, the greatest, the deepest challenges of all...to get into the minds of young African Americans so that they who recognize opportunity will come to those who are prepared.

--Barbara Jordan

A bird and a fish can fall in love, but where do they build their nest?

—Old Saying

I have one criticism about the Negro troops who fought under my command in the Korean War. They didn't send me enough of them.

--Douglas MacArthur

The existence of any pure race with special endowments is a myth, as is the belief that there are races all of whose members are foredoomed to eternal inferiority.

--Franz Boas

We are a nation of many nationalities, many races, many religions—bound together by a single unity, the unity of freedom and equality. Whoever seeks to set one nationality against another, seeks to degrade all nationalities.

--Franklin Delano
Roosevelt

All history is a record of the power of minorities, and of minorities of one.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803-1882)

I am the inferior of any man whose rights I trample under foot. Men are not superior by reason of the accidents of race or color. They are superior who have the best heart—the best brain. The superior man ... stands erect by bending above the fallen. He rises by lifting others.

--Robert Green Ingersoll

Do not call for black power or green power. Call for brain power.

--Barbara Jordan

When an individual is kept in a situation of inferiority, the fact is that he does become inferior.

--Simone de Beauvoir

Segregation was wrong when it was forced by white people, and I believe it is still wrong when it is requested by black people.

--Coretta Scott King

The Lord so constituted everybody that no matter what color you are you require the same amount of food.

--Will Rogers

Absolute equality, that's the thing: and throughout the ages we have always defended to the death the sacred right of every Black man, no matter how lowly, to be equal to every other Black man.

--Hugh Leonard

It doesn't matter if the cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.

--Deng Xiaoping

We should acknowledge differences, we should greet differences, until difference makes no difference anymore.

--Dr. Adela A. Allen

Prejudice is a state of mind that can be cured with success.

--Francisco Avelar

In the United States, having a French or German accent is to be considered cultured, educated. But if you have a Spanish accent you are ignored, even if you are a Ph.D.

--Hugo Piñeda

You cannot be witness to the human suffering and not be convinced of the existence of social sin. We are all responsible unless we take a stand and speak out against it.

--Father Luis Olivares

We will consider our jobs done when every one of our people recognizes his sense of personal dignity and pride in his history, his culture and his race.

--Luís M. Valdez

Is the Anglo really the enemy? Or is the enemy our fear of the unknown and our reluctance to conquer it? Yes, Anglos, or anyone else for that matter, can intimidate you, make you feel inferior and threaten you, but only when they are more knowledgeable than you and only when you let them.

--Bettina R. Flores

These boys on the street, they have nothing, no one to look up to. When we have men who will help our young males make the rite of passage into manhood, they will feel like men—and they will feel good. They won't have to search out for manhood among their peers who hand them guns.

--Edward James Olmos

To be a man is to suffer for others. God help us be men!

--César Chávez

The poor who migrate into a richer nation do not pose a threat to the local culture. In fact, the opposite is true. The threat is to their own self-image and cultural identity.

--Father Virgil P.
Elizondo

Public assistance/welfare, crime and a lack of education is the syndrome of failure in the immigrant community.

--Fransisco Avelar

African people can have a Golden Age or another Age of Continued Despair, depending on how they view themselves in relationship to the totality of history and its ironies. The cruelest thing slavery and colonialism did to the Africans was to destroy their memory of what they were before foreign contact.

--John Henrik Clark

If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.

--Carter G. Woodson

If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can go.

--James Baldwin

As a beginning, Afrocentricity is good to strip away those layers of doubt and self-hate in Black people, the way old paint is scraped away for a new coat to adhere properly. But sooner or later we folks in America must admit to ourselves we are not pure African at all—we're out of Africa. Just as the origins of humanity are out of Africa.

--Ralph Wiley

I feel that the problem that we have in the black community is education. The greatest impact on the community is education. Until we can educate our people to be healthy we're going to have problems; until we can improve the education in the schools and our community we are going to have problems; until we can start early with our bright young people, get them off to a good start so they aren't already behind when they get to school we are going to have problems. So I feel that the problems are related to education.

--Dr. Joycelyn Elders

African-American leaders have now taken hold of the concept that we need to be responsible for what goes on in our own backyard. In terms of solutions we need to look inward...We need to do a better job of parenting. We need to create extended families. We need to create our own economic institutions. We need to take responsibility for what goes on in our communities, in our families.

--Bill Nabor

The whole gangster mentality, it's killing our youth. Black males, we're really just choking ourselves with this whole macho shit, where you can't show any tenderness, no vulnerability, no nothing. You have to be granite, 100 percent. And that's just not natural. And another thing: you have a hundred thousand black kids across this country failing class's on purpose because of peer pressure. And if you speak proper English, and you get straight A's in school, then you're considered a white boy or a white girl. But if you're hanging on the corner, scratching your nuts, drinking, then you're down. So, you know, the whole value system is fucked up; ignorance is being championed over intelligence.

--Spike Lee

Way down deep we feel it. The power of mother love. For centuries, it is been the glue that cemented the two things Black folks have traditionally valued above all others: our families and our faith.

--Laura B. Randolph

There is something systemic, however, between the environments in which young black males are reared and incarceration rates.

--Ronald V. Mincy

A vast number of black and Latino youths in the inner cities are trying desperately to make some sense of their lives. But they are caught in a crossfire between a small group of the sociopaths in their midst and the larger society that ignores their potential and has written them out of the future.

Every time a delivery man is murdered, a drama teacher shot off his bike in the park, public opinion hardens against taking steps to remedy the desperate condition of urban youth including those who carry dreams instead of guns...

Trapped between the shooters in their neighborhood and a society that fears and quarantines them, a generation of city teen-agers is turning inward, away from counsel from the old heads in their community and communication with the larger society.

--Greg Donaldson

The media portrays our celebrities as role models, but we have to really look around us and determine who are role models are. I have never read an article about a white celebrity that portrayed him or her as a role model for white people. But when you read about black role models, they are either entertainers or athletes.

--Camille Cosby

Where King advocated redemptive suffering for blacks through their own bloodshed, Malcolm promulgated 'reciprocal bleeding' for blacks and whites. As King preached the virtues of a Christian love, Malcolm articulated black anger with unmitigated passion. While King urged nonviolent civil disobedience, Malcolm promoted the liberation of blacks by whatever means were necessary.

--Michael Eric Dyson

Nowhere in the civilized world, save in the United States, do men go out in bands. . .to hunt, shoot, hang or burn to death, a single individual, unarmed and absolutely powerless.

--Ida B. Wells
(1862-1931)

Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those herculean efforts that we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary 'peaks of progress,' short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard to accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it, not as a sign of submission, but as an act of ultimate defiance.

--Derrick Bell

What integration achieved for me and my peers was a subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) daily reinforcement of the notion that being Black means being inferior.

--Teresa Wiltz

The American people have this to learn: That where justice is denied; where poverty is enforced; where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob, and degrade them, neither person nor property will be safe.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

Booker T. Washington's doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical and rather pessimistic spectators; when in fact the burden belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we bend not our energies to righting these great wrongs.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

We first have to understand that racism is permanent, and then we have to take a stance similar to that of Mrs. Biona MacDonald, the Black lady down in Mississippi who once said to me, 'Derrick, I live to harass White folks!' The point here is that even though this woman had no money, had no gun, she was still going to be on the case as long she lived. She was always going to fight. At that point she had triumphed over them.

--Derrick Bell

We will never feel psychologically whole until we're able to call ourselves Africans. To call Africans in America 'blacks' is like calling Asians in America 'yellows.'

--Nathan Hare and Julia Hare

The analogy I use is that of the kidnapped victim. Psychologists have done studies on kidnapped victims, and they've found one thing in common: In a lot of cases where a person has been held captive or hostage, they're usually in a very vulnerable, weak position. They feel helpless. They have no resources to fall back on. After a while, a strange psychic process begins to happen. They begin to identify with their captors.

I suggest this: I see a similar parallel with African Americans. Many African Americans over time have begun to identify, empathize and bond with white supremacy.

--Earl Ofari Hutchinson

Instead of seeking true equality with whites, too many blacks sought acceptance. They fled their own communities to live instead among the whites, because they saw whites as successful and blacks as doomed. This is a manifestation of self-hatred that many believe is a far greater obstacle to African-American economic empowerment than racial hatred.

--George C. Fraser

The free man is the man with no fears.

--Dick Gregory

If the wealthy aristocrats who are perpetrating conditions in the ghetto actually heard the screams of ghetto suffering, or saw the slow death of hungry little kids, or witnessed the strangulation of manhood and dignity, they could not continue the killing.

--Dick Gregory

Black people need to work on their speaking and writing skills to avoid the pitfalls of exploitation, exclusion, and economic illiteracy. Knowing the language of power and finance is gaining clout, not selling out.

--Gerrard McClendon

Be skilled in speech so that you will succeed.

--Sacred Wisdom of
Ancient Egypt

The number of female-headed households continues to grow among black families. Let it be known that the problem with such households is not that a woman is in charge. The problem is that they are poor households.

--Johnetta B. Cole

When you see black people on television brushing their teeth...like everybody else, that says much more than any civil rights activist or orator.

--Constance Baker
Motley

I love Black men for the incredible strength in the face of the rage, the racism and the rancor they must face on a daily basis. Movie and media images of Black men in trouble and in a crisis permeate our lives while every day, all across the country, millions of Black men go out and do what they do like nobody else on the planet: raise their children, serve their communities, love their women. Like millions of Black women, I know the special joy of marriage to a strong Black man with whom you share the same struggle. Only a Black man can truly understand the fight and the plight of our people. For me, that fight is made infinitely easier because of David Justice. When I see him across the room, or wake up and see his face, I'm always renewed because I never have to explain myself or feelings to him. He understands my pain because it is his pain; he understands my struggle because it is his struggle. What bond can be more powerful? What love can be more profound?

--Halle Berry

They can laugh, but they can't deny us. They can curse and kill us, but they can't destroy us. This land is ours because we come out of it, we bled in it, our tears watered it, we fertilized it with our dead. So the more of us they destroy the more it becomes filled with the spirit of our redemption.

--Ralph Ellison
(1913-1994)

Got one mind for white folk to see
'Nother for what I know is me.

--African-American Folk
Saying

As much joy as I take in being a writer, I take an equal amount of joy being black. I think being black is really the coolest thing to be in this country. It is certainly bad from a socioeconomic standpoint. Certainly we get the last hired, first fired; and the crap beat out of us all the time. But really, if you look at this culture, this American culture, it is, I think, essentially black. The whole culture! From rock and roll to language. . . Just look at basketball. . . I think the essence of this culture extends from the contributions of black people. So I think being black is really cool. If we could only recognize that. If we only could see that and draw our strengths from what we've contributed.

--Eddy L. Harris

The Asians are learning how to do our hair and when that happens, the sister will put up a sign that says perm for \$25 and the Asian girl will put up an even larger one that says \$10 and while the sister goes home to watch 'Monday Night Football' with her family, the Asian girl will work all day and all night.

--Clarence Ward Sr.

As long as you are a consumer, you are a beggar. You must become a producer. We must learn from the lessons of the Japanese.

--Haki Madhubuti

The last time I was down South I walked into this restaurant, and this white waitress came up to me and said: 'We don't serve colored people here,' I said, 'That's all right, I don't eat colored people.'

--Dick Gregory

Never before have so many white Americans paid black Americans that sincerest form of flattery—imitation.

--John H. Johnson

Our responsibility is to carry our generation one step forward.

--Mary McLeod Bethune
(1875-1955)

As I traveled the country to a series of welfare-reform hearings late last year, I met many African-Americans who believe that the welfare system is one of the worst things that ever happened to poor people in general and to African-Americans in particular. Many people still remembered times when we, as a group, would do any kind of honest work and were too proud to accept 'handouts.' They believe that welfare has robbed us of our dignity and sense of self-determination. They feel that this system, ostensibly devised to help uplift women and children, has actually made us poorer as a people.

--Avis LaVelle

If you're poor and ignorant, with a child, you're a slave. Meaning that you're never going to get out of it. These women are in bondage to a kind of slavery that the 13th Amendment just didn't deal with. The old master provided food, clothing and health care to the slaves because he wanted them to get up and go to work in the morning. And so on welfare: you get food, clothing and shelter—you get survival, but you can't really do anything else. You can't control your life.

--Dr. Jocelyn Elders

The way America looks at the Black male hasn't changed since the day they sold us cut-rate and cutthroat.

--Mel Tapley

If there is no struggle, there is no progress.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

FBI agents are looking for the man who pulled the trigger and surely they will find him. But it doesn't matter if they do or they don't. They can't catch everybody, and Martin Luther King was executed by a firing squad that numbered in the millions.

--Mike Royko

As blacks, we need not be afraid that encouraging moral development, a conscience and guilt will prevent social action. Black children without the ability to feel a normal amount of guilt will victimize their parents, relatives and community first. They are unlikely to be involved in social action to improve the black community. Their self-centered personalities will cause them to look out for themselves without concern for others, black or white.

--James P. Comer

Now, Mr. Chairman, before concluding my remarks I want to submit a brief recipe for the solution of the so-called American negro problem. He asks no special favors, but simply demands that he be given the same chance for existence, for earning a livelihood, for raising himself in the scales of manhood and womanhood that are accorded to kindred nationalities. Treat him as a man; go into his home and learn of his social conditions; learn of his cares, his troubles, and his hopes for the future; gain his confidence; open the doors of industry to him; let the word 'negro,' 'colored,' and 'black' be stricken from all the organizations enumerated in the federation of labor.

Help him to overcome his weaknesses, punish the crime-committing class by the courts of the land, measure the standard of the race by its best material, cease to mold prejudicial and unjust public sentiment against him, and my word for it, he will learn to support, hold up the hands of, and join in with that political party, that institution, whether secular or religious, in every community where he lives, which is destined to do the greatest good for the greatest number. Obliterate race hatred, party prejudice, and help us to achieve nobler ends, greater results, and become more satisfactory citizens to our brother in white.

This, Mr. Chairman, is perhaps the negroes' temporary farewell to the American Congress; but let me say, Phoenix-like he will rise up some day and come again. These parting words are in behalf of an outraged, heart-broken, bruised, and bleeding, but God-fearing people, faithful, industrious, loyal people—rising people, full of potential force.

Mr. Chairman, in the trial of Lord Bacon, when the court disturbed the counsel for the defendant, Sir Walter Raleigh raised himself up to his full height and, addressing the court, said: 'Sir, I am pleading for the life of a human being.'

The only apology that I have to make for the earnestness with which I have spoken is that I am pleading for the life, the liberty, the future happiness, and manhood suffrage for one-eighth of the entire population of the United States.

--Representative George
H. White, (1901)
(The only African
American in
Congress at the
time)

I think I see her sitting bowed and black,
Stricken and seared with slavery's mortal scars,
Reft of her children, lonely, anguished, yet
Still looking at the stars.

--Jessie Fauset
(1882-1961)

It was common practice for me to take my children with me whenever I went shopping, out for a walk in a white neighborhood, or just felt like going about in a white world. The reason was simple enough: if a black man is alone or with other black men, he is a threat to whites. But if he is with children, then he is harmless, adorable.

--Gerald Early

Confronted with the unhappy facts of exclusion, we sometimes reassure ourselves by telling stories: the poor boys who made it, the blacks who became a 'credit to their race,' the women elected to high office, the handicapped who made 'useful contributions' to our society....Just as we believe in the self-sufficient family, we also believe that any child with enough grit and ability can escape poverty and make a rewarding life. But these stories and beliefs clearly reflect the exceptions.

--Kenneth Keniston

How a minority,
Reaching a majority,
Seizing authority,
Hates a minority!

--Leonard Harman
Robbins

It's always seemed to me that black people's grace has been with what they do with language.

--Toni Morrison

What a horror it must be for a child to discover that his skin is the wrong color.

--Sam Levenson

When blacks are unemployed, they are considered lazy and apathetic. When whites are unemployed, it's considered a depression.

--Rev. Jesse Jackson

Something is dismally wrong with an America in which a white prostitute can buy a house where a black businessman can't.

--Rev. Theodore M.
Hesburgh
(1917-2015)

I am visible—see this Indian face—yet I am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I exist, we exist. They'd like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven't, we haven't.

--Gloria Anzaldúa

She realized that white people rarely concerned themselves with Indian matters, that Indians were the shadow people, living almost invisibly on the fringes around them, and that this shadowy world allowed for a strange kind of freedom.

--Linda Hogan

What hurts Indians most is that our costumes are considered beautiful, but it's as if the person wearing it didn't exist.

--Rigoberta Menchú

The joke used to be that in every Indian home, there is the mother, father, children, grandparents, and the anthropologist.

--Elizabeth Cook-Lynn

An odd thing occurs in the minds of Americans when Indian civilization is mentioned: little or nothing.

--Paula Gunn Allen

If you were going to compete successfully in a white man's world, you had to learn to play the white man's game. It was not enough that an Indian be as good as; an Indian had to be better than.

--Janet Campbell Hale

The white man had come with the *Bible* in one hand, the bottle in the other.

--E. Pauline Johnson

'Coffin-nails' are of the white man's inception, along with his multitudinous diseased adjuncts of civilization: whiskey, beer, wine and opium with attending crimes and ills. And to cap the irony of it all, he brings the 'glad tidings' of an endlessly burning hell where we are roasted for emulating his 'superior' example.

--Mourning Dove

We are the land. To the best of my understanding, that is the fundamental idea that permeates American Indian life.

--Paula Gunn Allen

They (Native Americans) seemed to have none of the European's desire to 'master' nature, to arrange and re-create. They spent their ingenuity in the other direction; in accommodating themselves to the scene in which they found themselves....It was as if the great country were asleep, and they wished to carry on their lives without awakening it.

--Willa Cather

We are not afraid to rock the boat. Making waves. This is what Asian American women have done and will continue to do.

--*Asian Women United of California*

Who
can be born
black
and not exult!

--Mari E. Evans

It is utterly exhausting being Black in America—physically, mentally, and emotionally. While many minority groups and women feel similar stress, there is no respite or escape from your badge of color.

--Marian Wright
Edleman

'Crisis' seems to be too mild a word to describe conditions in countless African-American communities. It is beyond crisis when in the richest nation in the world, African Americans in Harlem live shorter lives than the people of Bangladesh, one of the poorest nations of the world.

--Johnnetta B. Cole

To be a colored man in America...and enjoy it, you must be greatly daring, greatly stolid, greatly humorous and greatly sensitive. And at all times a philosopher.

--Jessie Fauset
(1882-1961)

Black people are the only segment in American society that is defined by its weakest elements. Every other segment is defined by its highest achievement. We have to turn that around.

--Jewell Jackson McCabe

To be black and female, in a society which is both racist and sexist, is to be in a unique position of having nowhere to go but up.

--Rosemary Brown

On the road to equality there is no better place for blacks to detour around American values than in foregoing its example in the treatment of its women and the organization of its family life.

--Eleanor Holmes Norton

The Black emphasis must be not against white but FOR Black.

--Gwendolyn Brooks

I am somebody.
I may be poor,
but I am somebody!
I may be uneducated,
I may be unskilled,
but I am somebody!
I may be victimized by racism,
but I am somebody!
Respect me. Protect me. Never
neglect me.
I am God's child.

--Jesse Jackson

Excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism.

--Oprah Winfrey

Gentlemen are bred not born. They are trained in childhood and receive manners from those who surround them and not from their blood...Unless a new type of Negro family takes the burden of this duty, we are destined to be, as we are too largely today, a bad-mannered, unclean crowd of ill-bred young men and women who are under the impression that they are educated.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

Pa said white men called the Indians savages because that made it easier to hate them, and hating them made it easier to drive them off or kill them and take their land. He said that as long as folks thought of the Shawnees as savages, they didn't have to think of them as people.

--Cynthia DeFelice

In 1492 there were six million native people residing in what is now the U.S. They spoke 2000 languages, and had been part of thriving civilizations long before the coming of Columbus. This rich culture of the native people, nonetheless, was demolished methodically and ruthlessly within a historically short period.

--Wilma Mankiller

Our chiefs are killed....The old men are dead....The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food....My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.

--Chief Joseph
(1840-1904)

Being Indian is an attitude, a state of mind, a way of being in harmony with all things and all beings.

--Brooke Medicine-Eagle

When you first came we were many, and you were few; now you are many, and we are getting very few, and we are poor.

--Red Cloud (1822-1909)

What law have I broken? Is it wrong for me to love my own? Is it wicked in me because my skin is red; because I am a Sioux...because I would die for my people and my country?

--Sitting Bull
(1831-1890)

Where today are the Pequot? Where are the Narragansett, the Mohican, the Pokanet, and the many other once powerful tribes of our people? They have vanished before the avarice and the oppression of the White Man, as snow before a summer sun.

—Tecumseh (1768-1813)

I want people to see American Indians as a part of modern America. Too many people think we are a dead culture. But that's not true.

--Ben Nighthorse
Campbell

The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had...gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

There ain't a white man, lean-bellied and hopeless as so many of them are, that would change lots with a slave belongin' to the kindest master in the south.

--Irene Hunt

Slavery was a kind of legal robbery. Slaveholders, instead of paying their workers, simply stole their labor.

--Michele Stepto

Good words do not last long unless they amount to something. Words do not pay for my dead people. They do not pay for my country, now overrun by white men....I am tired of talk that comes to nothing. It makes my heart sick when I remember all the good words and broken promises of the white men.

--Chief Joseph
(1840-1904)

Choose your socks by their color and your friends by their character. Choosing your socks by their character makes no sense. Choosing your friends by their color is unthinkable.

-- Gary Oldman

People don't get along because they fear each other. People fear each other because they don't know each other. They don't know each other because they have not properly communicated with each other.

-- Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Segregation is the offspring of an illicit intercourse between injustice and immorality.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

There is good taste in humor like there is good taste in clothes or furniture. It is okay for one Irishman to call another Irishman anything, any kind of name. But if you are not an Irishman, keep the mouth shut. The same with all people.

--Fanny Brice

In our differences we grow; in our sameness we connect.

--Virginia Satir

The best things and the best people rise out of their separateness; I'm against a homogenized society because I want the cream to rise.

--Robert Frost

Freedom is not something that anybody can be given. Freedom is something people take, and people are as free as they want to be.

--James Baldwin

It isn't a matter of black is beautiful as much as it is white is not all that's beautiful.

--Bill Cosby

We did not all come over on the same ship, but we are all in the same boat.

--Bernard Baruch

If you can show me how I can cling to that which is real to me, while teaching me a way into the larger society, then and only then will I drop my defenses and my hostility, and I will sing your praises and help you to make the desert bear fruit.

--Ralph Ellison
(1913-1994)

Passion is not friendly. It is arrogant, superbly contemptuous of all that is not itself, and, as the very definition of passion implies the impulse to freedom, it has a mighty intimidating power. It contains a challenge. It contains an unspeakable hope.

--James Baldwin

Conspicuous consumption...is not an unambiguous signal of personal affluence. It's a sign of belonging to a relatively poor group. Visible luxury thus serves less to establish the owner's positive status as affluent than to fend off the negative perception that the owner is poor. The richer a society or peer group, the less important visible spending becomes.

--Virginia Postrel

When you educate a black man, you empower families, you empower sons and daughters, and you change generations.

--Tyler Perry

Visible consumption lets individuals show strangers they aren't poor. Since strangers tend to lump people together by race, the lower your racial group's income, the more valuable it is to demonstrate your personal buying power.

--Virginia Postrel

We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Both whites and blacks agree that racial stereotyping still occurs in America, and emphatic majorities of both whites and blacks believe America is divided on the basis of race.

--Tina Brown, (2012)

The core gay experience throughout history has been displacement, a sense of belonging and yet not belonging. Gays are born mostly into heterosexual families and discover as they grow up that, for some reason, they will never be able to have a marriage like their parents' or their siblings'. They know this before they can tell anyone else, even their parents. This sense of subtle alienation—of loving your own family while feeling excluded from it—is something all gay children learn. They sense something inchoate, a separateness from their peers, a subtle estrangement from their families, the first sharp pangs of shame.

--Andrew Sullivan

This is the gay experience: the discovery in adulthood of a community not like your own home and the struggle to belong in both places, without displacement, without alienation.

--Andrew Sullivan

The point of the gay-rights movement, after all, is not about helping people be gay. It is about creating the space for people to be themselves.

--Andrew Sullivan

A black man can't be president in America, given the racial aversion and history that's still out there. However, an extraordinary, gifted, and talented young man who happens to be black can be president.

--Cornell Belcher

Barack Obama governs a nation enlightened enough to send an African American to the White House, but not enlightened enough to accept a black man as its president.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Before Barack Obama, the 'black president' lived in the African American imagination as a kind of cosmic joke, a phantom of all that could ever be. White folks, whatever their talk of freedom and liberty, would not allow a black president. They could not tolerate Emmett's boyish gaze. Dr. King turned the other cheek, and they blew it off. White folks shot Lincoln over 'nigger equality,' ran Ida Wells out of Memphis, beat Freedom Riders over bus seats, slaughtered Medgar in his driveway like a dog.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

The first black president would need a 'Vice President Santiago'—because the only thing that would ensure his life in the White House was a Hispanic president-in-waiting.

--Dave Chappelle

The peculiar qualities which should characterize any people who are fit to decide upon the management of public affairs for a great state have seldom been combined. It is the glory of white men to know that they have had these qualities in sufficient measure to build upon this continent a great political fabric and to preserve its stability for more than ninety years, while in every other part of the world all similar experiments have failed. But if anything can be proved by known facts, if all reasoning upon evidence is not abandoned, it must be acknowledged that in the progress of nations Negroes have shown less capacity for government than any other race of people. No independent government of any form has ever been successful in their hands. On the contrary, wherever they have been left to their own devices they have shown a constant tendency to relapse into barbarism.

--Andrew Johnson
(1808-1875)

I am a typical American, a southerner, and 27 years of age...I am loyal to my country and know but reverence to her flag, BUT I shall never submit to fight beneath that banner with a negro by my side. Rather I should die a thousand times, and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throw back to the blackest specimen from the wilds.

--U.S. Senator Robert
Byrd, (1944)

The central question that emerges—and it is not a parliamentary question or a question that is answered by merely consulting a catalog of the rights of American citizens, born Equal—is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes—the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race.

--William F. Buckley, Jr.,
(1957)

No other factor, in fact, came close to dividing the Democratic primary electorate as powerfully as their feelings about African Americans. The impact of racial attitudes on individual vote decisions...was so strong that it appears to have even outstripped the substantive impact of racial attitudes on Jesse Jackson's more racially charged campaign for the nomination in 1988.

--Michael Tesler and
David Sears on the
2008 Democratic
Primary

After Obama won, the longed-for post-racial moment did not arrive; on the contrary, racism intensified.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

They act like they don't love their country
No
What it is
Is they found out
Their country don't love them.

--Lucille Clifton

When our laws, our leaders, or our government are out of alignment with our ideals, then the dissent of ordinary Americans may prove to be one of the truest expressions of patriotism.

--Barack Obama

It was only once America was well and truly bankrupted that the presidency went to a black man.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Why are so many Asian kids good at math and achieve so much?...It's not genetic, it's not in the rice! It's about hard work.

--Amy Chua

70 percent of black women are unmarried, and they are more than twice as likely as white women to remain that way.

--Kate Bolick

When you're writing about black people, white people may assume it's unconnected to them. But the reality is that what's happened to the black family is already beginning to happen to the white family. In 1950, 64 percent of African American women were married—roughly the same percentage as white women. By 1965, African American marriage rates had declined precipitously....Black marriage rates have fallen drastically in the years since—but then, so have white marriage rates....In 1965, fewer than 25 percent of black children were born out of wedlock; in 2011, considerably more than 25 percent of white children are....Just as the decline of marriage in the black underclass augured the decline of marriage in the white underclass, the decline of marriage in the black middle class has prefigured the decline of marriage in the white middle class.

--Kate Bolick

If you're a successful black man in New York City, one of the most appealing and sought-after men around, your options are plentiful. Why marry if you don't have to? If you have four quality women you're dating and they're in a rotation, who's going to rush into a marriage?

--Ralph Richard Banks

Successful black men have taken these stupid statistics about us to heart and are having the time of their lives. They do not hold themselves accountable to anybody for anything, and they're getting away with murder...They lie to us without a conscience; they fuck as many of us at a time as they want to.

--Terry McMillan

Trite as it may seem, the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, was the first public assertion of human equality as a legitimate rationale for political action. The Declaration would eventually eat away at the formal barriers of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and any other differences that human beings have created to hold some down and raise others up.

--Anne-Marie Slaughter

Black women who do marry are more likely than any other group of women to ‘marry down.’

--Kate Bolick

We know that too many young men in our community continue to make bad choices. Growing up, I made a few myself. And I have to confess, sometimes I wrote off my own failings as just another example of the world trying to keep a black man down. But one of the things you’ve learned over the last four years is that there’s no longer any room for excuses. I understand that there’s a common fraternity creed here at Morehouse: ‘excuses are tools of the incompetent, used to build bridges to nowhere and monuments of nothingness.’ We’ve got no time for excuses – not because the bitter legacies of slavery and segregation have vanished entirely; they haven’t. Not because racism and discrimination no longer exist; that’s still out there. It’s just that in today’s hyperconnected, hypercompetitive world, with a billion young people from China and India and Brazil entering the global workforce alongside you, nobody is going to give you anything you haven’t earned. And whatever hardships you may experience because of your race, they pale in comparison to the hardships previous generations endured – and overcame.

You now hail from a lineage and legacy of immeasurably strong men – men who bore tremendous burdens and still laid the stones for the path on which we now walk. You wear the mantle of Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, Ralph Bunche and Langston Hughes, George Washington Carver and Ralph Abernathy, Thurgood Marshall and yes, Dr. King. These men were many things to many people. They knew full well the role that racism played in their lives. But when it came to their own accomplishments and sense of purpose, they had no time for excuses.

--Barack Obama

I was raised by a heroic single mother and wonderful grandparents who made incredible sacrifices for me. And I know there are moms and grandparents here today who did the same thing for all of you. But I still wish I had a father who was not only present, but involved. And so my whole life, I’ve tried to be for Michelle and my girls what my father wasn’t for my mother and me. I’ve tried to be a better husband, a better father, and a better man.

It’s hard work that demands your constant attention, and frequent sacrifice. And Michelle will be the first to tell you that I’m not perfect. Even now, I’m still learning how to be the best husband and father I can be. Because success in everything else is unfulfilling if we fail at family. I know that when I’m on my deathbed someday, I won’t be thinking about any particular legislation I passed, or policy I promoted; I won’t be thinking about the speech I gave, or the Nobel Prize I received. I’ll be thinking about a walk I took with my daughters. A lazy afternoon with my wife. Whether I did right by all of them.

Be a good role model and set a good example for that young brother coming up. If you know someone who isn't on point, go back and bring that brother along. The brothers who have been left behind – who haven't had the same opportunities we have – they need to hear from us. We've got to be in the barbershops with them, at church with them, spending time and energy and presence helping pull them up, exposing them to new opportunities, and supporting their dreams. We have to teach them what it means to be a man – to serve your city like Maynard Jackson; to shape the culture like Spike Lee. Chester Davenport was one of the first people to integrate the University of Georgia law school. When he got there, no one would sit next to him in class. But Chester didn't mind. Later on, he said, 'It was the thing for me to do. Someone needed to be the first.' Today, Chester is here celebrating his 50th reunion. If you've had role models, fathers, brothers like that – thank them today. If you haven't, commit yourself to being that man for someone else.

--Barack Obama

It is not just African-Americans who feel belittled and injured. No, the desire to understand what happened, to comprehend, to inform, to ingest what we know to be right has finally spread to people of all different backgrounds and beliefs.

--Maya Angelou

Any meaningful action on the topic of race must begin with forgiveness. Once we forgive, we can encourage the majority population to walk in our shoes—the shoes of a black mothers, a black father, a black son, a black daughter. But first, we have to forgive.

--John Lewis

Blacks were systematically dehumanized for hundreds of years, a practice that had unique social and psychological effects on men. They were worked and whipped in fields like cattle. Any semblance of pride, any cry for justice, any measure of genuine manhood was tortured, beaten, or sold out of them. Marriage was strictly prohibited. Most were forbidden from learning to read and write. The wealth derived from their labor—the massive wealth derived from cotton, our chief export throughout much of the 19th and early 20th centuries—was channeled elsewhere. But because slavery ended 150 years ago, we often assume that this dehumanization is ancient history. It is not.

--Joshua DuBois

The war on drugs had created a permanent under-caste of men convicted of drug offenses. Men who, even after their release from incarceration for relatively minor crimes, would never again be able to navigate the world on equal footing with the rest of us.

--Joshua DuBois

Because slavery ended 150 years ago, we often assume that this dehumanization is ancient history. It is not. Blacks were kept in virtual bondage through JimCrow laws, sharecropping, and quite often, a form of quasi-slavery called peonage, which endured well into the middle of the 20th century. Here's how it worked; black men (it was usually men) were arrested for petty crimes or no crimes at all; 'selling cotton after sunset' was a favorite charge. They were then assessed a steep fine. If they could not pay, they were imprisoned for long sentences and forced to work for free. This allowed savvy industrialists to replace thousands of slaves with thousands of convicts....This practice endured until 1948, when the federal criminal code was rewritten to helpfully clarify that the law forbade involuntary servitude.

--Joshua DuBois

There are more African-Americans in the corrections system today—in prison or on probation or parole—than there were enslaved in 1850. As of 2004, more black men were denied the right to vote because of a criminal record than in 1870, when the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified, giving blacks the right to vote. In the three decades since the war on drugs began, the U.S. prison population has exploded from 300,000 to more than 2 million people, giving our country the highest incarceration rate in the world—higher than Russia, China, and other regimes we consider repressive.

--Joshua DuBois

Black men are the most incarcerated people on the planet...warehoused in prison for nonviolent crimes that two decades ago would have resulted in little to no jail time.

--Ben Jealous

Overly harsh discipline and suspension marginalizes, stigmatizes, and criminalizes these boys. When an African-American male in eighth grade has defiant behavior in the classroom, it's like seeing a burn on their body; we need to treat their behavior as evidence of a problem to be solved rather than a kid to lock up.

--Robert Ross

If there's one thing that's missing in our country, it's an acknowledgment of the broad humanity of black folks. Racism—and anti-black racism in particular—is the belief that there's something wrong with black people...and I mean something in our bones. In our own community, we've internalized this. We wonder if we lack moral courage. I want the country to understand that there's nothing wrong with us. Things have happened in this country, but there's nothing wrong with us.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Whatever success I have achieved, whatever positions of leadership I have held have depended less on Ivy League degrees or SAT scores or GPAs, and have instead been due to that sense of connection and empathy—the special obligation I felt, as a black man, to help those who need it most, people who didn't have the opportunities that I had. Because there but for the grace of God go I. I might have been in prison. I might have been unemployed. I might not have been able to support a family. And that motivates me.

--Barack Obama

Some folks hate the Whites who hate the Blacks who hate the Klan.
Most of us hate anything that we don't understand.

--Kris Kristofferson

If physical death is the price that I must pay to free my white brothers and sisters from a permanent death of the spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Destroy racism: Be like a panda—he's black, he's white, he's Asian, and he's chubby.

—Internet Meme

American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it.

--James A. Baldwin

We all have the stereotype of the Asian American immigrant who is successful, who becomes a doctor or a lawyer....There are ones who are left behind, the people who are invisible to us—the dishwashers and the taxi drivers and the pizza delivery guy—they have their dreams and their hopes and their struggles as well.

--Jean Kwok

Being a star has made it possible for me to get insulted in places where the average Negro could never hope to go and get insulted.

--Sammy Davis, Jr.

You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.

--Malcolm X

One puts on black robes to scare the hell out of white people, while the other puts on white robes to scare the hell out of blacks.

--Mo Udall

Alabama joined other southern states in passing laws allowing or requiring school boards to shut schools to avoid having even a handful of black children sit in classrooms with white ones. Some states helped fund the all-white academies popping up across the South. State officials encouraged white parents to remove their children from public schools, helping to set off the white flight that continues to plague school systems today. Two years after the Brown ruling, not a single black child attended school with white children in eight of the 11 former Confederate states, including Alabama.

--Nikole Hannah-Jones

Black Americans who attended schools integrated by court order were more likely to graduate, go on to college, and earn a degree than black Americans who attended segregated schools. They made more money: five years of integrated schooling increased the earnings of black adults by 15 percent. They were significantly less likely to spend time in jail. They were healthier.

--Nikole Hannah-Jones

Black progress did not come at the expense of white Americans—white students in integrated schools did just as well academically as those in segregated schools. Other studies have found that attending integrated schools made white students more likely to later live in integrated neighborhoods and send their own children to racially diverse schools.

--Nikole Hannah-Jones

American prosperity was built on two and a half centuries of slavery, a deep wound that has never been healed or fully atoned for—and that has been deepened by years of discrimination, segregation, and racist housing policies that persist to this day. Until America reckons with the moral debt it has accrued and the practical damage it has done to generations of black Americans, it will fail to live up to its own ideals.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Black families, regardless of income, are significantly less wealthy than white families. The Pew Research Center estimates that white households are worth roughly 20 times as much as black households, and that whereas only 15 percent of whites have zero or negative wealth, more than a third of blacks do. Effectively, the black family in America is working without a safety net. When financial calamity strikes—a medical emergency, divorce, job loss—the fall is precipitous.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Having been enslaved for 250 years, black people were not left to their own devices. They were terrorized. In the Deep south, a second slavery ruled. In the North, legislatures, mayors, civic associations, banks, and citizens all colluded to pin black people into ghettos, where they were overcrowded, overcharged, and undereducated. Businesses discriminated against them, awarding them the worst jobs and the worst wages. Police brutalized them in the streets. And the notion that black lives, black bodies, and black wealth were rightful targets remained deeply rooted in the broader society.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

The wealth accorded America by slavery was not just in what the slaves pulled from the land but in the slaves themselves. 'In 1860, slaves as an asset were worth more than all of America's manufacturing, all of the railroads, all of the productive capacity of the United States put together,' the Yale historian David W. Blight has noted. 'Slaves were the single largest, by far, financial asset of property in the entire American economy. The sale of these slaves—in whose bodies that money congealed,' writes Walter Johnson, a Harvard historian—generated even more ancillary wealth. Loans were taken out for purchase, to be repaid with interest. Insurance policies were drafted against the untimely death of a slave and the loss of potential profits. Slave sales were taxed and notarized. The vending of the black body and the sundering of the black family became an economy unto themselves, estimated to have brought in tens of millions of dollars to antebellum America. In 1860 there were more millionaires per capita in the Mississippi Valley than anywhere else in the country.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

The consequences of 250 years of enslavement, of war upon black families and black people, were profound. Like homeownership today, slave ownership was aspirational, attracting not just those who owned slaves but those who wished to. Much as homeowners today might discuss the addition of a patio or the painting of a living room, slaveholders traded tips on the best methods for breeding workers, exacting labor, and doling out punishment. Just as a homeowner today might subscribe to a magazine like *This Old House*, slaveholders had journals such as *De Bow's Review*, which recommended the best practices for wringing profits from slaves. By the dawn of the Civil War, the enslavement of black America was thought to be so foundational to the country that those who sought to end it were branded heretics worthy of death. Imagine what would happen if a president today came out in favor of taking all American homes from their owners: the reaction might well be violent.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Poor black people do not work their way out of the ghetto—and those who do often face the horror of watching their children and grandchildren tumble back.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

This country was formed for the white, not for the black man. And looking upon African slavery from the same standpoint held by those noble framers of our Constitution, I for one have ever considered it one of the greatest blessings (both for themselves and us) that God ever bestowed upon a favored nation.

--John Wilkes Booth
(1838-1865)

Negro poverty is not white poverty. Many of its causes and many of its cures are the same. But there are differences—deep, corrosive, obstinate differences—radiating painful roots into the community and into the family, and the nature of the individual. These differences are not racial differences. They are solely and simply the consequence of ancient brutality, past injustice, and present prejudice.

--Lyndon Baines Johnson

When they told me my new-born babe was a girl, my heart was heavier than it had ever been before. Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women.

--Harriet Ann Jacobs
(1813-1897)

One man cannot hold another man down in the ditch without remaining down in the ditch with him.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

One consequence of racism and segregation is that many American whites know little or nothing about the daily lives of African Americans. Black America's least-understood communities are those poor, hyper-segregated places we once called ghettos. These neighborhoods are not far away, but they might as well be on the moon. The only news most people ever hear about the inner city comes from grim headlines; the only residents they can name are characters on *The Wire*. Of course, ignorance of a community doesn't stop outsiders from having opinions about it or passing laws that govern it. But those opinions, based on stereotypes and catchphrases, make it difficult to conduct meaningful public deliberation about social policy. And the laws, all too often, harm people who have enough going against them already.

—James Forman Jr.

That all men are equal is a proposition to which, at ordinary times, no sane human being has ever given his assent.

—Aldous Huxley

Once you begin to explain or excuse all events on racial grounds, you begin to indulge in the perilous mythology of race.

—James Earl

To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

The poor prey on one another because their lives offer no hope and communicate the tragic message to these human beings that they have no possibility to attain a decent standard of living.

—Thabo Mbeki

As in the rankest soil the most beautiful flowers are grown, so in the dark soil of poverty the choicest flowers of humanity have developed and bloomed.

—James Allen

Race hate isn't human nature; race hate is the abandonment of human nature.

—Orson Welles

You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.

—Harper Lee

Children growing up poor and black in the city are more likely to witness gun violence and street drug sales than their middle-class peers are. Once teens, they are more likely to attract the suspicion of the police, to be arrested if they break the law, to spend their lives behind bars, and to die young. If they make a mistake—fall in with the wrong crowd, antagonize the wrong adults, drop out of school—they are less likely to get a second chance. One study found, for instance, that marijuana use among whites is slightly higher than among blacks, yet blacks are arrested for it nearly four times as often.

—Sarah Carr

I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.

—James A. Baldwin

Written laws are like spider's webs; they will catch, it is true, the weak and the poor, but would be torn in pieces by the rich and powerful.

—Anacharsis
(6th Century B.C.)

The way to kill a man or a nation is to cut off his dreams, the way the whites are taking care of the Indians: killing their dreams, their magic, their familiar spirits.

—William S. Burroughs

As another has well said, to handicap a student by teaching him that his black face is a curse and that his struggle to change his condition is hopeless is the worst sort of lynching.

—Carter G. Woodson
(1875-1950)

He was jazz in motion, and, of course, jazz is improvisation, swing and the blues. Malcolm X had all three of those things. He could be lyrical and funny and, the next moment, he'd shift and be serious and push you against the wall. The way he spoke had a swing to it, had a rhythm to it. It was a call and response with the audience that you get with jazz musicians. And he was the blues. Blues is associated with catastrophe. From the very beginning, from slavery to Jim Crow, that sense of catastrophe, of urgency, of needing to get it out, to cry out, to shout, somehow allowed that fire inside of his bones to be pressed with power and with vision. He never lost that.

—Cornel West

You can't talk about one without the other—Malcolm X without Martin Luther King. For me, Malcolm had a revolutionary fire that Martin didn't have initially; Martin had a moral fire from the very beginning that Malcolm didn't get until later. Malcolm's love for black people was so strong and so intense that early on it led him to call white folk devils and give up on them, and I think he was wrong about that. Martin never did that. But Martin didn't have the revolutionary fire that Malcolm had until the very end of his life.

—Cornel West

What do you think you would do after 400 years of slavery and Jim Crow and lynching? Do you think you would respond nonviolently? What's your history like? Let's look at how you have responded when you were oppressed. George Washington—revolutionary guerrilla fighter!

—Malcolm X

A decade before the Civil War, the leading Southern periodical *De Bow's Review* published a series titled 'Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race'—a much-needed study, the editors opined, given its 'direct and practical bearing' upon 3 million people whose value the distinguished New Orleans physician Samuel Adolphus Cartwright, described in precise anatomical terms the reasons for African Americans' supposed laziness ('deficiency of red blood in the pulmonary and arterial systems'), love of dancing ('profuse distribution of nervous matter to the stomach, liver and genital organs'), and exceptional dislike of being whipped ('skin...as sensitive, when they are in perfect health, as that of children').

—Adam Goodheart

We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet.

—E. M. Forster

Let me tell you why we civil rights workers were so against the war: The federal government was not providing any protection of democracy in Mississippi, yet it told us we had to go 10,000 miles away to protect democracy in Southeast Asia. We weren't buying it.

—Miriam Cohen
Glickman

I believe in the beauty of diversity, but I don't believe in the melting pot. I believe in the stew pot. In the melting pot you lose your identity. In the stew pot, you're the potato, I'm the carrots, and everyone knows who they are.

—Rhigel Tan

Riot is the language of the unheard.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

I'm not interested in trying to work on people's perceptions. I am who I am, and if you don't take the time to learn about that, then your perception is going to be your problem.

—Jim Brown

The native American has been generally despised by his white conquerors for his poverty and simplicity.

—Charles Eastman
(1858-1939)

Accomplishments have no color.

—Leontyne Price

People don't have any idea of how deeply segregated our schools have become all over again.

—Jonathan Kozol

We like to think of college as a meritocracy, a place where only the dedicated and smart survive. But it seems to be something else. Between 1970 and 2012, the proportion of American 24-year-olds who came from affluent families and had a bachelor's degree rose from 40 percent to 73 percent—quite an enlightenment period for privileged kids. But over the same period, the proportion of American 24-year-olds who came from low-income families and had a bachelor's degree rose from 6 percent to just 8 percent. The country's uneven public-school systems cannot be blamed entirely for this state of affairs. Too many people come to college unprepared academically, it's true. But even those low-income students who outperform their affluent peers on tests are less likely to graduate from college.

—Amanda Ripley

Income inequality started increasing in 1983, and 70 percent of that inequality is derived from differences in access to higher education. It is both a fountain of opportunity and a bastion of privilege. The problem has gotten worse and worse and worse.

—Anthony P. Carnevale

I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of Negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we begin by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it 'all men are created equal, except Negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal, except Negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics.' When it comes to this, I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty.

—Abraham Lincoln
(1809-1865)

Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Martin Luther King said, and it is sadly still true, that one of the most segregated times in America is the hour of worship.

—Barney Frank

‘One drop of blood does it,’ he said, reviewing the computation: 25 percent black plus 37.5 percent Irish plus 25 percent French plus 12.5 percent Choctaw equals 100 percent black. ‘I suppose I could claim to be Irish, but who wants to stand there and argue the point every time? So I’m black.’

—Ward Connerly

The heirs of slaveholders could never directly acknowledge our beauty or reckon with its power. And so the beauty of the black body was never celebrated in movies, on television shows, or in the textbooks I’d seen as a child. Everyone of any import, from Jesus to George Washington, was white.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body—it is heritage. Enslavement was not merely the antiseptic borrowing of labor—it is not so easy to get a human being to commit his body against its own elemental interest. And so enslavement must be casual wrath and random mangleings, the gashing of heads and brains blown out over the river as the body seeks to escape. It must be rape so regular as to be industrial. There is no uplifting way to say this. I have no praise anthems, nor old Negro spirituals. The spirit and soul are the body and brain, which are destructible—that is precisely why they are so precious. And the soul did not escape. The spirit did not steal away on gospel wings. The soul was the body that fed the tobacco, and the spirit was the blood that watered the cotton, and these created the first fruits of the American garden. And the fruits were secured through the bashing of children with stovewood, through hot iron peeling skin away like husk from corn.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

To be black in the Baltimore of my youth was to be naked before the elements of the world, before all the guns, fists, knives, crack, rape, and disease. The law did not protect us.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Enslavement is not a parable. It is damnation. It is the never-ending night. And the length of that night is most of our history. Never forget that we were enslaved in this country longer than we have been free. Never forget that for 250 years black people were born into chains—whole generations followed by more generations who knew nothing but chains.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

You must resist the common urge toward the comforting narrative of divine law, toward fairy tales that imply some irrepressible justice. The enslaved were not bricks in your road, and their lives were not chapters in your redemptive history. They were people turned to fuel for the American machine. Enslavement was not destined to end, and it is wrong to claim our present circumstance—no matter how improved—as the redemption for the lives of people who never asked for the posthumous, untouchable glory of dying for their children.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

You are a black boy, and you must be responsible for your body in a way that other boys cannot know. Indeed, you must be responsible for the worst actions of other black bodies, which, somehow, will always be assigned to you. And you must be responsible for the bodies of the powerful—the policeman who cracks you with a nightstick will quickly find his excuse in your furtive movements. You have to make your peace with the chaos, but you cannot lie. You cannot forget how much they took from us and how they transfigured our very bodies into sugar, tobacco, cotton, and gold.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Urban renewal = Negro removal.

—James Baldwin

You might as well expect rivers to run backwards as any man born free to be contented penned up.

--Chief Joseph
(1840-1904)

Oppression can only survive through silence.

—Carmen de Monteflores

The hospitality of the wigwam is only limited by the institution of war.

—Charles Eastman
(1858-1939)

Be nice to whites; they need you to rediscover their humanity.

—Desmond Tutu

The people made worse off by slavery were those who were enslaved. Their descendants would have been worse off today if born in Africa instead of America. Put differently, the terrible fate of their ancestors benefitted them.

—Thomas Sowell

We beg you to save young America from the blight of race prejudice. Do not bind the children within the narrow circles of your own lives.

—Charles Hamilton
Houston

The true worth of a race must be measured by the character of its womanhood.

--Mary McLeod Bethune
(1875-1955)

Martin Luther King's great contribution to the civil rights movement—and it's not surprising because he was a theologian—is that he took the Christian story of redemption and put it right on top of the movement. He transformed it into a redemptive act: White America, particularly the white South, embraced the sin of racism. African Americans walked into the face of that sin. They confronted that sin. They took that sin on their shoulders. They suffered for that sin. They died for that sin. And by that act they redeemed the soul of America.

—Kevin Boyle

Segregation had become so deeply entrenched in urban America it couldn't be uprooted, no matter what the law said.

—Kevin Boyle

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.

--Martin Luther
King, Jr.

There's an official measure of segregation that the *U.S. Census Bureau* does once every 10 years in metropolitan areas with more than 500,000 people. It's called the Index of Dissimilarity. That measure says on a scale of 0 to 100 what percentage of African Americans would have to move in order to make the entire metropolitan area actually integrated. If you get 100 on this scale, you are completely segregated. If you get zero, you are completely integrated.

According to the last measurement, in 2010, the most segregated metropolitan area in the country is Milwaukee. Eighty percent of African Americans in Milwaukee would have to move [to make the city completely integrated]. That's one step away from apartheid!

So the level of segregation in the United States, physical separation in American metropolitan areas, is absolutely through the roof. And it's all better than it was 10 years ago but not by a heck of a lot.

—Kevin Boyle

In the '20s you had white people saying, 'Look, I don't want black people living next to me.' The thing is that, even in the '20s, not all whites were that racist. But the forces of the marketplace came in, and realtors said, 'Look, if a black family wants to see a house in a white neighborhood, we won't show it to them.' Banks started to say, 'If African Americans want to buy in a white neighborhood, we won't loan to them.' So you had this racism that some white people felt, and then you combined it with these forces of the marketplace and you institutionalized it.

I really believe that whites are much less racist than they used to be. but those forces of the marketplace still sit there, though most of them are illegal now. The challenge is to try to break those structures.

—Kevin Boyle

Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of star. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction...The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars—must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

--Martin Luther
King, Jr.

The Statue of Liberty is no longer saying, 'Give me your poor, your tired, your huddled masses.' She's got a baseball bat and yelling, 'You want a piece of me?'

—Robin Williams

HATE: It has caused a lot of problems in this world, but it has not solved one yet.
—Maya Angelou

This country has socialism for the rich and rugged individualism for the poor.
--Martin Luther
King, Jr.

I never doubted my ability, but when you hear all your life you're inferior, it makes you wonder if the other guys have something you've never seen before. If they do, I'm still looking for it.

—Hank Aaron

The hate and scorn showered on us Negro officers by our fellow Americans convinced me that there was no sense in my dying for a world ruled by them. I made up my mind that if I got through this war I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back.

—Charles Hamilton
Houston
(1895-1950)

I still find 'Negro' a word of wonders, glorious and terrible. A word for runaway slave posters and civil rights proclamations; for social constructs and street corner flaunts. A tonal-language word whose meaning shifts as setting and context shift, as history twists, lurches, advances, and stagnates. As capital letters appear to enhance its dignity, as other nomenclatures arise to challenge its primacy.... 'Negro' dominated our history for so long; because I lived with its meanings and intimations for so long; because they were essential to my first discoveries of what race meant, or, as we now say, how race was constructed.

—Margo Jefferson

That the Negro American has survived at all is extraordinary—a lesser people might simply have died out, as indeed others have...But it may not be supposed that the Negro American community has not paid a fearful price for the incredible mistreatment to which it has been subjected over the past three centuries.

—Daniel Moynihan in
*The Negro Family:
The Case for
National Action,*
(1965)

In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well.

—Daniel Moynihan in
*The Negro Family:
The Case for
National Action,*
(1965)

In a word, most Negro youth are in danger of being caught up in the tangle of pathology that affects their world, and probably a majority are so entrapped. Many of those who escape do so for one generation only: as things now are, their children may have to run the gauntlet all over again. That is not the least vicious aspect of the world that white America has made for the Negro.

—Daniel Moynihan in
*The Negro Family:
The Case for
National Action,*
(1965)

For this, most of all, white America must accept responsibility. Family breakdown flows from centuries of oppression and persecution of the Negro man. It flows from the long years of degradation and discrimination, which have attacked his dignity and assaulted his ability to produce for his family.

—Lyndon Johnson

Prison is no longer a rare or extreme event among our nation's most marginalized groups. Rather it has now become a normal and anticipated marker in the transition to adulthood.

—Devah Pager

By 2000, more than 1 million black children had a father in jail or prison—and roughly half of those fathers were living in the same household as their kids when they were locked up. Paternal incarceration is associated with behavior problems and delinquency, especially among boys.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Ex-offenders are excluded from a wide variety of jobs, running the gamut from septic-tank cleaner to barber to real-estate agent, depending on the state. And in the limited job pool that ex-offenders can swim in, blacks and whites are not equal. For her research, Devah Pager pulled together four testers to pose as men looking for low-wage work. One white man and one black man would pose as job seekers without a criminal record, and another black man and white man would pose as job seekers with a criminal record. The negative credential of prison impaired the employment efforts of both the black man and the white man, but it impaired those of the black man more. Startlingly, the effect was not limited to the black man with a criminal record. The black man without a criminal record fared worse than the white man with one.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Many jurisdictions made slaves into ‘criminals’ by prohibiting them from pursuing a wide range of activities that whites were typically free to pursue. Among these activities were: learning to read, leaving their masters’ property without a proper pass, engaging in ‘unbecoming’ conduct in the presence of a white female, assembling to worship outside the supervisory presence of a white person, neglecting to step out of the way when a white person approached on a walkway, smoking in public, walking with a cane, making loud noises, or defending themselves from assaults.

—Randall Kennedy

The first and greatest step toward the settlement of the present friction between the races—commonly called the Negro problem—lies in the correction of the immorality, crime, and laziness among the Negroes themselves, which still remains as a heritage from slavery.

—W. E. B. Du Bois,
(1897)

There still remain enough well authenticated cases of brutal assault on women by black men in America to make every Negro bow his head in shame. This crime must at all hazards stop. Lynching is awful, and injustice and caste are hard to bear; but if they are to be successfully attacked they must cease to have even this terrible justification.

—W. E. B. Du Bois,
(1904)

It is not enough for ninety-five out of every hundred Negroes to be lawful. The ninety-five must band themselves together to restrain or suppress the vicious five.

—Kelly Miller, (1899)

I appear before you this evening as a thief and a robber. I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my master, and ran off with them.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

The blacks incarcerated in this country are not like the majority of Americans. They do not merely hail from poor communities—they hail from communities that have been imperiled across both the deep and immediate past, and continue to be imperiled today. Peril is generational for black people in America—and incarceration is our current mechanism for ensuring that the peril continues. Incarceration pushes you out of the job market. Incarceration disqualifies you from feeding your family with food stamps. Incarceration allows for housing discrimination based on a criminal-background check. Incarceration increases your risk of homelessness. Incarceration increases your chances of being incarcerated again.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

The Negro poor having become more openly violent—especially in the form of the rioting of the mid 1960's—they have given the black middle class an incomparable weapon with which to threaten white America. This has been for many an altogether intoxicating experience. 'Do this or the cities will burn.'...What building contracts and police graft were to the 19th-century urban Irish, the welfare department, Head Start, and Black Studies programs will be to the coming generation of Negroes. They are of course very wise in this respect.

—Daniel Patrick
Moynihan (1965)

A student, teacher, or counselor would look around to make sure no one was listening and then whisper a story about an Asian kid being punished or even kicked out of the house for a night after getting a B or failing to get into Stanford. I'd heard how new East Asian immigrant parents mistakenly transposed the reality of education in, say, China or Korea, which is that how you do on a single test can determine your entire future.

—Hanna Rosin

Some Asian kids did face intense pressure from their parents, on top of a cultural stigma against seeking help for mental-health issues.

—Hanna Rosin

Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand.

--Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

I had been pushed around all my life and felt at this moment that I couldn't take it any more...There is just so much oppression one can take.

—Rosa Parks

Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Some Americans need hyphens in their names because only part of them has come over.

—Woodrow Wilson
(1856-1924)

The settlers in New England fought the Indians without ever feeling that they were wrong in doing so. The Indians were not Christians, and therefore not really human in the eyes of the settlers. The Indians were pagans to be converted, pushed aside, and, eventually, exterminated.

—Isaac Asimov

The Pilgrims landed, worthy men,
And saved from wreck on raging seas,
They fell upon their knees, and then
Upon the Aborigines.

—Arthur Guiterman
(1871-1943)

Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

There was one population shut out from the newspaper boom, though: blacks. During slavery, American newspapers ignored blacks, except when they ran wild tales claiming they had poisoned their owners or committed burglaries. (Sections devoted to them were given names like ‘The Proceedings of the Rebellious Negroes.’) By 1827, a group of freed blacks decided to found their own newspaper, *Freedom’s Journal*. ‘We wish to plead our own cause,’ they wrote in their first issue. ‘Too long have others spoken for us.’ The black press was born, and soon there were dozens of black papers dotted across the country.

Getting their papers out required seat-of-the-pants ingenuity, even at the turn of the 20th century, because whites were often hostile to this upstart media. When Robert Abbott started the *Chicago Defender* in 1905, he found it hard to distribute in the South. ‘Once they realized it was out there, they tried to censor it—they’d arrest you if they saw you reading it, using vagrancy laws,’ says Clint C. Wilson II, a journalism professor emeritus at Howard University, and shipments of the paper were thrown in the trash.

—Clive Thompson

It is better that some should be unhappy, then that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality.

—Samuel Johnson
(1709-1784)

Equality in society beats inequality, whether the latter be the British-aristocratic sort or of the domestic-slavery sort.

—Abraham Lincoln
(1809-1865)

Our approach to social problems is to decrease their visibility: out of sight, out of mind. This is the real foundation of racial segregation, especially in its most extreme case, the Indian ‘reservation.’ Result of our social effort has been to remove the underlying problems of our society farther and farther from the daily experience and daily consciousness, and hence to decrease, in the mass of the population, the knowledge, skill, resources and motivation necessary to deal with them.

—Philip Slater

We were never fighting for the right to integrate, we were fighting against white supremacy. We must dismiss the fallacious notion that white people can give anybody his freedom. A man is born free.

—Stokely Carmichael

I encouraged people like me, who were eager to elect the first black president of the United States, to talk to their loved ones....A woman who called me was one of the brave souls who took me up on it. In a trembling voice, she told me she had finally told her beloved father, 'Stop.'

I described our conversation in an essay for *The Nation* the day after the election: 'He said he wouldn't vote for a black man,' she told me. 'And I held up my hand and said, Daddy, stop.'

She said it was the first time in her forty-six years that she had stood up to her father, and that her knees were trembling after she did it. When I asked her what happened next, she laughed.

'Well, after he got over the shock, we talked. And we're still talking. I don't know if he's going to vote for Obama, but at least he understands now why I will.'

Eight years later, I still think about that woman because of the peace she described washing over her after she had stood up for what was right. There's nothing like it, and there's only one way to find out....Multiply you by millions, I say.

—Connie Schultz

Will dissent be permitted? The answer to that question will determine whether the society is a free society or a fear society.

—Natan Sharansky

To be black and conscious in America is to be in a constant state of rage.

—Eldridge Cleaver

None of you white people in the audience would change places with me, and I'm rich.

—Chris Rock

The opposite of love is not hate; it is indifference.

—Elie Wiesel

I'd learned a lot in the Army. I knew that above all things in the world I had to become so big, so strong that people and their hatred could never touch me.

—Sammy Davis, Jr.

Prejudice is ignorance.

—Michael Jackson

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.

—Malcolm X

Equal rights cannot exist without equality of instruction.

—Frances Wright

The development of a tree depends on where it is planted.

—Edward Joyner

It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.

—Maya Angelou

We must scrupulously guard the civil rights and civil liberties of all our citizens, whatever their background. We must remember that any oppression, any injustice, any hatred, is a wedge designed to attack our civilization.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

I ain't draft dodging. I ain't burning no flag. I ain't running to Canada. I'm staying right here. You want to send me to jail? Fine, you go right ahead. I've been in jail for 400 years. I could be there for 4 or 5 more, but I ain't going no 10,000 miles to help murder and kill other poor people. If I want to die, I'll die right here, right now, fightin' you, if I want to die. You my enemy, not no Chinese, no Vietcong, no Japanese. You my opposer when I want freedom. You my opposer when I want justice. You my opposer when I want equality. Want me to go somewhere and fight for you? You won't even stand up for me right here in America, for my rights and my religious beliefs. You won't even stand up for my rights here at home.

—Muhammad Ali

Since the 1970s, political scientists have demonstrated that whites who express a higher level of resentment toward African Americans are more likely to identify as Republicans. Since the 1990s, as the political scientist Zoltan Hajnal and Michael Rivera detail in a 2014 paper, a similar correlation has emerged between resentment toward Latinos and Republican partisanship.

—Peter Beinart

To those that believe in and fought for civil rights...you must not become that which you hated.

--Rev. Jesse Jackson

The folks who captured and sold blacks into slavery in the first place were also Africans, working for profit....We need to get some distance from the binary opposition we were raised in: evil white people and good black people. The world just isn't like that.

—Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

No matter who did the capturing, it was white people who created the market for African slaves and perpetuated the practice even after the import trade was banned.

—Lolita Buckner Inniss

For black boys, there seemed to be only two roads—college or jail.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

It is better to die on one's feet than to live on one's knees.

—Albert Camus
(1913-1960)

You've got to have something to eat and a little love in your life before you can hold still for any damn body's sermon on how to behave.

—Billie Holiday

Prejudice is the child of ignorance.

—William Hazlitt

When evil men plot, good men must plan. When evil men burn and bomb, good men must build and bind. When evil men shout ugly words of hatred, good men must commit themselves to the glories of love.

—Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Many black communities have been robbed of the stability and prosperity on which long-term monogamous relationships are most readily built.

—Spencer Kornhaber

We have room but for one Language here and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans of American nationality and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding-house.

--Theodore Roosevelt
(1858-1919)

If I had a child who wanted to be a teacher, I would bid him Godspeed as if he were going to a war. For indeed the war against prejudice, greed and ignorance is eternal, and those who dedicate themselves to it give their lives no less because they may live to see some fraction of the battle won.

--James Hilton

The defining experience of African-American life has been the necessity of making a way out of no way, of mustering the nimbleness, ingenuity and perseverance to establish a place in this society. That effort, over the centuries, has shaped this nation's history so profoundly that, in many ways, African-American history is the quintessential American history. Most of the moments where American liberty has been expanded have been tied to the African-American experience. If you're interested in American notions of freedom, if you're interested in the broadening of fairness, opportunity and citizenship, then regardless of who you are, this is your story, too.

—Lonnie G. Bunch III

The subject of slavery went to the very core of the American dilemma, the contradiction of a nation built on freedom while denying that right to the enslaved. Slavery is one of the great unmentionables in contemporary American discourse.

—Lonnie G. Bunch III

Between 1880 and 1950, an African-American was lynched more than once a week for some perceived breach of the racial hierarchy.

—Isabel Wilkerson

The migration began, like the flap of a sea gull's wings, as a rivulet of black families escaping Selma, Alabama, in the winter of 1916. Their quiet departure was scarcely noticed except for a single paragraph in the *Chicago Defender*, to whom they confided that 'the treatment doesn't warrant staying.' The rivulet would become rapids, which grew into a flood of six million people journeying out of the South over the course of six decades. They were seeking political asylum within the borders of their own country, not unlike refugees in other parts of the world fleeing famine, war and pestilence.

Until that moment and from the time of their arrival on these shores, the vast majority of African-Americans had been confined to the South, at the bottom of a feudal social order, at the mercy of slaveholders and their descendants and often-violent vigilantes. The Great Migration was the first big step that the nation's servant class ever took without asking.

—Isabel Wilkerson

Throughout the migration, wherever black Southerners went, the hostility and hierarchies that fed the Southern caste system seemed to carry over into the receiving stations in the New World, as the cities of the North and West erected barriers to black mobility. There were ‘sundown towns’ throughout the country that banned African-Americans after dark. The constitution of Oregon explicitly prohibited black people from entering the state until 1926; whites-only signs could still be seen in store windows into the 1950s.

—Isabel Wilkerson

The Freedom Rides were probably...among the most dangerous aspects of the civil rights movement. To get on buses traveling through the South was very dangerous. It was dangerous, but it worked. By November 1, 1961...segregated waiting room signs were gone.

I didn’t like seeing those signs that said ‘white waiting,’ ‘colored waiting,’ ‘white men,’ ‘colored men,’ ‘white women,’ ‘colored women.’ I wanted to do whatever I could to help bring them down.

Growing up, I would always ask my mother and father, my grandparents, my great-grandparents to explain racial discrimination to me and they would tell me sometimes, ‘That’s the way it is. Don’t get in the way, don’t get in trouble.’ But Dr. King and Rosa Parks inspired me to get in the way and to get in trouble.

—John Lewis

For me, Harriet Tubman, the former slave, Underground Railroad conductor and Union spy, represents the quest for freedom in the face of one of the most devastating and despicable systems imaginable. Thirteen times she risked her life to venture back into slave territory; she led some 70 people out. She embodies the will to survive and the hope for a better life—because she believed she had the right to a better life—which is everything America stands for. I’m carried by the strength and spirit of my ancestors such as Tubman. I ask myself: If they could fight for freedom with nothing, knowing nothing and understanding nothing about how the world worked, then what can I do?

—Oprah Winfrey

The most important book I’ve ever read was the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, in English class, seventh or eighth grade, at Rothschild Junior High School, Brooklyn. It rocked my world.

—Spike Lee

No other nation has so successfully combined people of different races and nations within a single culture.

—Margaret Thatcher

It's painfully obvious that this nation and this world cannot allow white students to go through higher education without interacting with blacks in authoritative positions.

--Nikki Giovanni

The University of Virginia (UVA) is a public research university founded by Thomas Jefferson, making it home to the most awkward African American Studies program in the country.

—*TL;DR Wikipedia*

Income inequality started increasing in 1983, and 70 percent of that inequality is derived from differences in access to higher education. It is both a fountain of opportunity and a bastion of privilege. The problem has gotten worse and worse and worse.

—Anthony P. Carnevale

Black students drink less than all other races on campus. Why? The question hardly merits an answer. Drinking while black can be downright dangerous, as local police officers tend to take a dim view of young black people breaking laws.

—Caitlin Flanagan

Education, whether of black man or white man, that gives one physical courage to stand up in front of a cannon and fails to give one moral courage to stand up in defense of right and justice, is a failure.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

I feel that the problem that we have in the black community is education. The greatest impact on the community is education. Until we can educate our people to be healthy we're going to have problems; until we can improve the education in the schools and our community we are going to have problems; until we can start early with our bright young people, get them off to a good start so they aren't already behind when they get to school we are going to have problems. So I feel that the problems are related to education.

--Dr. Joycelyn Elders

When we escaped from Cuba, all we could carry was our education.

--Alicia Coro

There are children of color in special education who have been taken off the express train and put on local. The local never catches up with the express.

—M. Mason

If you're illiterate, people can do anything they want to you...As you go through life X-ing documents, unable to defend yourself against forces hostile to you, people can deprive you of your voting rights through gerrymandering schemes, build a freeway next to your apartment building, or open a retail crack operation on your block, with people coming and going as though you lived next door to Burger King—because you're not articulate enough to fight back, because you don't have sense enough to know what is happening to you, and so you're shoveled under at each turn in your life; you might as well be dead.

--Ishmael Reed

One of the few ways parents can improve their kids' academic performance—by as much as eight points on a reading or math test—is by getting them placed in the classroom of a teacher with a good reputation....White parents are at least twice as likely as black and Latino parents to request a specific teacher. Given that the best teachers have been shown to raise students' lifetime earnings and to decrease the likelihood of teen pregnancy, this is no small intervention.

--Dana Goldstein

A liberal education... frees a man from the prison-house of his class, race, time, place, background, family and even his nation.

—Robert M. Hutchins

You learn about equality in history and civics, but you find out life is not really like that.

—Arthur Ashe

If you will protest courageously, and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, 'There lived a great people—a black people—who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.'

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

In an Indian home, if a child's face is dirty or his diaper is wet, he is picked up by anyone. The mother or father or whoever comes into the house....And children are fed whenever they are hungry. They are never allowed to be in want.

--Wilfred Pelletier

A baby born today stands roughly a 50-50 chance of keeping his father. This is the first generation of American kids who must face not the sad loss of fathers to death, but the far more brutal knowledge that, to their fathers, many other things are more important than they are.

--Maggie Gallagher

The U.S. is becoming an increasingly fatherless society. A generation ago, an American child could reasonably expect to grow up with his or her father. Today an American child can reasonably expect not to. Fatherlessness is now approaching a rough parity with fatherhood as a defining feature of American childhood.

--David Blankenhorn

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—

But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners
And sometimes goin' in the dark
When there ain't no light.

So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you find it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin'
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

—Langston Hughes

Rosa Parks sat so Martin Luther King could walk. Martin Luther King walked so Obama could run. Obama's running so we all can fly.

—Jay-Z

There's a growing consensus that the most important input toward student achievement is child poverty and all the factors that go along with it. Unless and until we recommit ourselves to ending child poverty and reducing inequality, not just in schools but in families and communities, I don't see us reinventing ourselves. We can't put the cart before the horse. We've spent too long at this point saying, 'If we improve schools we'll erase poverty.' I think it's really time to try the other way around.

—Anya Kamenetz

What are some possible explanations for such extraordinary performance by Asian Americans? Several come readily to mind, but certainly require further exploration:

- Parents who value their children's education so much that they inculcate the centrality of that education in to every aspect of their everyday lives.
- Parents who actively monitor and supplement what the schools teach their children.
- Parents, and therefore children, who believe that academic effort and hard work are rewarded with accomplishment.
- Parents, and therefore students, who support the schools.
- Parents, and therefore students, who believe in taking the most challenging courses in the greatest numbers.

—Daniel B. Taylor

Prejudice is a great time saver. You can form opinions without having to get the facts.

—E. B. White

Fear of something is at the root of hate for others, and hate within will eventually destroy the hater.

—George Washington
Carver (1864-1943)

That is still the case in this country for too many students, the soft bigotry of low expectations. If you don't expect them to learn, if you don't expect them to succeed - then it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

—Tavis Smiley

During my eleven years as a New York City public school teacher, I saw firsthand the impact that poverty has on the classroom. In low-income neighborhoods like Sunset Park, where I taught, students as young as five years old enter school affected by the stresses often created by poverty: domestic violence, drug abuse, gang activity.

—Sal Albanese

Korean students are hard working, talented, and they do what they need to do. They succeed in exams. They are highly motivated to succeed in tests.

—Dan Shechtman

Every year, some 65,000 high school students - many of them star students and leaders in their communities - are unable to go to college or get a good job because they have no legal status.

—Gary Locke

As far as innovation goes, I can tell you that Korean students are reluctant to step out of line. If I ask questions, nobody raises their hands - not because they don't know the answers, but because they don't want to step out of line.

—Dan Shechtman

African-Americans have served in every American war, but pre-Civil War numbers are inexact. During the Revolution, an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 black soldiers fought for the Colonies, and an uncertain number fought for the British. During the Civil War, more than 179,000 served in the Union Army and 20,000 to 30,000 in the Union Navy.

—Krewasky Salater

Fixed ideas about Americans seemed, among Miami Cubans, general. Americans, I was frequently told, never touched one another, nor did they argue. Americans did not share the attachment to family which characterized Cuban life. Americans did not share the attachment to patria which characterized Cuban life. Americans placed undue importance on being on time. Americans were undereducated. Americans, at one and the same time, acted exclusively in their own interests and failed to see their own interests, not only because they were undereducated but because they were by temperament 'naive,' a people who could live and die without ever understanding those nuances of conspiracy and allegiance on which, in the Cuban view, the world turned. Americans, above all, lacked 'passion,' which was the central failing from which most of these other national peculiarities flowed.

—Joan Didion

I loved statistics from a young age. And I studied very much in Sweden. I used to be in the upper quarter of all courses I attended. But in St. John's, I was in the lower quarter. And the fact was that [East] Indian students studied harder than we did in Sweden. They read the textbook twice, or three times or four times.

—Hans Rosling

Everyone has seen photographs of Mexicans wearing those big sombreros. When you come to Mexico, the astonishing thing is, nobody wears these hats at all.

—Bruce Beresford

When it comes to racism, the public school is no different from any other American institution....The harrowing problems that beset Black men later in life...often begin in the classroom.

--David J. Dent

When I was a slave, I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study...would be about the same as getting into paradise.

--Booker T. Washington
(1856-1915)

When you teach a man to hate and fear his brother, when you teach that he is a lesser man because of his color or his beliefs or the policies he pursues, when you teach that those who differ from you threaten your freedom or your job or your family, then you also learn to confront others not as fellow citizens but as enemies, to be met not with cooperation but with conquest; to be subjugated and mastered. We learn, at the last, to look at our brothers as aliens, men with whom we share a city, but not a community; men bound to us in common dwelling, but not in common effort. We learn to share only a common fear, only a common desire to retreat from each other, only a common impulse to meet disagreement with force. For all this, there are no final answers. Yet we know what we must do. It is to achieve true justice among our fellow citizens. The question is not what programs we should seek to enact. The question is whether we can find in our own midst and in our own hearts that leadership of humane purpose that will recognize the terrible truths of our existence. We must admit the vanity of our false distinctions among men and learn to find our own advancement in the search for the advancement of others. We must admit in ourselves that our own children's future cannot be built on the misfortunes of others. We must recognize that this short life can neither be ennobled or enriched by hatred or revenge.

—Robert F. Kennedy

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens.

—George Washington
(1732-1799)

When I went to drama school, I knew I was at least as talented as other students, but because I was a black man and I wasn't pretty, I knew I would have to work my butt off to be the best that I would be, and to be noticed.

—Lance Reddick

It's not a ladder we're climbing, it's literature we're producing....We cannot possibly leave it to history as a discipline nor to sociology nor science nor economics to tell the story of our people.

--Nikki Giovanni

'The White Man's Burden' is seven stanzas long and is a glimpse into the way Europeans justified their colonial ambitions. The poor white man, said Kipling, is doomed to the hard work of going to foreign places and raising up the local savages into civilized society. It was originally written for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and then altered to serve as a British man's advice for how America should treat the newly acquired Philippines. It begins like this:

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half child.

And it continues in that vein for another six verses. 'The White Man's Burden,' from title to execution, is so over the top in its exhortations of white superiority that it could be mistaken for parody. But it isn't.

—Katharine Trendacosta

More people have to start spending as much time in the library as they do on the basketball court. If they took the ideas that they could escape poverty through education, I think it would make a more basic and long-lasting change in the way things are done.

--Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

Black people need to work on their speaking and writing skills to avoid the pitfalls of exploitation, exclusion, and economic illiteracy. Knowing the language of power and finance is gaining clout, not selling out.

--Gerrard McClendon

I think America concedes that true American music has sprung from the Negro.

—William Christopher Handy

I have not been in the country very long, but I do know this. For a 16-year-old, low-income Hispanic kid growing up in East Los Angeles, there are a lot of things that are dangerous. Calculus is not one of them.

--Jaime Escalante

The ratio of rich math whizzes to poor ones is 3 to 1 in south Korea and 3.7 to 1 in Canada, to take two representative developed countries. In the U.S., it is 8 to 1. And while the proportion of American students scoring at advanced levels in math is rising, those gains are almost entirely limited to the children of the highly educated, and largely exclude the children of the poor. By the end of high school, the percentage of low-income advanced-math learners rounds to zero.

—Peg Tyre

We know that math ability is universal, and interest in math is spread pretty much equally through the population, and we see there are almost no low-income, high-performing math students. So we know that there are many, many students who have the potential for high achievement in math but who have not had opportunity to develop their math minds, simply because they were born to the wrong parents or in the wrong zip code.

—Daniel Zaharopol

History, as taught in our schools, has been a celebration of the white, male, Protestant Founding Fathers rather than the great mix of people in the American drama....People who are in subordinated groups want history simply to do for them what history has already done for white males.

--Mary Frances Berry

The white race is the cancer of history.

--Susan Sontag

When we learn African-American history, it's either Malcolm or Martin, the bad guy and the good guy. But if you look at our society and our history, we know about Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, and we're taught to celebrate both of them.

—Ilyasah Shabazz

The first black president would need a 'Vice President Santiago'—because the only thing that would ensure his life in the White House was a Hispanic president-in-waiting.

--Dave Chappelle

The central question that emerges—and it is not a parliamentary question or a question that is answered by merely consulting a catalog of the rights of American citizens, born Equal—is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes—the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race.

--William F. Buckley, Jr.,
(1957)

The great majority of the Negroes of the South who do not vote do not care to vote and would not know for what to vote if they could.

--William F. Buckley, Jr.,
(1957)

For too long, we have focused on our differences - in our politics and backgrounds, in our race and beliefs - rather than cherishing the unity and pride that binds us together.

—Bob Riley

Those black males who try to hold women down are expressing in sexist terms the same kinds of expressions in racist terms which they would deny.

--Jacquelyne Jackson

There is no force equal to a woman determined to rise.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

The prejudice against color is no stronger than that against sex...The Negro's skin and the woman's sex are both prima facie evidence that they were intended to be in subjection to the white (Anglo-Saxon) man.

--Elizabeth Cady
Stanton (1860)

The government alone can't teach our kids to learn...children can't achieve unless we raise their expectations and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a black youth with a book is acting white.

—Barack Obama

There is no liberal America, no conservative America, no black America, no white America, no Latino America, no Asian America, only 'the United States of America.'

—Barack Obama

After telling his teacher he wants to be a lawyer, Malcolm X is told that the job isn't for 'niggers.'

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

[David] Axelrod recalled sitting around a conference table with [Chicago Mayor Harold] Washington after he had won the Democratic primary for his reelection in 1987, just as the mayor was about to hold a press conference. Washington asked what percentage of Chicago's white vote he'd received. And someone said, 'Well, you got 21 percent. And that's really good because last time' —in his successful 1983 mayoral campaign—'you only got 8,' Axelrod recalled. 'And he kind of smiled, sadly, and said, 'You know, I probably spent 70 percent of my time in those white neighborhoods, and I think I've been a good mayor for everybody, and I got 21 percent of the white vote and we think it's good.' And he just kind of shook his head and said, 'ain't it a bitch to be a black man in the land of the free and the home of the brave?'

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

The ghettos of America are the direct result of decades of public-policy decisions: the redlining of real estate zoning maps, the expanded authority given to prosecutors, the increased funding given to prisons. And all of this was done on the backs of people still reeling from the 250-year legacy of slavery. The results of this negative investment are clear—African Americans rank at the bottom of nearly every major socioeconomic measure in the country.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

The unemployment rate among black college graduates (4.1 percent) is almost the same as the unemployment rate among white high-school graduates (4.6 percent). But that college degree is generally purchased at a higher price by blacks than by whites. According to research by the Brookings Institution, African Americans tend to carry more student debt four years after graduation (\$53,000 versus \$28,000) and suffer from a higher default rate on their loans (7.6 percent versus 2.4 percent) than white Americans. This is both the result and the perpetuator of a sprawling wealth gap between the races. White households, on average, hold seven times as much wealth as black households—a difference so large as to make comparing the ‘black middle class’ and ‘white middle class’ meaningless; they’re simply not comparable. According to Patrick Sharkey, a sociologist at New York University who studies economic mobility, black families making \$100,000 a year or more live in more-disadvantaged neighborhoods than white families making less than \$30,000. This gap didn’t just appear by magic; it’s the result of the government’s effort over many decades to create a pigmentocracy—one that will continue without explicit intervention.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Theoretically, you can make obviously a powerful argument that centuries of slavery, Jim Crow, discrimination are the primary cause for all those gaps [wealth, education, housing, employment.] That those were wrongs to the black community as a whole, and black families specifically, and that in order to close that gap, a society has a moral obligation to make a large, aggressive investment, even if it’s not in the form of individual reparations checks but in the form of a Marshall Plan.

—Barack Obama

I want my children—I want Malia and Sasha—to understand that they’ve got responsibilities beyond just what they themselves have done. That they’ve a responsibility to the larger community and the larger nation, that they should be sensitive to and extra thoughtful about the plight of people who have been oppressed in the past, are oppressed currently. So that’s a wisdom that I want to transmit to my kids...But I would say that’s a high level of enlightenment that you’re looking to have from a majority of the society. And it may be something that future generations are more open to, but I am pretty confident that for the foreseeable future, using the argument of nondiscrimination, and ‘Let’s get it right for the kids who are here right now,’ and giving them the best chance possible is going to be a more persuasive argument.

—Barack Obama

Imagine if you had genuine, high-quality early-childhood education for every child, and suddenly every black child in America...is getting a really good education. And they're graduating from high school at the same rates that whites are, and they are going to college at the same rates that whites are, and they are able to afford college at the same rates because the government has universal programs that say that you're not going to be barred from school just because of how much money your parents have.

So now they're all graduating. And let's also say that the Justice Department and the courts are making sure, as I've said in a speech before, that when Jamal sends his résumé in, he's getting treated the same as when Johnny sends his résumé in. Now, are we going to have suddenly the same number of CEOs, billionaires, etc., as the white community? In 10 years? Probably not, maybe not even in 20 years.

But I guarantee you that we would be thriving, we would be succeeding. We wouldn't have huge numbers of young African American men in jail. We'd have more family formation as college-graduated girls are meeting boys who are their peers, which then in turn means the next generation of kids are growing up that much better. And suddenly you've got a whole generation that's in a position to start using the incredible creativity that we see in music, and sports, and frankly even on the streets, channeled into starting all kinds of businesses. I feel pretty good about our odds in that situation.

—Barack Obama

I felt a mix of pride and amazement walking onto Howard's campus that day. Howard alumni, of which I am one, are an obnoxious fraternity, known for yelling the school chant across city blocks, sneering at other historically black colleges and universities, and condescending to black graduates of predominantly white institutions. I like to think I am more reserved, but I felt an immense satisfaction in being in the library where I had once found my history.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

At Spelman College, a historically black, all-women's college in Atlanta, about half of last year's incoming class of some 530 students were obese or had high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, or some other chronic health condition that could be improved with exercise. Each year, Spelman was spending nearly \$1 million on athletics—not for those students, but for the 4 percent of the student body that played sports.

--Amanda Ripley

The researchers Josh Pasek, Jon A. Krosnick, and Trevor Tompson found that in 2012, 32 percent of Democrats held anti-black views, while 79 percent of Republicans did.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Poverty is constructed so as to destroy aspiration; it is a system designed to be impervious to hope. The other America does not contain the adventurous seeking a new life and land. It is populated by the failures, by those driven from the land and bewildered by the city, by the old people suddenly confronted with the torments of loneliness and poverty, and by minorities facing a wall of prejudice.

--Michael Harrington

East Harlem isn't a German camp. But it is worse. Because in East Harlem the sun is shining and there's not a gate or a lock or a machine-gun post....I'm beginning to feel that I'm in prison.

--Julius Horowitz

A nation, like a tree, does not thrive well till it is engrafted with a foreign stock.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803-1882)

The great social adventure of America is no longer the conquest of the wilderness but the absorption of fifty different peoples.

--Walter Lippmann

A study by a pair of business-school professors found that when subjects were made to feel a lack of social power, they were willing to pay more for high-status goods, presumably to compensate for lower status. Perhaps this is why blacks and Hispanics—groups that have historically had lower social status than whites—spend more on clothing, jewelry, and cars than do whites of comparable income.

—Matthew Hutson

The religion of the Indian is the last thing about him that the man of another race will ever understand.

—Charles Eastman
(1858-1939)

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro... two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self.

--W. E. B. Du Bois
(1868-1963)

The economic philosophy of black nationalism only means that our people need to be re-educated into the importance of controlling the economy of the community in which we live...which...means that we...won't have to constantly be involved in picketing and boycotting other people in other communities in order to get jobs.

--Malcolm X

The study of economic oppression led me to realize that Negroes were not alone but were part of an unending struggle for human dignity the world over.

--Pauli Murray

All politics is rich people screwing poor people. Poor people are too stupid to know they're just chess pieces in a game. All the poor white people, all the poor black people, all the Hispanics, they're in the same boat. They got no economic opportunities ... they spend all their time blaming each other because rich people throw words at them like, illegal immigration, and racism and things like that. If poor people ever get smart, and realize like, 'We should band together, rise up, instead of fighting each other,' we probably can make a difference.

—Charles Barkley

Living in a frustrating, stress-inducing environment like a ghetto every day of your life makes many people walking powder kegs. There's a pent-up rage that isn't ventilated elsewhere; when something happens to trigger that rage, it can be murderous.

--Dr. LaMaurice Gardner

The darkest thing about Africa is America's ignorance of it.

--Reverend James J.
Robinson

The fact is that Chinese parents can do things that would seem unimaginable—even legally actionable—to Westerners. Chinese mothers can say to their daughters, 'Hey fatty—lose some weight.' By contrast, Western parents have to tiptoe around the issue, talking in terms of 'health' and never ever mentioning the f-word, and their kids still end up in therapy for eating disorders and negative self image.

—Amy Chua

Black girls are 20 percent of preschool girls, but 54 percent of the girls facing out-of-school suspension in preschool. That number, and also the disparities around corporal punishment, are two points that show how schools are assessing threats among really young children. Those of us who have seen a 6-year-old throw a tantrum know they can throw a mean tantrum—but there are ways we can respond without pushing them out of school. What this says to me is that Black girls, from a very young age, are treated as disposable. What it also says is that we need to find ways to support them.

—Mary Ellen Flannery

Prison is no longer a rare or extreme event among our nation's most marginalized groups. Rather it has now become a normal and anticipated marker in the transition to adulthood.

—Devah Pager

The rich middle-and high-school kids...show higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse on average than poor kids, and much higher rates than the national norm. They report clinically significant depression or anxiety or delinquent behaviors at a rate two to three times the national average. Starting in the seventh grade, the rich cohort includes just as many kids who display troubling levels of delinquency as the poor cohort, although the rule-breaking takes different forms. The poor kids, for example, fight and carry weapons more frequently....The rich kids, meanwhile, report higher levels of lying, cheating, and theft.

—Hanna Rosin citing a
Yale Psychiatry
Department Study
by Suniya Luthar

Black girls make up 16 percent of girls in U.S. public schools, but 42 percent of girls' expulsions and more than a third of girls' school-based arrests.

—Mary Ellen Flannery

Most American schools today operate according to a philosophy of discipline that has its roots in the 1980s and '90s, when a belief that schools would be safer and more effective if they had 'zero tolerance' of violence, drug use, and other types of misbehavior led to a sharp rise in suspensions. In 2010, more than a tenth of all public-high-school students nationwide were suspended at least once. And suspension rates are substantially higher among certain demographic groups. African American students, for example, are suspended three times as often as white students. In Chicago public high schools (which have particularly good and well-analyzed data on suspensions), 27 percent of students who live in the cities poorest neighborhoods received an out-of-school suspension during the 2013-14 school year, as did 30 percent of students with a reported personal history of abuse or neglect.

—Paul Tough

You've never seen a Columbine done by a black child. Never. They always say, 'We can't believe it happened here. We can't believe it's these suburban white kids.' It's only them!

—Van Jones

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1969 against a Des Moines, Iowa, school district, finding that students had a right to protest peacefully on school grounds. In this case, the Court said, the teenage plaintiffs could wear black armbands in protest of the Vietnam War, as long as they did so without 'materially and substantially' disturbing class. Justice Hugo Black issued an ominous dissent. 'It is the beginning of a new revolutionary era of permissiveness in this country,' he wrote. 'Groups of students all over the land are already running loose, conducting break-ins, sit-ins, lie-ins, and smash-ins.' Following the federal ruling, state and local officials passed a flurry of laws that would punish students who were disturbing class, anywhere from universities to elementary schools. At the time, it's worth remembering, black students weren't just protesting; they were also integrating white classrooms, backed by the federal government. 'As soon as we started introducing black bodies into white schools, we got these laws,' says Jenny Egan, a public defender for juveniles in Maryland who regularly represents clients charged with disturbing school. 'That's not a coincidence.'

—Amanda Ripley

For most African Americans, white people exist either as a direct or an indirect force for bad in their lives.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

The American Indian is being ravaged by alcohol, and their survival is threatened. At nearly all organizational levels on the reservation they report social dysfunction. Their drug problems are unique.

—Wes Smith

Surveys have repeatedly shown that blacks and whites use drugs at remarkably comparable rates.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

I hear that melting-pot stuff a lot, and all I can say is that we haven't melted.

—Jesse Jackson

What is the black shadow? It's the running inner dialogue we have with ourselves all day long about our fears of being inferior as black people. It is our internalization of the white man's lie that blacks are inferior to whites -- the very lie that was the foundation of our ancestors' enslavement. The black shadow is more than simply internalized racism; it's also our complex feelings of fear and despair about being black, and consequently our longing to be less black.

—Marlene F. Watson

The soldiers did go away and their towns were torn down; and in the Moon of Falling Leaves (November), they made a treaty with Red Cloud that said our country would be ours as long as grass should grow and water flow.

—Black Elk (1863-1950)

We don't need a melting pot in this country, folks. We need a salad bowl. In a salad bowl, you put in the different things. You want the vegetables — the lettuce, the cucumbers, the onions, the green peppers — to maintain their identity. You appreciate differences.

—Jane Elliot

Approximately 1,000 high school students will drop out with each hour that passes in a school day in America. This means that 30 percent of the class of 2007, or 1.2 million students, were estimated to have dropped out last year. The high school dropout crisis has received significant recent attention from researchers, policy makers and the media. It has been widely reported that one in three boys, and nearly 50 percent or more of some racial and ethnic groups of boys, will fail to graduate from high school with a diploma in four years. This is an alarming finding that demands prompt remedial action. What has been generally overlooked, however, is that girls, too, are dropping out of high school at dangerously high

rates. In fact, one in four girls overall do not finish high school, and the numbers are worse for girls of color. One in two Native American female students, four in ten Black female students, and nearly four in ten Hispanic female students fail to graduate with a diploma each year. There are significant costs to be paid by both the individual and the nation as a whole for each and every student who drops out of high school. In general, dropouts face significant challenges to obtaining employment and achieving economic security. Female dropouts are at particular economic risk. As compared to their male peers, girls who fail to graduate from high school have higher rates of unemployment; make significantly lower wages; and are more likely to need to rely on public support programs to provide for their families. With so many students dropping out of high school each year, the aggregate drain on our nation's economy—through foregone income tax revenue and increased public spending—is substantial. At a time when every hour counts, the dropout rates and educational experiences of female students cannot be ignored.

—*National Women's Law
Center*

Esmeralda, a Latina sophomore, was the best softball player on the high school team that I coached. Nearly every time she came to the plate, she hit a triple or a double. While the other parents routinely came to the games, Esmeralda's parents were never there. One day, Esmeralda came to practice with a new tattoo of a boy's name. I assumed that it was the name of a new boyfriend, but she corrected me and told me it was her father's name. Her father was serving a life sentence in state prison. He had been in prison since Esmeralda was a child. The following year, Esmeralda was absent from school for four consecutive days. When she showed up on Friday, I asked her where she had been. She told me that over the weekend federal agents broke down her front door at 4:00 in the morning; they searched the entire house and arrested her mother and aunt. Esmeralda was terrified and had no idea what was going on. She later found out that her mother was part of a drug smuggling operation, and the police had found large amounts of drugs and money in the home. After her mother's arrest, law enforcement seized their home, and Esmeralda and her older sister, who was only 20 years old, needed a place to stay. The two of them had no money, so they stayed with their mother's friends. From then on, Esmeralda only came to school about once a week, until she finally dropped out. Esmeralda was a very talented student-athlete, and any college would have been lucky to have her, but her family's circumstances prevented her from ever having a chance.

—Adriane Kayoko
Peralta

I have come to the conclusion that just as the Japanese live to work, Asians live to eat.

—Anastacia Oaikhena

To me, the black black woman is our essential mother; the blacker she is the more **us** she is, and to see the hatred that is turned on her is enough to make me despair, almost entirely, of our future as a people.

—Alice Walker

No matter how big a nation is, it is no stronger than its weakest people, and as long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you might otherwise.

—Marian Anderson

But to the slave mother New Year's day comes laden with peculiar sorrows. She sits on her cold cabin floor, watching the children who may all be torn from her the next morning; and often does she wish that she and they might die before the day dawns.

—Harriet Ann Jacobs
(1813-1897)

More than anyone else he [Malcolm X] revolutionized the black mind, transforming docile Negroes and self-effacing colored people into proud blacks and self-confident African-Americans.

—James Cone

I saw no African people in the printed and illustrated Sunday school lessons. I began to suspect at this early age that someone had distorted the image of my people.

—John Henrik Clarke

What treaty have the Sioux made with the white man that we have broken? Not one. What treaty have the white man ever made with us that they have kept? Not one. When I was a boy, the Sioux owned the world. The sun rose and set on their land, they sent ten thousand men to battle. Where are the warriors today? Who slew them? Where are our lands? Who owns them?...What law have I broken? Is it wrong for me to love my own? Is it wicked for me because my skin is red? Because I am a Sioux? Because I was born where my father lived? Because I would die for my people and my country?

--Sitting Bull
(1831-1890)

I find chopsticks frankly distressing. Am I alone in thinking it odd that a people ingenious enough to invent paper, gunpowder, kites and any number of other useful objects, and who have a noble history extending back 3,000 years haven't yet worked out that a pair of knitting needles is no way to capture food?

—Bill Bryson

You know how I feel about tacos. It's the only food shaped like a smile.

—Danielle Sanchez-
Witzel and
Michael Pennie

How smooth must be the language of the whites, when they can make right look like wrong, and wrong like right.

—Black Hawk
(1767-1838)

Inequality is as dear to the American heart as liberty itself.

—William Dean Howells

In the United States there's a Puritan ethic and a mythology of success. He who is successful is good. In Latin countries, in Catholic countries, a successful person is a sinner.

—Umberto Eco

They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they kept only one; they promised to take our land, and they did.

--Red Cloud (1822-1909)

No one has been barred on account of his race from fighting or dying for America, there are no white or colored signs on the foxholes or graveyards of battle.

—John F. Kennedy

The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout. There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices -- to be found in the minds of men. For the record, prejudices can kill and suspicion can destroy, and a thoughtless, frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all its own -- for the children and the children yet unborn.

—Rod Serling

No Negro can saunter down a street with any real certainty that violence will not visit him on his walk...[He knows] in the cells of his existence that life [is] war, nothing but war.

—Norman Mailer

Look at the artifacts being discovered there [Africa], that are proving over and over again, how the black man had great, fine, sensitive civilizations before the white man was out of the caves. Below the Sahara, in the places where most of America's Negroes' foreparents were kidnapped, there is being unearthed some of the finest craftsmanship, sculpture and other objects, that has never been seen by modern man. Some of these things now are on view in such places as New York City's Museum of Modern Art. Gold work of such find tolerance and workmanship that it has no rival. Ancient objects produced by black hands... refined by those black hands with results that no human hands today can equal.

History has been so 'whitened' by the white man that even the black professors have known little more than the most ignorant black man about the talents and rich civilizations and cultures of the black man of millenniums ago.

—Malcolm X

If black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people? You understand what I'm saying? In other words, white people, this government and that Mayor were well aware of the fact that black people were dying every day in Los Angeles under gang violence. So if you're a gang member and you would normally be killing somebody, why not a white person?

—Sister Souljah

One of the prices that we pay for integration was the disintegration of the black community.

—Ed Smith

Striving for perfection in mind, body and spirit is a Korean way of life, and the cult of endless self-improvement begins as early as the hagwons, cram schools that keep the nation's children miserable and sleep-deprived, and sends a sizable portion of the population under the plastic surgeon's knife.

—Gary Shyteyngart

Western civilization, Christianity, decency are struggling for their very lives. In this worldwide civil war, race prejudice is our most dangerous enemy, for it is a disease at the very root of our democratic life.

—Mordecai Wyatt
Johnson

Cultural or racial affinity groups bring students of the same racial background together to discuss issues and topics that relate to their everyday school experiences. They can focus on reducing the isolation felt by minority students in predominately white schools, and help them develop their own cultural and racial identities. The group serves as a safe place for open discussion and empathy among its members. For example, at the Concord/Carlisle High School in Concord, Massachusetts, Cindy Aguilar and Yvonne Farino established a cultural affinity group called the Latino Caucus. It began informally with the need to prepare a presentation for the school's multicultural week. The topics of conversation arose from the issues facing the group, or from ideas presented by the advisers. The Latino/a students talk about their feelings of being left out of the February Black History Month events and celebrations. They felt that the ideas, values, and contributions of other cultures were often underrepresented and, at times, completely ignored. Now, every March, the student government sponsors speakers and events that celebrate the diversity of cultures represented in the high school. Students, along with a Latina teacher planned and choreographed the presentation. Some of the students choreographed a series of dances including salsa and merengue. Others shared their heritage and told about their experiences with the rest of the student body. Whether they were second-generation Americans or new immigrants, students from Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Mexico, Columbia, or the Dominican Republic talked about their family histories and shared their personal feelings about living in a predominately white society. The relevance of this cultural affinity group grew from the students' words and developing sense of self.

—Cynthia Mata Aguilar
and Fred E. Gross

Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. It is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals.
--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Hatred, which could destroy so much, never failed to destroy the man who hated, and this was an immutable law.

—James A. Baldwin

The hate and scorn showered on us Negro officers by our fellow Americans convinced me that there was no sense in my dying for a world ruled by them. I made up my mind that if I got through this war I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back.

—Charles Hamilton
Houston

If you are a woman, if you're a person of colour, if you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, if you are a person of size, if you are a person of intelligence, if you are a person of integrity, then you are considered a minority in this world.

And it's going to be really hard to find messages of self-love and support anywhere. Especially women's and gay men's culture. It's all about how you have to look a certain way or else you're worthless. You know when you look in the mirror and you think 'oh, I'm so fat, I'm so old, I'm so ugly', don't you know, that's not your authentic self? But that is billions upon billions of dollars of advertising, magazines, movies, billboards, all geared to make you feel shitty about yourself so that you will take your hard earned money and spend it at the mall on some turn-around creme that doesn't turn around shit.

When you don't have self-esteem you will hesitate before you do anything in your life. You will hesitate to go for the job you really wanna go for, you will hesitate to ask for a raise, you will hesitate to call yourself an American, you will hesitate to report a rape, you will hesitate to defend yourself when you are discriminated against because of your race, your sexuality, your size, your gender. You will hesitate to vote, you will hesitate to dream. For us to have self-esteem is truly an act of revolution and our revolution is long overdue.

--Margaret Cho

I, for one, would think both about how far we have come as a country and how much further we need to go to erase racism and discrimination from our society.

—Charles Rangel

In those days, slavery was not looked upon, even in Quaker Philadelphia, with the shudder and abhorrence one feels towards it now.

—John S. Wise

We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

—Elie Wiesel

To those of you who say that we are rushing this issue of civil rights, I say to them we are 172 years late.

—Hubert Humphrey
(1948)

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.

—Mark Twain

I am working for the time when unqualified blacks, browns, and women join the unqualified men in running our government.

—Cissy Farenthold

Today we know with certainty that segregation is dead. The only question remaining is how costly will be the funeral.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

As a teenager I had never been able to accept the fact of having to go to the back of a bus or sit in the segregated section of a train. The first time I had been seated behind a curtain in a dining car, I felt as if the curtain had been dropped on my selfhood.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

The means by which we live have outdistanced the ends for which we live. Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Unfortunately, most of the major denominations still practice segregation in local churches, hospitals, schools, and other church institutions. It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, the same hour when many are standing to sing: 'In Christ There Is No East Nor West.'

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

There is no more evil thing in this world than race prejudice...It justifies and holds together more baseness, cruelty, and abomination than any other sort of error in the world.

--H. G. Wells

After all there is but one race—humanity.

--George Moore

Racism is man's gravest threat to man—the maximum of hatred for a minimum of reason.

--Abraham Joshua
Herchel

To live anywhere in the world today and be against equality because of race or color, is like living in Alaska and being against snow.

--William Faulkner

The American economy, the American society, the American unconscious are all racist.

--Michael Harrington

There is a tendency to judge a race, a nation or any distinct group by its least worthy members.

--Eric Hoffer

Herein lies the tragedy of the age: not that men are poor,—all men know something of poverty; not that men are wicked,—who is good? Not that men are ignorant—what is truth? Nay, but that men know so little of men.

—W. E. B. Du Bois,
(1897)

We do not want the men of another color for our brothers-in-law, but we do want them for our brothers.

--Booker T. Washington

The only justification for ever looking down on somebody is to pick them up.

--Jesse Jackson

Chance has never yet satisfied the hope of a suffering people. Action, self-reliance, the vision of self and the future have been the only means by which the oppressed have seen and realized the light of their own freedom.

--Marcus Garvey

There was only one thing I could do—hammer relentlessly, continually crying aloud, even if in a wilderness, and force open, by sheer muscle power, every closed door.

--Adam Clayton
Powell, Jr.

Be not discouraged. There is a future for you....The resistance encountered now predicates hope....Only as we rise...do we encounter opposition.

--Frederick Douglass

I must oppose any attempt that Negroes may make to do to others what has been done to them....I know the spiritual wasteland to which that road leads...whoever debases others is debasing himself.

--James Baldwin

I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races,—that I am nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race. I say upon this occasion I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position the negro should be denied every thing. I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife.

--Abraham Lincoln

It takes two or three generations to get over the scars, the mutations and the damage to personality from immigration.

--James T. Farrell

When you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your 20 million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your 6-year-old-daughter why she can't go the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people.

--Dr. Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was the first evidence to America that no hurricane can be so disastrous to a country as a ruthlessly humanitarian woman.

--Sinclair Lewis

A Muslim, a Jew, a Christian, and an atheist all walk in to a coffee shop...and they talk, laugh, drink coffee and became good friends. It's not a joke. It's what happens when you're not an asshole.

—*facebook.com/theidealist*

Japanese and American fourth and fifth grade children were asked why they shouldn't hit, gossip or fight with other kids. 92 percent of the American kids answered 'because they'd get caught or get in trouble.' Ninety percent of the Japanese kids asked the same question responded, 'because it would be hurtful to someone else.'

—Christine Gross-Loh

I swear to the Lord
I still can't see
Why Democracy means
Everybody but me.

—Langston Hughes

Racial superiority is a mere pigment of the imagination.

—Unknown

It is persons least like ourselves who often teach us most about ourselves. They challenge us to examine what we have uncritically assumed to be true and raise our eyes to wider horizons. When people who are very different from one another must live and work together, tolerance and civility are the only hopes for peace. How we deal with our differences, how we nurture our shared bonds, will in large part determine the future...of our society and of our country.

--James O. Freedman,
President,
Dartmouth College

The first Africans arrived in New Amsterdam in 1626; by the 1740s, the city—then called New York—was a center of urban slavery: Slaves made up 21 percent of its population....South Street Seaport, where many slave ships off-loaded their human cargo....Wall Street, where the city's slave market opened in 1711.

—Jessica Leigh Hester

The truth is that any figure of Africans imported into the Americas which is narrowly based on the surviving records is bound to be low, because there were so many people at the time who had a vested interest in smuggling slaves (and withholding data. Nevertheless, if the low figure of ten million was accepted as basis for evaluating the impact of slaving on Africa as a whole, the conclusions that could legitimately be drawn would confound those who attempt to make light of the experience of the rape of Africans from 1445 to 1870.

--Walter Rodney

Black women who do marry are more likely than any other group of women to 'marry down.'

--Kate Bolick

According to a 2010 Pew poll, almost all millennials accept interracial dating and marriage—and the younger the person, the more likely that person was to have a friend of a different race.

--Caroline Linton

Chinese parents have long prized male heirs, and the one-child policy, recently abolished after 35 years, led many parents to abort female fetuses. According to one estimate, the country will by 2020 have at least 24 million 'surplus' men ages 20 to 45. With competition for brides fierce, plenty of young people approach marriage as a kind of business deal, and assess their partner's credentials accordingly. Men must typically bring a home and financial security (and in many cases a car) to the table; women are encouraged by their families to practice hypergamy—that is, to marry up. Marital rivalry has already caused rural 'bride prices' (essentially, reverse dowries paid to brides' parents) to surge; an extravagant proposal is now one more way for a prospective groom to enhance his desirability and status.

—Robert Foyle Hunwick

There about 26,250,000 arranged marriages annually worldwide. In India, 88.4% of marriages are arranged according to statisticbrain.com.

—Camille Shim

Essentially my parents choose. I have known this for all my life, but I still feel a bit caged because I do not get the freedom to choose my own love life. At the same time, I also trust my parents. In my culture, my parents enforce some rules on me and I understand the reasoning behind it. But I feel as if I cannot live my teenage years to the fullest. Being around all these kids my age and experiencing such fun things makes me feel as if I am missing out on this whole other world. Although I appreciate my culture, I feel special being Indian, but living in America is a totally different experience with restrictions. It affects my familial because if I do not follow

through with the arranged marriage, I would be shunned....If I could put the whole process in my words, it would be like this: when I'm 24, my friends and family would recruit possible guys. My parents and theirs meet and settle out all the options. Next, the guys are matched with horoscope and priest predictions, and finally I choose one guy to date, and then later comes the engagement. The wedding lasts six days and meeting my husband takes about six months to a year. I could never have a natural love life. However, I feel safe because I know I'm in good hands and that my life is set.

—Puja Lad

I used to think that I didn't have dates because I was ugly, and I was ugly because I was Chinese. But it was good because I grew up also thinking I could never really rely on my looks as a way to get ahead in the world.

—Amy Tan

I don't feel we did wrong in taking this great country away from them. There were great numbers of people who needed new land, and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves.

—John Wayne

The life-saving power of belonging may help explain why, in America, blacks and Hispanics have long had much lower suicide rates than white people. They are more likely to be lashed together by poverty, and more enduringly tied by the bonds of faith and family. In the last decade, as suicide rates have surged among middle-aged whites, the risk for blacks and Hispanics of the same age has increased less than a point—although they suffer worse health by almost every other measure. There's an old joke in the black community, a nod to the curious power of poverty and oppression to keep suicide rates low. It's simple, really: you can't die by jumping from a basement window.

--Tony Dokoupil

Martin Luther King Junior's 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' was little-noticed in April 1963, when his colleagues in the civil-rights movement stitched it together from the fragments he drafted in his cell. Major civil-rights legislation was not then on President John F. Kennedy's agenda. Yet the letter has gained recognition as the 20th Century's most influential essay in civil disobedience.

—Clayborne Carson

Any musical person who has never heard a Negro congregation under the spell of religious fervor sing these old songs has missed one of the most thrilling emotions which the human heart may experience.

—James Weldon Johnson

On September 19, 1738, a man named Benjamin Lay strode into a Quaker meeting House in Burlington, New Jersey, for the biggest event of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. He wore a great coat, which hid a military uniform and a sword. Beneath his coat Lay carried a hollowed out-book with a secret compartment, into which he had tucked a tied-off animal bladder filled with bright red pokeberry juice. Because Quakers had no formal minister or church ceremony, people spoke as the spirit moved them. Lay, a Quaker himself, waited his turn.

He finally rose to address this gathering of ‘weighty Quakers.’ Many Friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey had grown rich on Atlantic commerce, and many bought human property. To them Lay announced in a booming voice that God Almighty respects all peoples equally, rich and poor, men and women, white and black alike. He said that slave keeping was the greatest sin in the world and asked, how can a people who profess the golden rule keep slaves? He then threw off his great coat, revealing the military garb, the book in the blade.

A murmur filled the hall as the prophet thundered his judgment: ‘Thus shall God shed the blood of those persons who enslaved their fellow creatures.’ He pulled out the sword, raised the book above his head, and plunged the sword through it. People gasped as the red liquid gushed down his arm; women swooned. To the shock of all, he spattered ‘blood’ on the slave keepers. He prophesied a dark, violent future: Quakers who failed to heed the prophet’s call must expect physical, moral and spiritual death.

The room exploded into chaos, but Lay stood quiet and still, ‘like a statue,’ a witness remarked. Several Quakers quickly surrounded the armed soldier of God and carried him from the building. He did not resist. He had made his point.

—Marcus Rediker

I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it [slavery]— but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by Legislative authority: and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting.

—George Washington

THE PAYMENT

To those conquistadors
who came here and tried
to replace our culture
with their own:

This is what the world
shall know about you.

You were nothing but unwelcome
visitors here,

your names and language
were left here
like forgotten baggage.
Here's what we have done:
We have kept your names
and language as payment
for the destruction you left
behind,
for lives lost,
for rape and enslavement,
for your gold lust.
No one will say now that
we are Hispanic or
Latino.
We are Indigenous People.
The names we carry and
the common language we speak
belong to us and we
are not giving them back.
They belong to the Indigenous now.
Our names are not Spanish
names. They are Mexican names.
The new language we speak
is not the Spanish language.
It is a Mexican language.
You did not erase our
Indigenous identities.
We still dance the fire dance.
We still dance the deer dance.
We remember and honor our ancestors.
You are gone, but
we are still here.
When people hear our names
and when people hear us speak,
they will say,
'Ah, there is one who carries
the blood,
A child of The Survivors.'
Our People live on.

—Richard Walker

CINCO DE MAYO

Happy Cinco de Mayo, a day to party while clad in red and white and green
To drink Coronas and eat Mexican rice with a side of refried beans.

You could drink a Margarita, or around a glass of Dos Equis your hand might be
curled
As you believe at least for a day you could be the most interesting man in the world.

But there is something you should know about Cinco de Mayo...something to
remember.
It does not celebrate Mexico's Independence Day, (that's the 16th of September).

Today celebrates the Battle of Puebla where a small number of Mexicans stopped
the advance
Of the larger, more equipped and better trained oncoming army of France.

It celebrates freedom and courage and pride in the face of an unbeatable foe
It celebrates the Mexican heritage and the people of Mexico.

In truth when we take the time to celebrate another countries spirit it's not very far
from our thoughts
To remember and celebrate our own country and the battles for freedom we've
fought.

It reminds us that freedom is precious, and should come with some chivalry
For we know the only way to enjoy freedom is for everyone to be free.

It's a time to remember that freedom has a price, not just today but every day.
For there are many people out in the world who would take that freedom away.

So as you raise a glass this Cinco de Mayo as you celebrate vociferously
Remember in a way you're celebrating all people who fight for the right to be free.

--Jim Yerman

For children, diversity needs to be real and not merely relegated to learning the
names of the usual suspects during Black History Month or enjoying south-of-the-
border cuisine on Cinco de Mayo. It means talking to and spending time with kids
not like them so that they may discover those kids are in fact just like them.

—John Ridley

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour.

--Frederick Douglas
(1852)

BULLET

Somebody shot a bullet, and my
brother died.

Somebody shot a bullet, and for a day
my momma cried.

Somebody shot a bullet, and my
brother's not here anymore.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and I
never will know why.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and my
brother had to die.

Somebody pulled a trigger, and I
won't forget that bang.

Somebody pulled a trigger, to be
accepted by a gang.

Somebody changed my world that
night, and I'm still asking why.

Somebody changed my world that
night when my brother had to die.

Somebody changed my world, and if
I could, I know what I'd do,

But I don't want to be like them—
So God, I'll leave it up to you.

—Anonymous Teen

Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Anyone who said he wasn't afraid during the civil rights movement was either a liar or without imagination. I was scared all the time. My hands didn't shake but inside I was shaking.

—James L. Farmer, Jr.

To be an American is to be accosted by bigotry and enmity for the rights that you were told to appreciate.

--Tennessee West

Only a few days after my encounter with the police, two patrolmen tackled Alton Sterling onto a car, then pinned him down on the ground and shot him in the chest while he was selling CDs in front of a convenience store, seventy-five miles up the road in Baton Rouge. A day after that, Philando Castile was shot in the passenger seat of his car during a police traffic stop in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, as his girlfriend recorded the aftermath via Facebook Live.

Then, the day after Castile was killed, five policemen were shot dead by a sniper in Dallas. It felt as if the world was subsumed by cascades of unceasing despair. I mourned for the family and friends of Sterling and Castille. I felt deep sympathy for the families of the policemen who died. I also felt a real fear that, as a result of what took place in Dallas, law enforcement would become more deeply entrenched in their biases against black men, leading to the possibility of even more violence.

The stream of names of those who have been killed at the hands of the police feels endless, and I become overwhelmed when I consider all the names we do not know—all of those who lost their lives and had no camera there to capture it, nothing to corroborate police reports that named them as threats. Closed cases. I watch the collective mourning transpire across my social-media feeds. I watch as people declare that they cannot get out of bed, cannot bear to go to work, cannot function as a human being is meant to function. This sense of anxiety is something I have become unsettlingly accustomed to. The familiar knot in my stomach. The tightness in my chest. But becoming accustomed to something does not mean that it does not take a toll. Systemic racism always takes a toll, whether it be by bullet or by blood clot.

--Clint Smith

Homicide through gun violence is the leading cause of death among young African American males in the United States. If people look a certain way, they have a higher tendency of dying, of having their lives taken away.

--Ryan Coogler

In 1990, when we started the *Black Community Crusade for Children*, we were always talking about all children, but we paid particular attention to children who were not white, who were poor, who were disabled, and who were the most vulnerable. I thought I knew what the black community wanted and needed, but thank goodness we decided to hold focus groups and do it multigenerational. We were floored when we found the top issue of concern in all generations of black folk was gun violence.

Parents didn't think their children would live to adulthood, and the children didn't think they were going to live to adulthood. That's when we started our first gun-violence campaign. We've lost 17 times more young black people to gun violence since 1968 than we lost in all the lynching in slavery.

Guns are the only unregulated consumer product. We regulate toy guns and pajamas and toasters, but we don't regulate something that kills 30,000-plus people a year. It's obscene, and it's a money business. It's not just the NRA. It's also because of the gun manufacturers. We're a violent nation, and we need to confront it. This gun plague has to stop.

—Marian Wright
Edelman

A *ProPublica* article in November noted that half of American gun death victims are men of color in 'poor, segregated neighborhoods that have little political clout.' Timothy Heaphy, a former U.S. Attorney in Virginia, says this is precisely why such killings don't capture the public's attention. 'I don't think we care about African-American lives as much as we care about white lives,' he said.

—Burt Constable

Black men are 14 times more likely than non-hispanic white men to be shot and killed with guns.

Black Americans make up 14 percent of the U.S. population but are victims of more than half of all gun homicides.

—*everytownresearch.org*.
(2015)

Our *Constitution* is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.

—John Marshall Harlan

Rosa Parks was the queen mother of a movement whose single act of heroism sparked the movement for freedom, justice and equality. Her greatest contribution is that she told us a regular person can make a difference.

—Marc Morial

The tragedy of the civil rights movement is that just as it achieved the beginning of the end of racial segregation, white educated elites became swept up in the glamour of the sexual revolution.

—Maggie Gallagher

What is a minority? The chosen heroes of this earth have been in a minority. There is not a social, political, or religious privilege that you enjoy today that was not bought for you by the blood and tears and patient suffering of the minority. It is the minority that have stood in the van of every moral conflict, and achieved all that is noble in the history of the world.

—John B. Gough

I'm a huge supporter of animal rights—and I've been an outspoken critic of the cruelties routinely inflicted on livestock at factory farms. But it really bothers me that the mistreatment of pigs and chickens and cows seems to attract a lot more attention and spark a lot more outrage than the abuse of immigrant workers.

—Eric Schlosser

If we talk about the environment...we have to talk about environmental racism—about the fact that kids in South Central Los Angeles have a third of the lung capacity of kids in Santa Monica.

—Danny Glover

When you teach a man to hate and fear his brother, when you teach that he is a lesser man because of his color or his beliefs or the policies he pursues, when you teach that those who differ from you threaten your freedom or your job or your family, then you also learn to confront others not as fellow citizens but as enemies—to be met not with cooperation but with conquest, to be subjugated and mastered.

We learn, at the last, to look at our brothers as aliens, men with whom we share a city, but not a community, men bound to us in common dwelling, but not in common effort. We learn to share only a common fear—only a common desire to retreat from each other—only a common impulse to meet disagreement with force. For all this there are no final answers.

Yet we know what we must do. It is to achieve true justice among our fellow citizens. The question is now what programs we should seek to enact. The question is

whether we can find in our own midst and in our own hearts that leadership of human purpose that will recognize the terrible truths of our existence.

We must admit the vanity of our false distinctions among men and learn to find our own advancement in the search for the advancement of all. We must admit in ourselves that our own children's future cannot be built on the misfortunes of others. We must recognize that this short life can neither be ennobled or enriched by hatred or revenge.

—Robert F. Kennedy

Racism remains, as it has since 1776, at the heart of this country's political life.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

I say that the lower race of human beings that constitute the substratum of what is termed the slave population of the South, elevates every white man in our community... It is the presence of a lower caste, those lower by their mental and physical organization, controlled by a higher intellect of the white man, that gives this superiority to the white laborer. Menial services are not there performed by the white man. We have none of our brethren sunk to the degradation of being menials. That belongs to the lower race—the descendants of Ham.

—Jefferson Davis

Working-class whites had been agents for racist terrorism since at least the draft riots of 1863; terrorism could not be neatly separated from the racist animus found in every class of whites. Indeed, in the area era of lynching, the daily newspapers often whipped up the fury of the white masses by invoking the last species of property that all white men held in common—white women. But to conceal the breath of white racism, these racist outbursts were often disregarded or treated not as racism but as the unfortunate side effect of legitimate grievances against capital. By focusing on that sympathetic laboring class, the sins of whiteness itself were, and are still being, evaded.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Some of the greatest crimes are not considered illegal. The African slave trade changed history by forcibly disrupting millions of lives in two worlds—it robbed Africa of its people and perverted the foundation of America with a national sin, while leaving more than 1 million bodies dead in the Atlantic.

—Reginald Hudlin

Black folk have been here 350 years, but if all the people vanished and the martians came to explore America, they wouldn't know we had even existed. All the icons, statuary and remembrances are white.

—Ed Dwight

We need to become world citizens, and such a trend is already under way. Economics and emigration move people around the globe at a rate history has never before witnessed. Social media have their downside, but they also put the entire world in the palm of your hand. Diversity is becoming the new normal. Although adults today may look askance at those Somali neighbors, their children will not wonder about their clothing, language, or religion—only about whether they listen to Beyoncé and play soccer.

—Robert L Kelly

Racism is the reason America cannot properly enter the 21st century. It pollutes and degrades every national dialogue we have, from education to health care to foreign-policy.

If you want to point to a date when our politics went ‘haywire,’ trying 1964. That was the year the Civil Rights Act was passed and the GOP sold its soul to become the party of racism in order to win elections in the Dixiecrat states. It was a desperate strategy by an out-of-touch party to maintain some power, but it worked—at the expense of our nation.

—Royal Mason

The story of black members of historically white fraternities is a complex one. Although the clubs started opening their ranks to African-Americans in the 1950s and '60s, they have few black members; nationally, only 3 percent of Beta Theta Pi's members are black, for example. There is reason to believe that official membership policy and actual practice diverge. In 2015, cell phone video of some Sigma Alpha Epsilon members from the University of Oklahoma singing a fraternity song became public:

There will never be a n—SAE
There will never be a n—SAE
You can hang him from a tree
But he'll never sing with me
There will never be a n—SAE

—Caitlin Flanagan

Our forbearers [assumed] that the black man, to become truly human and acceptable, must first become like us. This assumption once accepted, the Negro in America can only acquiesce in the obliteration of his own personality, the distortion and debasement of his own experience, surrendering to those forces which reduce the person to anonymity and which make themselves manifest daily all over this darkening world.

—James Baldwin

The seemingly insurmountable handicaps of enslavement in a culturally different country which legally and illegally prevented them from learning the culture of the controlling society while it ridiculed and attempted to erase the language and the culture of the African societies from which they had been stolen, Afro-Americans, prior to 1865, edited more than one hundred newspapers, published several volumes of poetry, penned many autobiographies and pamphlets, produced plays, and even wrote novels. Furthermore, their folk tales and songs had enriched America by providing what some scholars have described as the only indigenous American song and story.

—Darwin T. Turner

Until we are all free, we are none of us free.

—Emma Lazarus
(1849-1887)

The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson more than nods at Twain's interest—or, rather more appropriately, his concern—about race. In this novel Twain turns on its proverbial ear the misconception of racial inferiority as evidenced through language acquisition. Roxy, a slave woman who gives birth to a child sired by the slave master, switches her baby with that of the slave master's wife to avoid having her son sold down South. Through the strength of Roxy's character and the results of her actions, Twain makes clear that racial inferiority is not inherent (as many in his time believed) and that voice and language can be acquired by anyone who is put in the right environmental circumstances.

—Jocelyn Chadwick

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn must remain in classrooms throughout the country. It is educative not only for African Americans, but for anyone sitting in an American literature survey course. Does it stand in lieu of a good, substantive American history class that addresses African American's experiences under slavery? Of course not, but it certainly rounds out that experience. This is especially true in school districts that for budgetary or other reasons do not have access to many novels by African Americans who were Twain's contemporaries. But even if the district does have a budget that allows it to purchase class sets of Francis Harper's *Iola Leroy*, for example, it is still important to include a Twain novel, especially *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in the curriculum.

—Jocelyn Chadwick

I think there [are] very good reasons why the Negro in this country has been treated for such a long time in such a cruel way... Some of them are social, and... they have to do with our social panic, with our fear of losing status. This really amounts sometimes to a kind of social paranoia. One cannot afford to lose status on this peculiar

ladder, for the prevailing notion of American life seems to involve a kind of rung-by-rung ascension to some hideously desirable state. If this is one's concept of life, obviously one cannot afford to slip back one rung. When one slips, one slips back not a rung but back into chaos and no longer knows who he is. And this reason, this fear, suggests to me one of the real reasons for the status of the Negro in this country. In a way, the Negro tells us where the bottom is: because he is there, and where he is, beneath us, we know where the limits are and how far we must not fall. We must not fall beneath him. We must never allow ourselves to fall that low.

—James Baldwin

In the beginning I thought that the white world was very different from the world I was moving out of and I turned out to be entirely wrong. It seemed different. It seemed safer,...it seemed cleaner, it seemed more polite, and, of course, it seemed much richer from the material point of view. But I didn't meet anyone in that world who didn't suffer from the very same affliction that all the people I had fled from suffered from and that was that they didn't know who they were. They wanted to be something that they were not. And very shortly I didn't know who I was, either. I could not be certain whether I was really rich or really poor, really black or really white, really male or really female, really talented or a fraud, really strong or merely stubborn. In short, I had become an American. I had stepped into...the bottomless confusion which is both public and private, of the American republic.

—James Baldwin

Unfortunately, some teachers still presume literature by Afro-Americans to be merely a weed which sprouted overnight in their carefully cultured garden of classics. Or, even worse, they discount the flowerings of that literature as hallucinations visible only to persons hypnotized by protest, guilt, and sentimentality....Let it suffice to point out that literature by Afro-Americans is not new and... the study and the teaching of that literature are not new.

—Darwin T. Turner

Although the study of Afro-American literature is not as old as the material itself, it is not significantly younger than the formal study of American literature, which has earned academic respectability in this country only within the past eighty years. Two years before the end of the Civil War, William Wells Brown, a former slave, described the achievements of early Afro-American writers in *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*, and by 1915, the words of black writers were being read, memorized, recited, studied, and revered by black students in the schools into which blacks were segregated. During the 1920s four anthologies of Afro-American poetry, one of drama, and two general collections provided readers with examples of those kinds of works which the editors, in critical introductions,

distinguished from earlier Afro-American efforts described by Benjamin Brawley in *The Negro in Literature and Art in the United States*. The spate of anthologies during the Twenties was followed by an almost equally heavy flood of criticism during the Thirties. Vernon Loggins' *The Negro Author* (1931) was merely the first book-length critical history in a decade which also witnessed the publication of Sterling Brown's monumental *Negro Poetry and Drama* (1937) and the *Negro in American Fiction* (1937), Brawley's *The Negro Genius* (1937), and the first book-length critical biography of a black American author, Brawley's *Paul Laurence Dunbar: Poet of His People* (1936). In short, long before some of today's teachers were born, black American literature had been read, taught, and, too often, forgotten.

—Darwin T. Turner

The seemingly insurmountable handicaps of enslavement in a culturally different country which legally and illegally prevented them from learning the culture of the controlling society while it ridiculed and attempted to erase the language and the culture of the African societies from which they had been stolen, Afro-Americans, prior to 1865, edited more than one hundred newspapers, published several volumes of poetry, penned many autobiographies and pamphlets, produced plays, and even wrote novels. Furthermore, their folk tales and songs had enriched America by providing what some scholars have described as the only indigenous American song and story.

—Darwin T. Turner

A valuable early work is *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), the autobiography of a man who, during the nineteenth century, was a major fighter for rights for black people. Written to silence those skeptics who doubted that the articulate orator had actually been a slave, *Narrative* remains surprisingly readable and exciting more than a century later. Not as erudite and philosophical as Douglass' later autobiographies, it presents more vividly the picture of young Fred—a bold, handsome, brave, intelligent youth, who swore that no white man would ever whip him again and kept his promise.

—Darwin T. Turner

The best known black intellectual of the generation, W. E. B. Dubois, earned a Ph.D. in history from Harvard. Although Dubois wrote fiction and poetry, his most valuable work for younger readers is the *Souls of Black Folk* (1903), a collection of essays which perceptively present the spirit and the aspirations of black people. A second collection of writings, *Darkwater* (1920), is both interesting and significant; many readers will find it easier than Dubois' earlier volume.

—Darwin T. Turner

We must be careful to be teachers of literature and not of sociology. We do our students a disservice putting *Go Tell it on the Mountain* in a black literature course. Certainly, the black experience in America is not the same as the white middle-class experience, but *Go Tell it on the Mountain* is an initiation story and should be compared to other initiation stories. It too is a novel of working-class life but it ends on a very positive note. In putting Baldwin's book in a course called Black Literature, we are segregating the black imagination as well as black people. Perhaps it is time to emphasize that there is no difference between the black imagination and the white imagination, between the working-class imagination and the middle-class imagination, that literature is an expression of the human imagination, which at all times and in all places expresses the same wishes and the same nightmares.

—Audrey Renwick
Gibson

We cannot...overlook the works of Twain that...address the issues of race and stereotype. Clearly, Twain used his writing to work through issues of race for himself and his society, and when I read Twain's satires, I feel that he 'gets it.' Despite the culture surrounding him, Twain understood deeply that racism is wrong. For Twain to have depicted in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* a young hero who questioned racial inequality and an African American who was caring, compassionate, and strongly committed to his freedom was revolutionary indeed.

—Jocelyn Chadwick

A value is some aspect of human experience to be preserved, fought for, striven for, sacrificed for. If education is a value to me, then I sacrifice other things for education; if family is a value, then I sacrifice other things for family; if work is a value—etc. Americans profess a common set of values: Judeo-Christian values, political values, legal values, educational values, social values, economic and even cultural values. These values have often been observed more in the breach, and there has been no end of criticism of Americans for their values. Among the earliest and most impassioned of these critics must rank black writers who, from the beginning, have been questioning these values.

—Mary Rose
Shaughnessy

The distinguishing sign of slavery is to have a price, and to be bought for it.

—John Ruskin

Racism is not merely a simplistic hatred. It is, more often, broad sympathy towards some and broader skepticism toward others.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

Books can make a difference in dispelling prejudice and building community: not with role models and recipes, not with noble messages about the human family, but with enthralling stories that make us imagine the lives of others. A good story lets you know people as individuals in all their particularity and conflict; and once you see someone as a person—flawed, complex, striving—you’ve reached beyond stereotype.

--Hazel Rochman

The *Chinese Exclusion Act* of 1882 was the first American law that restricted immigration based on ethnicity, and it reflected a backlash against migrants who had come for the Gold Rush in 1848 and stayed to build the transcontinental railroad. While competition for jobs animated the arguments behind the ban, it was also linked to xenophobia with racist stereotypes feeding into the ‘Yellow Peril’ myth. Initially set to last for ten years, the ban was extended for ten years and then made permanent. It was repealed in 1943, to improve relations with China, a World War II ally, but large-scale immigration from that country didn’t resume until Congress passed the *Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965*, abolishing nation-origins quotas. In 2011 and 2012, the senate and the house of representatives both passed resolutions apologizing for the exclusion act.

—Robert F. Rosenberg

Conservatives wishing to disprove charges of racial bad faith have an obvious place to begin: GOP efforts to make voting harder for minorities, under the guise of preventing voter fraud. In theory, voter fraud is a legitimate, non-bigoted concern. The problem is, a mountains of evidence suggests that in the United States in 2017, it barely exists. Moreover, throughout U.S. history, white politicians have tried to prevent African-Americans from voting. And that’s exactly what some Republicans are trying to do today.

—Peter Beinart

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals found last year that North Carolina’s Republican-dominated legislature had restricted voting and registration in ways that targeted African-Americans with almost surgical precision. In 2016, a former GOP staffer in the Wisconsin State Legislature reported, ‘I was in the closed Senate Republican Caucus when the final round of multiple voter ID bills were being discussed. A handful of the GOP senators were giddy about the ramifications and literally singled out the prospects of suppressing minority and college voters.’ Too often, that’s what conservative ‘color blindness’ looks like when the cameras are off.

—Peter Beinart

Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

The photos of 14-year-old Emmett Till's mutilated body that appeared in Jet magazine and other publications in 1955 energized the U.S. civil-rights movement. Rosa Parks later stated that what happened to Till was what made her decide to protest on the bus that day in Montgomery, Alabama.

—Brian G. Gilmore

Imagine if you had genuine, high-quality early-childhood education for every child, and suddenly every black child in America...is getting a really good education. And they're graduating from high school at the same rates that whites are, and they are going to college at the same rates that whites are, and they are able to afford college at the same rates because the government has universal programs that say that you're not going to be barred from school just because of how much money your parents have.

So now they're all graduating. And let's also say that the Justice Department and the courts are making sure, as I've said in a speech before, that when Jamal sends his résumé in, he's getting treated the same as when Johnny sends his résumé in. Now, are we going to have suddenly the same number of CEOs, billionaires, etc., as the white community? In 10 years? Probably not, maybe not even in 20 years.

But I guarantee you that we would be thriving, we would be succeeding. We wouldn't have huge numbers of young African American men in jail. We'd have more family formation as college-graduated girls are meeting boys who are their peers, which then in turn means the next generation of kids are growing up that much better. And suddenly you've got a whole generation that's in a position to start using the incredible creativity that we see in music, and sports, and frankly even on the streets, channeled into starting all kinds of businesses. I feel pretty good about our odds in that situation.

—Barack Obama

Had it not been for James Meredith, who was willing to risk his life, the University of Mississippi would still be all white.

—Constance Baker
Motley

Many studies have discovered a close link between prejudice and 'patriotism'...Extreme bigots are almost always super-patriots.

--Gordon W. Allport

You're a Black educated fool, son. These white folk have newspapers, magazines, radios, spokesmen to get their ideas across. If they want to tell the world a lie, they can tell it so well that it becomes the truth; and if I tell them you're lying, they'll tell the world even if you prove you're telling the truth. Because it's the kind of lie they want to hear.

--Ralph Ellison

Prejudices, as is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks.

--Charlotte Brontë

Friendship based solely upon gratitude is like a photograph; with time it fades.

—Carmen Sylva

I am the American Dream. I am the epitome of what the American Dream basically said. It said, you could come from anywhere and be anything you want in this country. That's exactly what I've done.

—Whoopi Goldberg

OUR country's national crime is lynching. It is not the creature of an hour, the sudden outburst of uncontrolled fury, or the unspeakable brutality of an insane mob.

—Ida B. Wells

What brutalized me so much was that I knew what it is to hate.

—Black South African
Activist Winnie
Madikizela-
Mandela

In the early months of 1904, a black man named Luther Holbert was accused by neighbors in Doddsville, Mississippi, of killing a white farmer. Holbert was never given a chance to stand trial. Instead, he and an unnamed female companion were chased dozens of miles across Sunflower County before they were captured, tied to a tree, tortured with corkscrews and knives, and burned alive. Although hundreds of people observed the double lynching—according to newspaper reports, the crowd dined on deviled eggs, whiskey and lemonade—no monument was erected to remember the brutally murdered man and woman and no charges were ever brought against their killers.

—Matthew Shaer

The most common way people give up their power is not realizing they have it in the first place.

—Alice Walker

The United States has failed to tell the truth about slavery, racial terror lynching and the shameful mistreatment of people of color....We need truth and reconciliation in America, but I believe that process is sequential. We must first tell the truth before we can frame a response that heals and repairs the damage of racial injustice.

—Bryan Stevenson

Society tells my students that people like them should aspire to prison the same way I understood I would go to college. They only listen to media that reinforces what they've been told all their lives: that they are worthless and that they will die or be incarcerated before they reach twenty-five.

--Thommm Quackenbush

If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.

—Malcolm X

For too long, we financed our schools in a way that has systematically left large segments of our population behind.

—Ruben Hinojosa

[In California] The Foreign Miners' License Tax of 1850 had exacted a monthly fee of any non-citizen who wanted to work a claim. In 1854, an existing law prohibiting Negroes and Indians from testifying in court had been extended to also prohibit testimony by Chinese. The state legislature had barred 'Mongolians, Indians, and Negroes' from public school in 1860; had barred Chinese from employment in corporations or on public works projects in 1879; and had amended an existing miscegenation law to include Chinese in 1906. The state Alien Land Acts of 1913 and 1920 would for more than thirty years effectively prohibit land ownership in California to both Asians and their American-born children.

—Joan Didion

Misery is when you heard on the radio that the neighborhood you live in is a slum but you always thought it was home.

--Langston Hughes

Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil.

—Elie Wiesel

When the *Kerner Report* surfaced, in February 1968, black-power supporters felt cheered, and President Johnson was chagrined. H. Rap Brown, who was in a Louisiana jail cell for inciting a crowd, released an exultant statement: ‘The members of the commission should be put in jail under \$100,000 bail each because they’re saying essentially what I’ve been saying.’ For his part, an infuriated LBJ canceled the White House ceremony where he had been scheduled to accept a bound copy of the report, avoided public commentary on the eagerly anticipated document, and refused to sign customary letters recognizing the commissioners for their service. But Johnson’s effort to ignore the report failed utterly. The *Kerner Report* became an instant publishing phenomena; Bantam sold almost 1 million paperbacks in the first two weeks. Public appetite ran so strong that Marlon Brando read aloud excerpts of the volume on a late-night television talk show....The document stands out for its own unvarnished, unflinching identification of ‘white racism’ as the fundamental cause of urban unrest.

—Justin Driver

What white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it. Our Nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.

—*The Kerner Report*
(1968)

This Nation is confronted with the issue of justice for all its people—white as well as black, rural as well as urban... in speaking of the Negro, we do not speak of ‘them.’ We speak of us—for the freedoms and opportunities of all Americans are diminished and imperiled when they are denied to some Americans.

—*The Kerner Report*
(1968)

I believe that white people in America are decent people [and that] if they can be shown the terrible conditions in which other Americans live and how this threatens our society, they will join together to try to solve these problems

—Senator Fred Harris
(1968)

[After being transported by sweating rickshaw runners in Ceylon] I was very much ashamed of myself for being complicit in such despicable treatment of human beings but couldn’t change anything.

—Albert Einstein

Following the Watts riots in 1965, a California report explained the violence by invoking what came to be known as ‘the riffraff theory,’ the notion that a group of perpetual misfits (many of whom had migrated from the South) had plotted the unrest. Scholars immediately assailed this view, and the [Kerner] commission’s own profile of the typical rioter in 1967 belied the stereotype: Generally, rioters were educated, lifelong resident of their cities who—crucially— had at least seen or suffered police brutality.

—Justin Driver

On the exquisiteness of the Japanese woman, this flower-like creature—I have also remained reticent; for here the common mortal must cede the word to the poet.

—Albert Einstein

A cloak and suit manufacture, obviously born abroad, was taunted on his Americanism by a bigoted blue-blood. ‘What kind of American are you, after all?’ sneered the blue-blood. ‘Why, my ancestors came over on the Mayflower.’ The cloak and suit man, unperturbed, replied ‘Maybe it’s lucky they did. By the time I arrived, the immigration laws were a lot stricter.’

—Sam Levenson

Beware prejudices. They are like rats, and men’s minds are like traps; prejudices get in easily, but it is doubtful if they ever get out.

—Lord Jeffrey

The U.S. government has a sacred, solemn, inviolable obligation to enforce the laws of the United States to stop illegal immigration and to secure and protect the borders. There is no straying from that mission....You have one party that’s in favor of open borders, and you have one party that wants to secure the border. And all day long the American people are going to side with the party that wants to secure the border. And not by a little bit. Not 55-45. 60-40. 70-30. 80-20. I’m talking 90-10 on that.

—Stephen Miller, Senior
Advisor to the
President
(June 18, 2018)

Beyond a certain threshold—5 percent minority or 20 percent, it varies according to the mood of the region—neighborhoods suddenly go completely black or brown.

—Matthew Stewart

Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Atheists...They all taste like chicken.

—Grizzly Bear

The slaveholding elite were vastly more educated, healthier, and had much better table manners than the overwhelming majority of their fellow white people, never mind the people they enslaved. They dominated not only the government of the nation, but also its media, culture, and religion. Their votaries in the pulpits and the news networks were so successful in demonstrating the sanctity and beneficence of the slave system that millions of impoverished white people with no enslaved people to call their own conceived of it as an honor to lay down their life in the system's defense.

—Matthew Stewart

'Don't cross the border illegally.'

The only reason you are not in their shoes, seeking asylum, is because you had the sheer dumb luck to be born here. You have done nothing to deserve the privilege you have. You did not earn your citizenship. You. Were. Lucky.

—Internet Meme

They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one; they promised to take our land, and they took it.

—Red Cloud

Marian Greenup, one of a dozen girls and two boys who integrated Baton Rouge High School in 1963, the most unsettling day was the assassination in November of President John F. Kennedy, despised in much of the South for having sent federal troops to enforce desegregation orders. 'The school just rejoiced,' Greenup says. 'That really made me think, I can't to go back, I can't do this anymore.' In the end, she says, 'we decided we had to finish it out.'

—Amy Crawford

Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Several studies also show that experiencing racism might be part of the reason black women are about 50 percent more likely than white women to have premature babies and about twice as likely to have low-birth-weight babies. Researchers think the stress they experience might cause the body to go into labor too soon or to mount an immune attack against the fetus. This disparity, too, does not appear to be genetic: Black women from sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean are less likely to have preterm births than African American women are, possibly because they've spent less time living in America's racist environment.

—Olga Khazan

We need to reach that happy stage of our development when differences and diversity are not seen as sources of division and distrust, but of strength and inspiration.

—Josefa Iloilo

Predominantly black neighborhoods tend to become what researchers call ‘food swamps,’ or areas where fast-food joints outnumber healthier options. (Food deserts, by contrast, simply lack grocery stores.) One study in New York found that as the number of African Americans who lived in a given area increased, so did the distance to the nearest clothing store, pharmacy, electronics store, office-supply store. Meanwhile, one type of establishment drew nearer: fast-food restaurants.

—Olga Khazan

Maya Angelou’s poem ‘Human Family—Her signature plea, ‘We are more alike my friends, than unlike,’ is truly universal.

—Don Marine

The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and you spend twenty years proving that you do. Somebody says your head isn’t shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of this is necessary. There will always be one more thing.

—Toni Morrison

America never was America to me.

—Langston Hughes

Just because you live in suburban America, if you’re black or biracial, it doesn’t mean everything’s cool.

—Steve James

Rosa Parks drew solace & sustenance from the long history of Black resistance before her time, placing her action & the Montgomery bus boycott in the continuum of Black protest. Her speech notes during the boycott read: ‘Reading histories of others—Crispus Attucks through all wars—Richard Allen—Dr. Adam Clayton Powell Sr. & Jr. Women Phyllis Wheatley—Sojourner Truth—Harriet Tubman, Mary McLeod Bethune.’ For Parks, the ability to keep going, to know that the struggle for justice was possible amidst all the setbacks they encountered, was partly possible through reading & referencing the long Black struggle before her.

—Jeanne Theoharis

The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. it opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. in moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

--Frederick Douglass

The American dream we see in movies or in shows or in books, it's an American dream for white people. I don't think it exists.

—Esther Reyes

never
trust anyone
who says
they do not see color.
this means
to them,
you are invisible.

—Nayyirah Waheed

[Jim Crow-era Mississippi] was as close to a fascist state as has ever existed in the United States.

—Joseph B. Atkins

[1964 Mississippi] was a place where the tenets of white supremacy went virtually unchallenged in the press, in the pulpit and in politics.

—James W. Silver

In small-town Mississippi, you either stayed in step or kept your mouth shut if you wanted to stay in business, stay in town and stay above ground.

—Hodding Carter III

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

—Gwendolyn Brooks

The day my wife and I became citizens, in 2013, the officiant told us that America expected us to bring the best of ourselves to our new home and to weave that into the American DNA. We were becoming not just citizens but active citizens, responsible for improving America—speaking up, getting involved.

—José Andrés

I have a visceral reaction when I hear the word ‘Hispanic,’ a term that came down on us during the Nixon administration. It’s a term I’ve always had difficulty accepting, because it seemed to me a catch-all, false term to group us together—a group with diverse histories and relationships with one another. Lumping us all together as ‘Hispanics,’ whether it’s someone who just arrived from Spain or someone whose family was in Texas before Texas was even a state, seems to me a lack of awareness of who I am and the history of my people.

I used to define my self as Chicana—which means someone of Mexican descent—and Latina. Not anymore. Now I say I’m estadounidense (‘from the U.S.’) with Mexican roots, or Mexican with U.S. roots. Or simply, assembled in the U.S. from Mexican parts. There’s complexity in our situation. We shouldn’t define ourselves simply by borders.

—Sandra Cisneros

Latin people are the second-oldest ethnic group in America, after the Native Americans. We have unknown patriots who fought in the American Revolution—we are the sons and daughter of the American Revolution. Twenty thousand of us fought in the American Civil War. We had so many people participating, and it's like, wait a minute—how come I've never seen that in a Ken Burns documentary or in a Civil War movie? Why aren't we included? We're not just bystanders or leeches standing on the sidelines and enjoying the benefits of the Founding Fathers. We've shed blood for this country—made this country from the ground up.

—John Leguizamo

I always tell my kids that we are blessed in that we've inherited the cultural and historical wealth of not one but two countries. We are doubly blessed, and we are also doubly responsible because we have to make not one but two countries proud.

—Pati Jinich

Whatever may be tolerated in monarchical and despotic governments, no republic is safe that tolerates a privileged class, or denies to any of its citizens equal rights and equal means to maintain them.

—Frederick Douglass

The United States took another century to begin dismantling the legalized racism that continued unabated after the Civil War. Nonetheless, the core constitutional aspiration—in the 1780s, the 1860s, the 1960s, and the present—has been to create a tribe-transcending national identity.

—Amy Chua and Jed
Rubenfeld

For all its flaws, the United States is uniquely equipped to unite a diverse and divided society. Alone among the world powers, America has succeeded in forging a strong group-transcending national identity without requiring its citizens to shed or suppress their subgroup identities. In the United States, you can be Irish American, Syrian American, or Japanese American, and be intensely patriotic at the same time. We take this for granted, but consider how strange it would be to call someone 'Irish French' or 'Japanese Chinese.'

Most European and all East Asian countries originated as, and continue to be, ethnic nations, whose citizens are overwhelmingly composed of a particular ethnic group supplying the country's name as well as its national language and dominant culture. Strongly ethnic nations, such as China and Hungary, tend to be less embracing of minority cultures.

—Amy Chua and Jed
Rubenfeld

When I was 5, my mother brought me with her to New York City from Puerto Rico. The culture shock is still etched in my 86-year-old mind. The language, the snow—I had never seen snow—the racism, even among children, the name-calling. Suddenly, I was ‘different’! I had never been different. It was sink or swim, build character or give up. Thankfully, I had the model of my mommy’s grit.

—Rita Moreno

Mother made sure her little kids were subjected to a strict routine. We were given a timetable which covered our every waking moment, copies of which were posted by our bedside, in the sitting room and in the kitchen. Story hour meant that mother would read us novels and short stories by Guy de Maupassant, Oscar Wilde and Edmondo de Amicis. Soon we graduated to Tolstoy, Gogol and Turgenev. She read them to us in Chinese and I never realized until much later that the writers wrote them in different European languages. Comics were absolutely forbidden and so were Enid Blyton adventures and pop music. . . Lee Cyn and I soon went to a primary school nearby. . . After mother’s rigorous timetable, school became fun and easy-going.

—Ang Swee Chai

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

To inspire more students of color to pursue STEM, we have to redefine what excellent STEM instruction and curriculum look like. Instead of lectures and labs that are disconnected from everyday reality, students need to ‘remix the content they’ve internalized’ to create solutions for real people. This remixing involves developing an understanding of what problems can and cannot be solved with technology, learning how to source the necessary tools and work on a team, and discerning scope and scale. New models of learning need to be co-created by educators with the students and communities they serve. It’s nuanced, time-intensive work, and requires that more people engage in better conversations.

—Wisdom Amouzou

In the years before puberty, children do not see race as the firewall they do in later years.

—Stephanie Stokes
Oliver

‘What’s your sign?’ may soon morph into ‘What’s your DNA?’ It will be nice if someday we no longer find it necessary to segregate ourselves according to our long-ago lineage. We are, after all, descended from the same original source, and our differences, while interesting, are largely inconsequential.

—Kathleen Parker

A lot of times I hear people talk about coming to the United States in pursuit of economic opportunities. It’s funny for me to hear that because, for my family, it was never about money or economics. It was about the United States being a beacon of freedom. When I think about the Declaration of Independence, it’s not just a piece of paper to me. It has a lot of meaning—probably more meaning than for some people who grew up here, because they have not experienced any other way of life. Thanksgiving dinner for me is not just Thanksgiving dinner. It’s celebrating the United States and freedom. When I stand for the national anthem, I think of my grandparents and great-grandparents getting arrested by the communist government for no crimes other than ‘thought crimes.’ After you have lived in a country with no free press and no elections, it makes you appreciate democracy so much more.

—Vadim Backman

On the field, blacks have been able to be super giants. But, once our playing days are over, this is the end of it and we go back to the back of the bus again.

—Hank Aaron

Eighty-six percent of women in the U.S. have children....The majority of mothers also have jobs, which means that vast numbers of women of all races and classes are grappling with the same old problem: child care....and let’s not prettify things. Maternity can be impoverishing—the result of yet more social decisions. Female-headed households were overrepresented in families living below the poverty line, and black mothers are far more likely to be in this group than white mothers are. (By contrast, in France, to take one much-cited example, publicly funded nurseries and preschool are regarded as a social right; 95 percent of children attend the latter, and the percentage of GDP spending on children is more than twice what it is in the United States.)

—Laura Kipnis

As a black man who is not slight of stature, I am aware that displays of emotion that might be construed as passion or overlooked altogether coming from my white counterparts may easily be interpreted as threatening coming from me, or get me branded as an ‘angry black man.’ Black women, including Michelle Obama, have been called angry when they dare project a temperament other than sweetness and sunshine. Race is at least as important as gender in business communications if you are not a white male.

—Steve Brown

We’re all alive and well. All of us, Nora, Irka, Zygyus, my friends, my family. Tomorrow, along with all the other Jews, I’ll have to start wearing a white armband. To you I will always remain the same Renia, but to others I’ll become someone inferior: a girl wearing a white armband with a blue star. I will be a Jude.

I’m not crying or complaining. I’ve resigned myself to my fate. It just feels so strange and sorrowful. My school vacation and my dates with Zygyus are coming to an end. I don’t know when I’ll see him next. No news about Mamma. God protect us all.

Goodby, dear diary. I’m writing this while I’m still independent and free. Tomorrow I’ll be someone else but only on the outside. And perhaps one day I’ll greet you as someone else still. Grant me that, Lord God, I believe in you.

—Renia Spiegel, Polish
Teen and
Holocaust Victim,
[1941]

I don’t see why innocent and good guys have to pay for stuff that the Japanese do. Darn it anyhow us loyal Jap. Americans have no chance. When we’re outside, people look at us suspiciously and think we’re spies. Now that we’re in camp, the Japs look at us and say we’re bad because we still love America. And now the people outside want to take our citizenship away from us as if we’re the bad ones.

—Teenager Stanley
Hayami’s Diary
Entry from
Internment Camp
[1942]

Many white people freak out when they’re told that they will soon be a minority: Experiments show that when white people are told they will lose their majority status and related social advantages, they respond with anger toward and fear of ethnic minorities. But this response isn’t unique to working-class people—college students react in much the same way as other white people.

—Joan C. Williams

We are sometimes asked in the name of patriotism to forget the merits of [the Civil War], and to remember with equal admiration those who struck at the nation's life, and those who struck to save it—those who fought for slavery and those who fought for liberty...May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I forget the difference between the parties to that...bloody conflict.

—Frederick Douglass

To talk of kindness entering into a relation in which one party is robbed of wife, of children, of his hard earnings, of home, of friends, of society, of knowledge, and of all that makes this life desirable is most absurd, wicked, and preposterous.

—Frederick Douglass [On Slavery, 1850]

First, far from simply being markers of historic events and people, as proponents argue, these [Confederate] memorials were created and funded by Jim Crow governments to pay homage to a slave-owning society and to serve as blunt assertions of dominance over African-Americans.

Second, contrary to the claim that today's objections to the monuments are merely the product of contemporary political correctness, they were actively opposed at the time, often by African-Americans, as instruments of white power.

Finally, Confederate monuments aren't just heirlooms, the artifacts of a bygone era. Instead, American taxpayers are still heavily investing in these tributes today. We have found that, over the past ten years, taxpayers have directed at least \$40 million to Confederate monuments—statues, homes, parks, museums, libraries and cemeteries—and to Confederate heritage organizations.

—Brian Palmer and Seth Freed Wessler
[2018]

The Confederacy's foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.

—Alexander Hamilton
Stephens, [Vice
President of the
Confederacy, 1861]

Beginning roughly in 1890, an African-American was lynched, burned alive, or mutilated every week for the next 50 years. The rearrangement of a nation founded on the idea of equality into a country with a permanent second class meant re-domesticating the slaveholding planter philosophy of how things should be. Blacks would be relegated to a segregated economy, but this time, a more folksy sense of supremacy was also promulgated, a kind of Southern lifestyle every region of America could enjoy. The popularization of the Confederate rectangular Navy Jack flag would serve to rebrand the South as this distinctive place, home of a new easygoing racism. Now, everyone could have an Aunt Jemima cook you pancakes in the morning, and faithful retainer Uncle Ben serve the converted rice at dinner. They were right there on the boxes at the local grocery, available for purchase.

—Jack Hitt

The idea that some lives matter less is the root cause of all that is wrong with the world.

—Internet Meme

Researchers have proven, scientifically, that humans are all one people. The color of our ancestors' skin and ultimately my skin and your skin is a consequence of ultraviolet light, of latitude and climate. Despite our recent sad conflicts here in the U.S., there really is no such thing as race. We are one species—each of us much, much more alike than different. We all come from Africa. We all are of the same stardust. We are all going to live and die on the same planet, a Pale Blue Dot in the vastness of space. We have to work together.

—Bill Nye

When I was bleeding to death in my black hawk helicopter on that dusty field in Iraq, I didn't care if the American troops risking their lives to help save me were gay, straight, transgender, black, white, male or female. All that mattered was they didn't leave me behind.

—Tammy Duckworth

It can be lonely....And there have been times when I've retreated to my hotel room, emotionally exhausted from being visibly invisible all day.

—Rachel Howzell Hall

...education and wisdom....It is a very painful and very important topic for Koreans. It's an important topic for everybody, but for Koreans? They kind of hold it almost like some sort of bizarre idol, like they're really attached to what it means.

—Min Jin Lee

When Americans first voted in 1788, only property holders had the right to cast ballots. The rationale was that only white male landowners could be completely independent. But by 1968, when Shirley Chisholm first ran for Congress, many Americans were looking for an alternative to ‘The Man’—the white male leader who drew much of his support from special interest groups. Although Chisholm was initially shunned by the Democratic establishment, she became the first black woman elected to Congress, where she represented New York’s 12th District for seven terms. She ran for president in 1972 under the slogan ‘Unbought and Unbossed’—a compelling statement of independence from a woman whose ancestors had existed outside American power structures for hundreds of years.

—*smithsonian.com*

Willie Mae ‘Big Mama’ Thornton was 25 years old when the 19-year-old songwriters Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller wrote her first and only hit, tailoring it to her voice. ‘We wanted her to growl it,’ Stoller later told Rolling Stone. Growl it she did—and the record sold more than half a million copies, helping usher in the dawn of rock’n’ roll. A few years later, 21-year-old Elvis Presley recorded his own version, which Lieber initially found annoying. ‘I have no idea what that rabbit business is all about,’ he wrote. ‘The song is not about a dog; it’s about a man, a freeloading gigolo.’ But Presley’s recording went on to sell ten million copies. To this day, few Elvis fans realize that ‘Hound Dog’ started life as an anthem of black female power.

—*smithsonian.com*

When Nannie Helen Burroughs opened a school for young African-American women in 1909, its motto was ‘We specialize in the wholly impossible.’ Burroughs initially managed to fund the school entirely from within the black community, largely through small donations from other women. The school was unlike any other at the time: It offered vocational training alongside high school and junior college academics. Graduates entered the work force with the skills to become domestic workers or bookkeepers, but they also had a financial savvy and independence their mothers had never had. Burroughs also insisted that students learn African-American history. As she declared in a 1934 speech: ‘I want you to take the struggles, the hardships, and the handicaps of this civilization and turn them into stepping-stones.

—*smithsonian.com*

Straight white males in America have never had to fight for their civil liberties; they have been endowed with such rights since the conception of the country. The entire pursuit of civil rights in this country has been a game of catch-up; women and racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities aren’t pursuing ‘special rights’—the pursuit has always been one for equal rights.

—Phoebe Solomon

In graduate school, early on, I once overheard a classmate talking in her office as I walked by. She didn't know I was there. She was gossiping about me to a group of our classmates & said I was the affirmative-action student...Rationally, I know it was absurd, but hearing how she & maybe others saw me hurt real bad...I stopped joking about being a slacker. I tripled the number of projects I was involved with. I was excellent most of the time. I fell short some of the time. I made sure I got good grades. I made sure my comprehensive exams were solid. I wrote conference proposals & had them accepted. I published. I designed an overly ambitious research project for my dissertation that kind of made me want to die. No matter what I did, I heard that girl, that girl who had accomplished a fraction of a fraction of what I had, telling a group of our peers I was the one who did not deserve to be in our program.

—Roxane Gay

When I see Mexican flags waved at pro-immigration demonstrations, I sometimes feel a flush of patriotic resentment. When I'm forced to use a translator to communicate with the guy fixing my car, I feel a certain frustration.

—Barack Obama

Since the 1980s, arts education has declined disproportionately for certain groups. Black students, and students whose parents have less than a high school diploma, have experienced a 50% and 77% decline in school-based exposure to the arts, while white students and those with college-educated parents have experienced virtually no decrease.

This shameful discrepancy is yet another example of the educational injustice that pervades our system. All children deserve a well-rounded education that inspires and engages them and introduces them to the delights of theater, music, and visual arts. Yet too often, poor children attend schools where their educational experience is reduced to a colorless line up of low-level math and rudimentary literacy.

One reason for this is that low-income children often enter school behind in math and literacy skills. Educators want to ensure their students can catch up, and thus dedicate more time to basic math and reading skills and less time for art and field trips. It is true that students who start school behind benefit from extended, high-quality instruction in math and literacy, but the flip side of this is also true: spending less time on other subjects can actually have a damaging effect on learning.

Too few educators understand that broad and robust background knowledge—built through a rich, comprehensive curriculum that includes study of and exposure to the arts, both in and out of school—is actually vital to helping children become great readers, writers, and thinkers. Furthermore, the engagement that stems from in-school opportunities to discover and pursue co-curricular passions and talents spills over to academic classes.

—Eva Moskowitz (2019)

The severest self-harm, suicide, is very much a problem of the native-born. Suicide rates have surged since 1999. But white people commit suicide at nearly three times the rate of ethnic minorities. The states with the highest percentages of immigrants have suffered least from the suicide surge; the states with the lowest percentages have suffered most.

—David From

A recent study of 13-year-olds in 6 countries placed Americans last in mathematics and Koreans first. But when students were asked whether they were ‘good at mathematics,’ 68 percent of the Americans said yes (the highest), compared with only 23 percent of the Koreans (the lowest).

This was no quirk. The psychologist Harold Stevenson, of the University of Michigan, who has studied American and Asian students for years, finds the same relationship. Americans score lower in achievement but, along with their parents, are more satisfied with their performance.

‘If children believe they are already doing well—and their parents agree with them—what is the purpose of studying harder?’ he writes.

—Robert J. Samuelson

I’ve been called every racial slur in the book. I’ve been told explicitly that people who look like me don’t play golf, we don’t have a right to exist in America, you should go home. It would definitely faze me a little bit, but it never deterred me. I’m really stubborn, so I’m going to prove you wrong, just wait. When people think they’re dragging me down, it kind of fuels the fire in me that I’m going to be a better golfer, I’m going to be a better student, I’m going to keep climbing up the ladder.

—Noor Ahmed (Muslim golfer at the University of Nebraska)

America is not yet Dubai or Qatar or ancient Athens, where citizenship is almost an aristocratic status rather than the shared birthright of all residents. But more and more of the people who live among Americans are not on equal legal footing with Americans. They cannot vote. They cannot qualify as jurors. If they commit a crime, they are subject not only to prison but to deportation. And because these noncitizen are keenly aware of those things, they adjust their behavior. They keep a low profile. They do not complain to the authorities if, say, their boss cheats them out of some of their pay, or if they’ve been attacked on the street, or if they are abused by a parent or partner at home.

—David From

The children and children's children of all of us have to live here in this land together. Our children's children will intermarry, one with another, your children's children, friends, and mine. They will be the citizens of one country.

—Theodore Roosevelt

It was awful to be Negro and have no control over my life. It was brutal to be young and already trained to sit quietly and listen to charges brought against my color with no chance of defense. We should all be dead. I thought I should like to see us all dead, one on top of the other. A pyramid of flesh with the whitefolks on the bottom, as the broad base, then the Indians with their silly tomahawks and teepees and wigwams and treaties, the Negroes with their mops and recipes and cotton sacks and spirituals sticking out of their mouths. The Dutch children should all stumble in their wooden shoes and break their necks. The French should choke to death on the Louisiana Purchase (1803) while silkworms ate all the Chinese with their stupid pigtails. As a species, we were an abomination. All of us.

—Maya Angelou

The world should not pass judgement upon the Negro, and especially the Negro youth, too quickly or too harshly. The Negro boy has obstacles, discouragements and temptations to battle with that are little known to those not situated as he is.

—Booker T. Washington

We were color-blind while we were in combat in Vietnam. In the field everybody covered everybody. Once we got back to the States, we segregated ourselves. Blacks had their place; Hispanics had their place; Caucasians had their place.

—Gumersindo Gomez

Growing up in the 1970s, all I knew was the Army. As a kid, because of my father's job as a drill sergeant, I lived on Army bases and went to Army schools. Army life is a society within a society. As a child, I did not encounter prejudice. You have no choice who your neighbor is. It's whoever the Army assigns. If Koreans are assigned, then your neighbors are Korean. If blacks are assigned, then your neighbors are black. You all go to school together. You depend on one another. Your dads work together. You get to be friends with everybody. But then when I was 13, my parents got divorced—Eva is my stepmother—and I moved to Georgia with my mother. That was the first time I experienced prejudice. I'll never forget sitting in class and the kid next to me says, 'What are you, black or white?' I said, 'I'm Puerto Rican.' He said, 'No, you're black or white. And you ain't white.' It blew my mind because, in Army society, everyone was equal.

—Giovanni Gomez

With few exceptions, the Negro youth must work harder and must perform his tasks even better than a white youth in order to secure recognition. But out of the hard and unusual struggle through which he is compelled to pass, he gets a strength, a confidence, that one missed whose pathway is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race.

—Booker T. Washington

American diversity rarely applies to money and success.

—Suzanne Munshower

We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes, but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

...an old adage I've been told throughout my life as an African American man—that you have to be twice as good just to be considered equal.

—Randal Pinkett

How can we love our country and not love our countrymen?

—Ronald Reagan

[About growing up white in the 1950s segregated South] It's that obliviousness, the unexamined assumption, that so pains me now. How could I not have wondered, not have asked. [Going north to school] threw wide the door of my ignorant childhood, and the future, the heartbroken future filled with hitherto unasked questions, strolled easefully in. It wounded me, then and there, with the great sadness and tragedy of our American life, with the truth of all that I had not seen, had not known, and had not asked.

—Sally Mann

African Americans are present on death row at three times their proportion in the national population. Not to see color, its legacies and its enduring effects on our society, is not to see. What's struck me...is how much of the white South has been acculturated to not see or think about the victimization of black people, their humiliation through Jim Crow, their terror in the face of lynching and racial violence and the constant degradation as human.

—Bryan Stevenson

A black boy born to a wealthy family is more than twice as likely to end up poor as a white boy from a wealthy family.

—Raj Chetty

Black families lost far more wealth in the Great Recession than white families did. Our system of incarceration imprisons one in three African American men over the course of their lifetimes. Black American women are three times as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes as white women are. The long history of oppression and prejudice has shaped everything from attitudes to housing patterns. Only by understanding this history can we hope to at last transcend it.

—Drew Gilpin Faust

If you can only be tall because someone else is on their knees, then you have a serious problem.

—Toni Morrison

No country has worked harder than the Philippines to export its people, and no people have proved more eager to go. Since the mid-1970s, the government has trained and marketed overseas workers, not just drumming up jobs but fashioning a brand—casting the Filipino as a genial hard worker, the best in low-cost labor.

—Jason DeParle

What I ask for the negro is not benevolence, not pity, not sympathy, but simply justice. The American people have always been anxious to know what they shall do with us...I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us! Your doing with us has already played the mischief with us. Do nothing with us!

—Frederick Douglass
(1818-1895)

The land was rested first from Native Americans, by force. It was then cleared, watered, and made productive for intensive agriculture by the labor of enslaved Africans, who after Emancipation would come to own a portion of it. Later, through a variety of means—sometimes legal, often coercive, in many cases legal and coercive, occasionally violent—farmland owned by black people came into the hands of white people. It was aggregated into larger holdings, then aggregated again, eventually attracting the interest of Wall Street....A war waged by deed of title has dispossessed 98 percent of black agricultural landowners in America. They have lost 12 million acres over the past century. But even that statement falsely consigns the losses to long-ago history. In fact, the losses mostly occurred within living memory, from the 1950s onward. Today, except for a handful of farmers...who have been able to keep or get back some land, black people in...the Deep South own almost nothing of the bounty under their feet.

—Vann R. Newkirk II

The telling factor, looking at it from the long view, is that at the time of World War I there were 1 million black farmers, and in 1992 there were 18,000.

—Phil Fraas

In 1984 and 1985, at the height of the fam crisis, the USDA lent a total of \$1.3 billion to nearly 16,000 farmers to help them maintain their land. Only 209 of those farmers were black.

—*The Nation* (2005)

The past will remain horrible for exactly as long as we refuse to assess it honestly.

—James Baldwin

Fascism is cured by reading, and racism is cured by traveling.

—Miguel de Unamuno