


The Color

of My

Resilience:

*A Guided Self-Care Journal for
Black Men*

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
N.D. JONES



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This Journal
Belongs To:



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Introduction

My Why and What

I dedicated my first full-length novel to my father—Nathaniel Jones Jr. He died of a heart attack at age fifty-four—a few months after my son’s first birthday. Smoked cigarettes. Internalized emotions. Worked long hours. Had high blood pressure. My oldest brother relayed the awful news. Our father not only had a heart attack but had also died. I had seen and spoken to my father earlier that day, unknowing the next time I would see him would be in a hospital emergency room—him gone and our family left wondering why him . . . why now.



The Color of My Resilience



“The African race is a rubber ball. The harder you dash it to the ground, the higher it will rise.” – African Proverb

I dedicated my first futuristic fantasy novel to my third oldest brother—Brian Jones. He died in 2015 at the age of fifty. In and out of prison, on and off drugs, he lived a life I could not understand. When not in one and on the other, he was a good person and an even better brother. He died after being struck by a CSX train. My mother was told he had been sitting on the train tracks and did not move at the sound of the approaching train. Many questions and doubts from the family but no investigation. Just another dead Black man in Baltimore City. We cremated my brother. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Trayvon Martin (1995-2012) and George Floyd (1973-2020), two more book dedications to honor, to remember that Black lives have meaning . . . have value. Yes, the lives of Black men matter. Not a bandwagon slogan but a rallying cry for so much—the least of which is humane treatment. As a wife, mother and sister of Black men, my heart soars with love and pride but also tightens from concerns born of too many fears.

But fear, like other strong emotions, can serve, if allowed, as a powerful motivator for change . . . for action. This book is my action, or rather, my reaction to the current and historic struggle of Black men to challenge the oppressive forces without while also owning and managing any hampering forces within.

N. D. JONES



Not-So-Fun Facts

- 43.7% of Black men die of heart disease and cancer
- 9.4% of Black men die of unintentional injuries
- 35.3% of Black men age 1-19 years die of homicide
- 27.6% of Black men age 20-44 years die from homicide
- 6.5% of Black men age 20-44 die of suicide
- 4.5% of Black men age 65-84 years die of chronic respiratory disease
- 5.9% of Black men age 85 years and older die of Alzheimer's disease

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Leading Causes of Death - Males - Non-Hispanic black - United States, 2017 (2019)*





"One positive thought
produces millions of
positive vibrations."
– John Coltrane

How This Book is Organized

The book is divided into five chapters and three parts. The first chapter—The Man with Resolve: How Do I Persevere?—provides an opportunity for you to describe your struggles and to reflect on your resilience. The other four chapters—The Man in the Mirror, The Man with Heart, The Man with Helping Hands, and the Man of Good Health—cover aspects of resilience, such as self-care and management of emotions. This is the guidebook portion of the book. Each chapter includes topics that contribute to the Not-So-Fun Facts listed above. Keep this question in mind: What is within my sphere of control and influence? Your answers are the rich soil from which the most flagrant perennials will grow. You are your best change agent.

The second part of the book is the journal. While there are opportunities to journal in part one, part two provides six different reflection strategies—long and short reflections, notes of appreciation, artful thinking, letters to emotions, and perspective writing from a selection of timely and relevant topics. You may find you prefer one or two methods over the others. Comfort level and engagement are essential, but consider trying them all once. Sometimes, a gem is hidden in plain sight.



“Everybody’s at war with
different things...I’m at
war with my own heart
sometimes.”

— Tupac Shakur

The third part of the book—Leveling Up—contains copies of the forms and reflection pages from part one. Think of this book as a “living” document. The topics and activities are not timebound. They are meant to serve you for years to come—long after you have filled the pages with your wisdom, happiness, and, yes, even with your heartache. When you brainstorm a Month of Joy activities in part one, for example, turn the task into a healthy, lifelong practice. When you identify your allies at home, work and school, allow the importance of forming allies to follow you through every aspect of your life. Section three is a reminder that resilience is as much about knowing, doing, and reflecting as it is about knowing, doing, and reflecting over and over again.

Finally, there are essays written by Black men. From a Meyerhoff Scholar graduate to a historian and educator to a poet and songwriter, these men have opened their hearts and shared their stories of resilience.



“Everybody’s at war with different things...I’m at war with my own heart sometimes.”
— Tupac Shakur

What This Book Is and What It Is Not

The Color of My Resilience is a guidebook and journal intended to foster and support self-awareness and reflection in a safe environment. Despite the personal and sensitive nature of the topics herein, this book does not offer advice or seek to replace medical treatment. If you are in therapy or counseling, follow orders from your medical professional. If you require medical support, seek the necessary assistance from a qualified and licensed professional.

Finally, all journeys do not need to be undertaken alone or in secret. Indeed, some of the best trips are those traveled with others. Two key ingredients to building resilience are the willingness to experience vulnerability and the strength to say no.

On behalf of those who love and care about you, thank you for choosing to increase your resilience.

Stay safe.

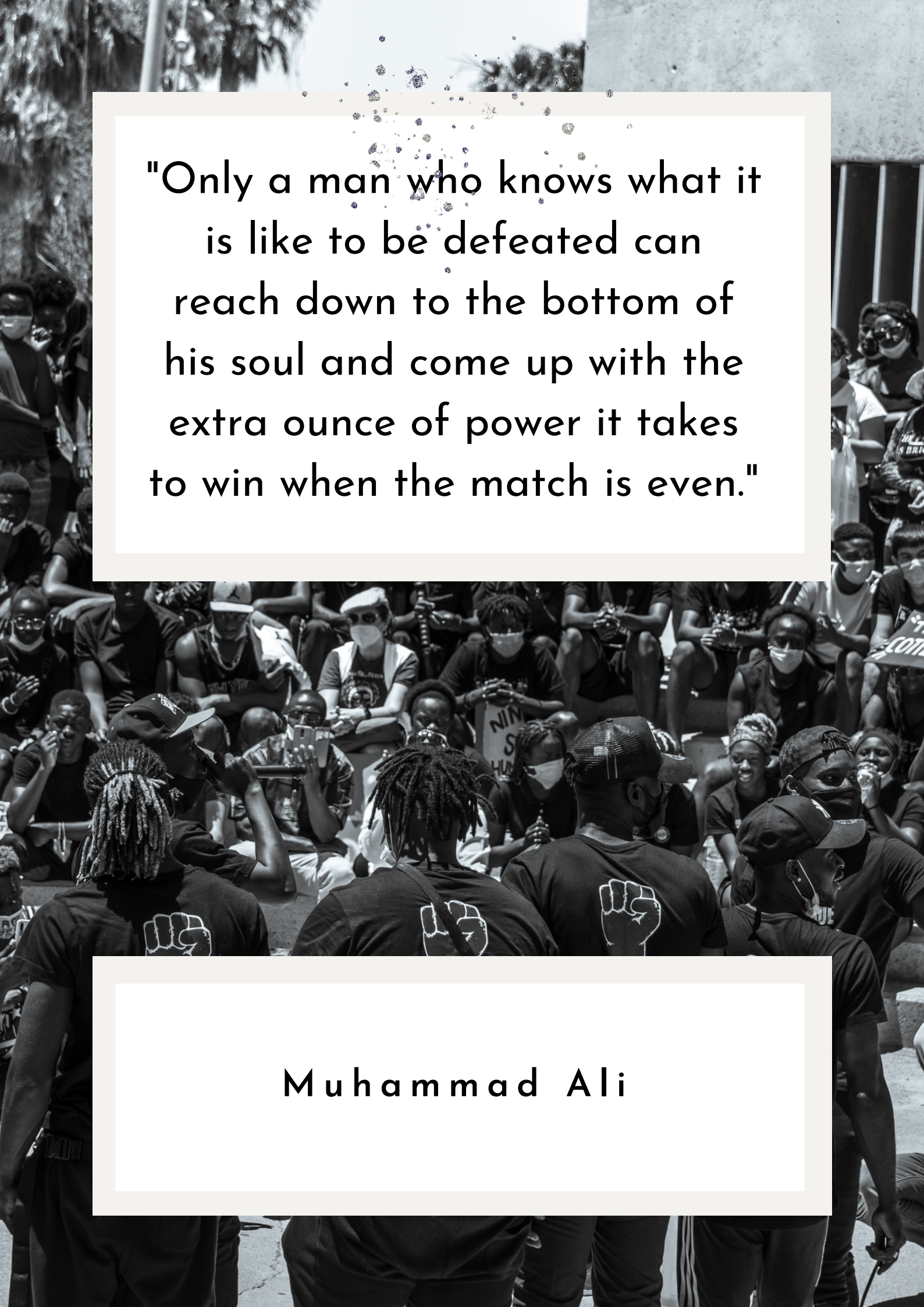
Be healthy.

Be. Resilient.



PART 1

GUIDEBOOK



"Only a man who knows what it is like to be defeated can reach down to the bottom of his soul and come up with the extra ounce of power it takes to win when the match is even."

Muhammad Ali

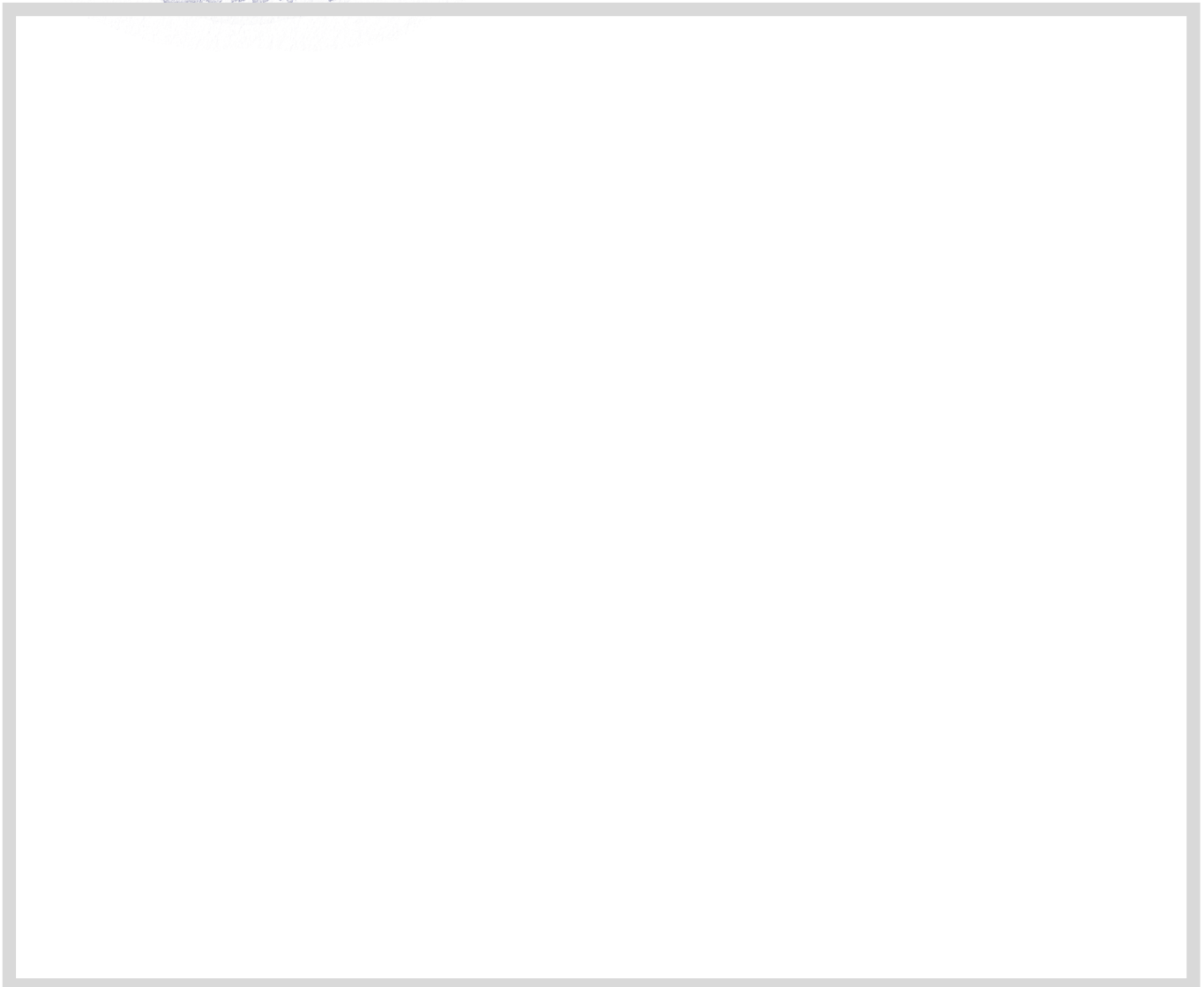


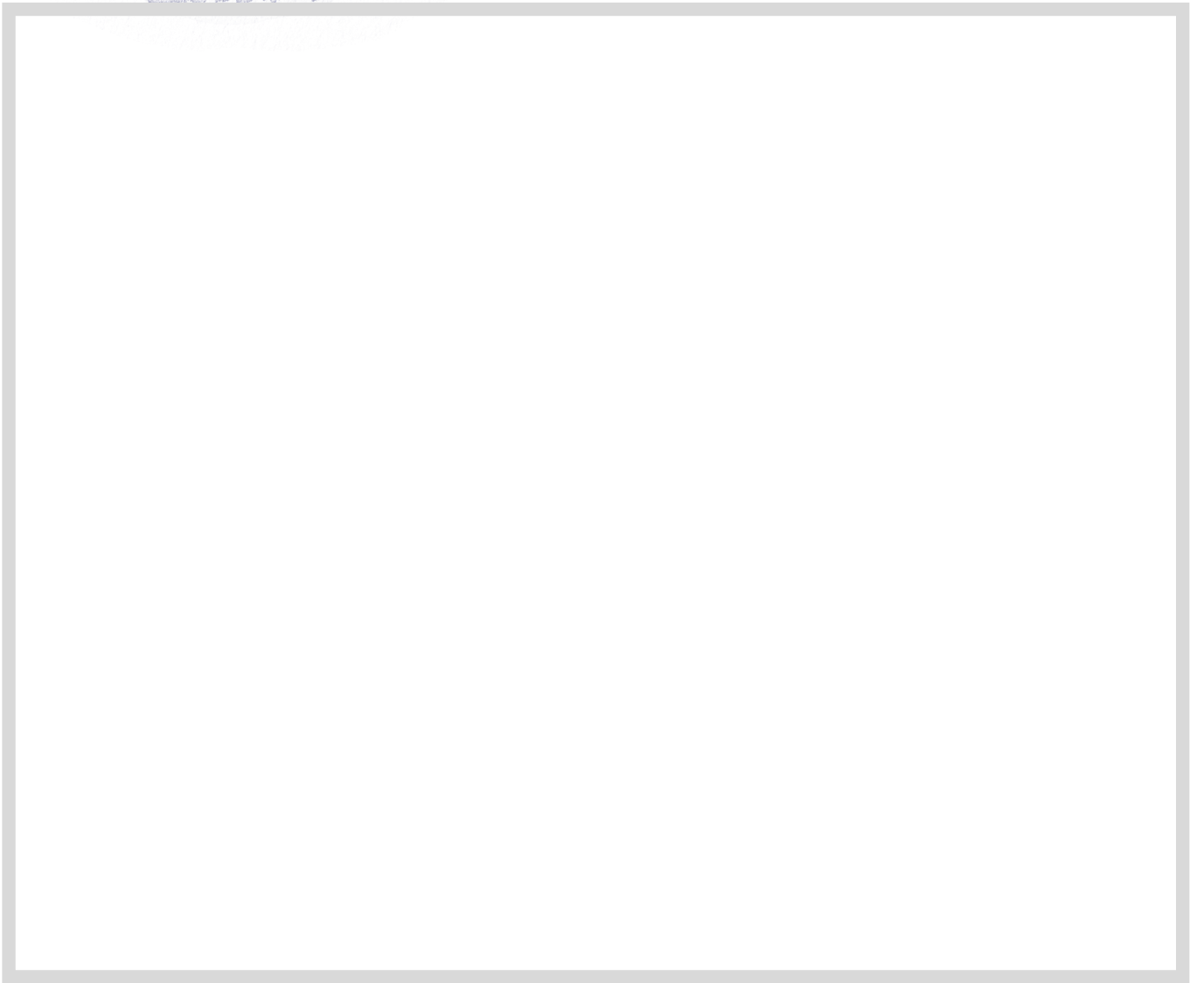
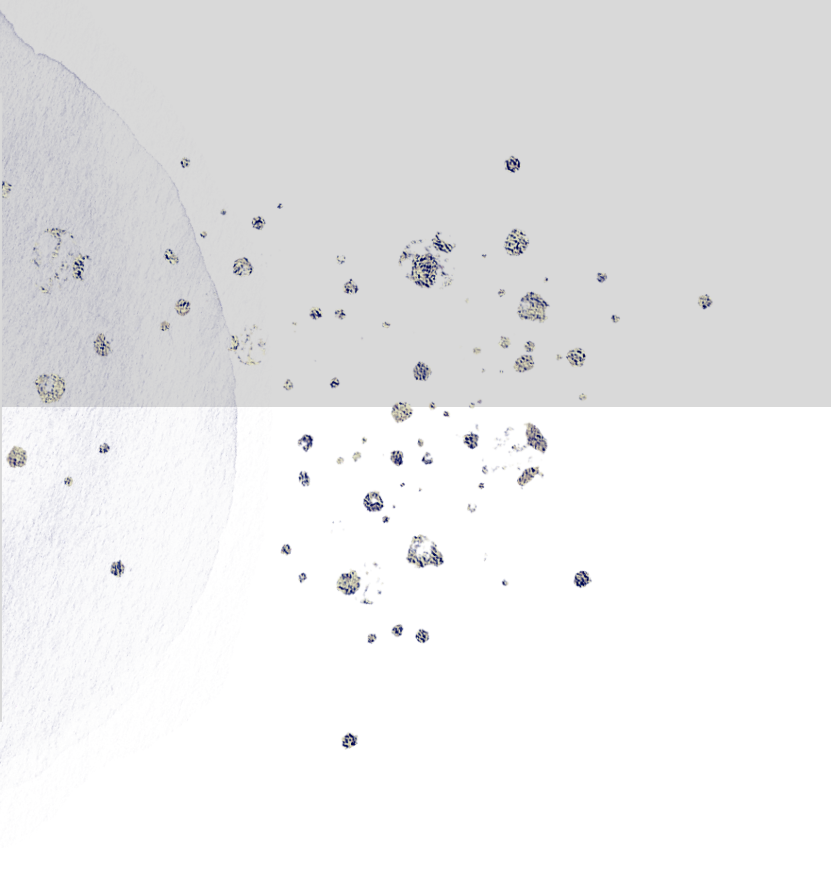
The Man with Resolve

How Do I
Persevere?



What it means for me to be a Black/African American man
in the 21st century





"I VIEW MYSELF AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES."



RT Cage
Retired Geographer and College Professor

More than ever today as a Black man, I view myself as an endangered species. I experienced racism at an early age but was unaware of it. It was a cold January 1954; I had developed pneumonia at one-month-old. My parents caught a cab to Mercy Hospital in Baltimore where I could not be admitted because they did not accept Black babies. So my father wrapped me back up in my blankets and my parents walked a mile to University Hospital, which did not have an issue accepting me. Ironically, my father died of a massive heart attack at Mercy Hospital forty-three years later. As for me, it would be another fifteen years before I would encounter racism up close and personal.

During this period, I was naïve to racist acts that involved me directly because the white people I encountered were mostly nice. My high school was ninety-five percent Black, but college and the workforce were when I encountered more white people and their idiosyncrasies. As I grew older, I understood why my father would cheer on the American Indians when watching cowboy movies and why he addressed white people straight up. One day, a homeless, white man approached him for a handout. My dad replied, "Why are you begging me? You can be president of the United States." Unfortunately, he passed eleven years before Barack Obama was elected. For the most part, I got along with the white people I met. However, as I transcended the hierarchies of life in pursuit of a career, I found that to be the exception and not the rule. More often than not, I was the only Black person in the room. This was especially the case when my job required me to attend trainings or to travel.

RT Cage

Retired Geographer and College Professor

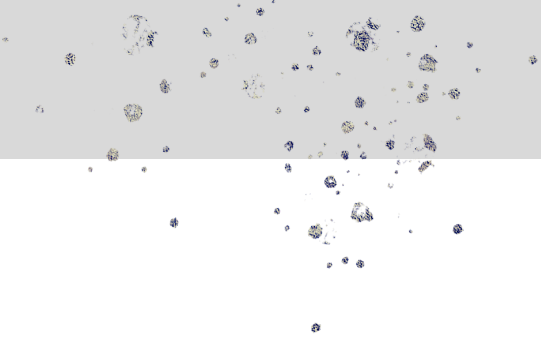
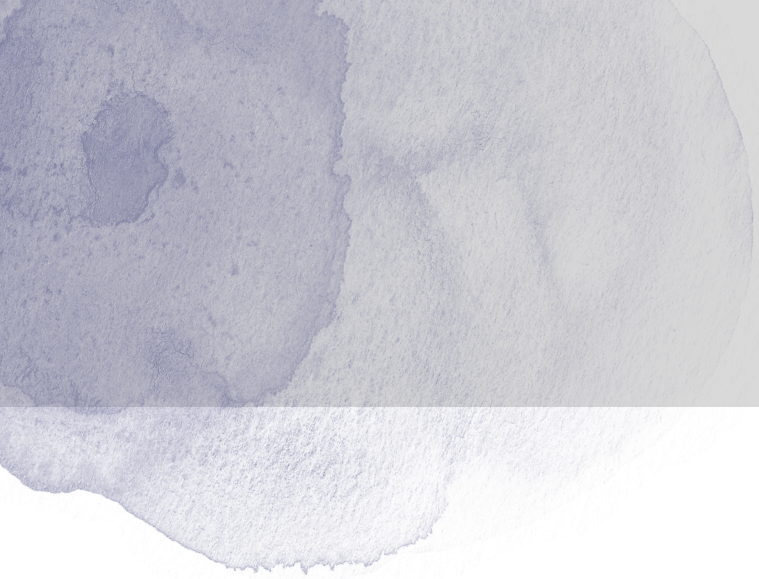
I am a geographer by profession; maps and dogs were my first loves, then I discovered girls. I studied geography as a discipline, worked in the field for thirty-one years, and taught same at two colleges for sixteen years. Possessing high degrees of fortitude and temperance in conjunction with a "sixth sense" enabled my success in graduate school as it has throughout life. Having that steadfast purpose of the mind that enables you to undergo any task and restraint upon the passions that free the mind to stay focused on the task. Opportunities to enhance personal development opened the door to reaching plateaus that required a change of mindset, transcended my thought-patterns to a higher echelon, thereby turning obstacles into advantages. I did not find myself until age thirty-eight, and as life progresses, I recognize my foibles as lessons to the living and admit to being eccentric. The poem "IF," by Rudyard Kipling truly defines me.

A photograph of a man with a goatee, wearing a black sleeveless shirt and black shorts. He has his hands clasped in front of him and is looking slightly to the left with a thoughtful expression. The background is a dark grey gradient.

**WHAT'S ON MY
MIND?**

WHAT'S MY WHY?





BLACK DEMOGRAPHICS



Est. 2007

BLACK DEMOGRAPHICS



Educational Attainment

Black Men

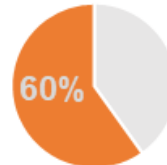
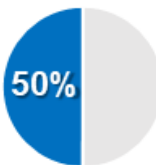
age 25 and older



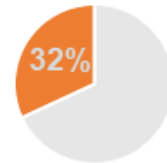
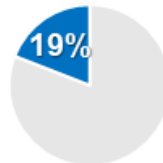
Black Men

All Men

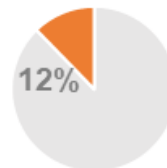
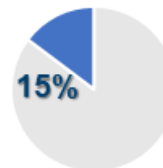
Attended college



Bachelor's degree and higher



Less than high school diploma

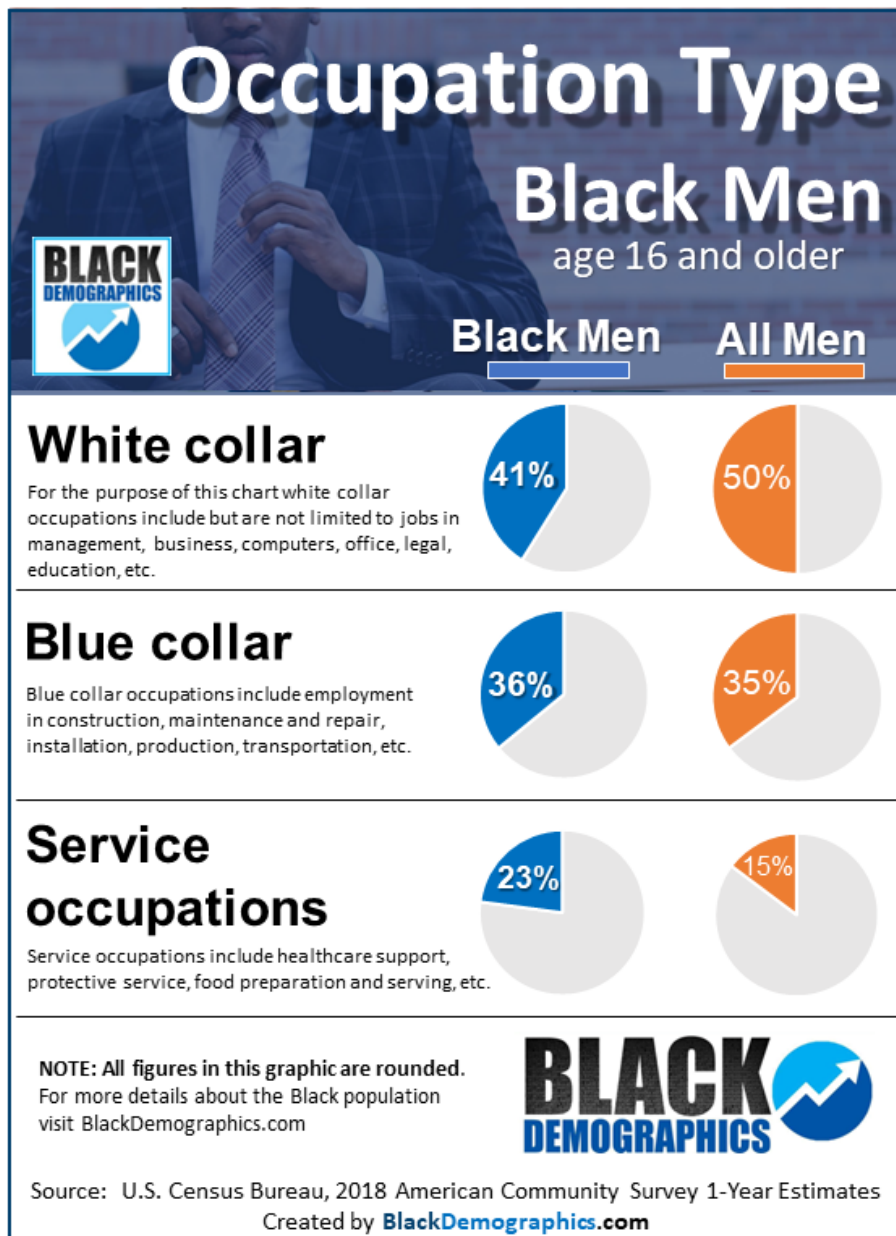


NOTE: All figures in this graphic are rounded.
For more details about the Black population
visit BlackDemographics.com



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Created by BlackDemographics.com

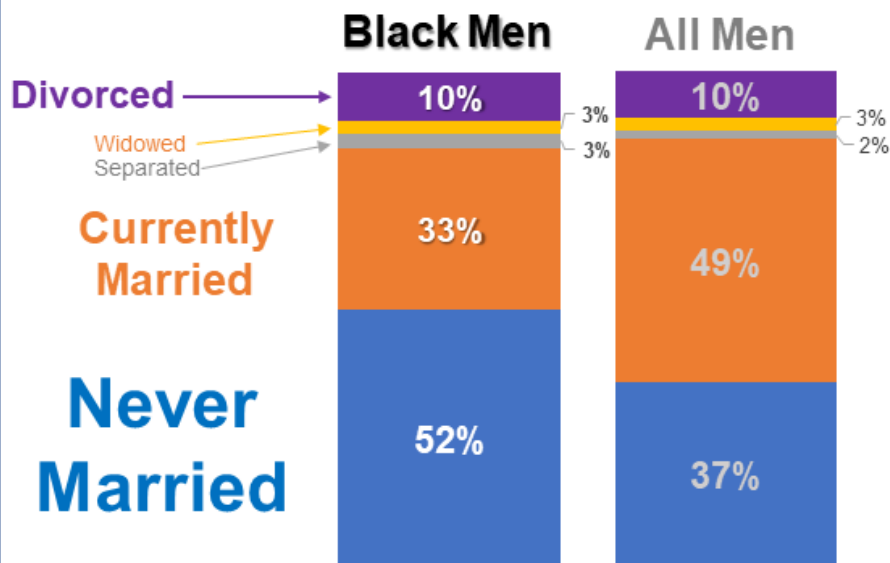
BLACK DEMOGRAPHICS





Relationships Black Men

age 15 and older



NOTE: All figures in this graphic are rounded.
For more details about the Black population
visit BlackDemographics.com



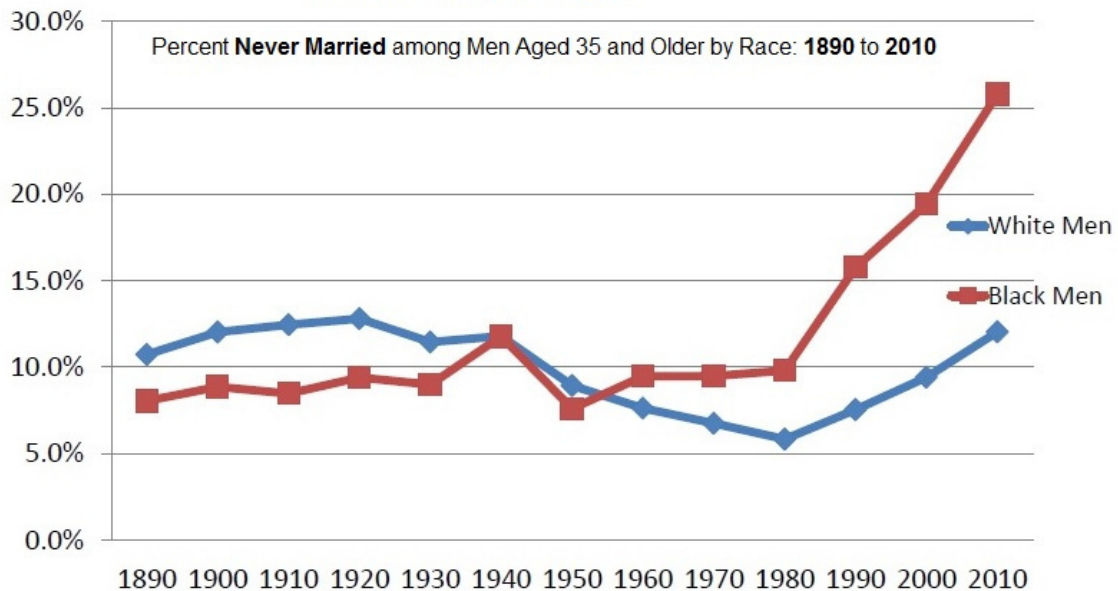
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Created by BlackDemographics.com

BLACK DEMOGRAPHICS



Black Men More Likely to be Married than White Men

...Until 1960. Then...

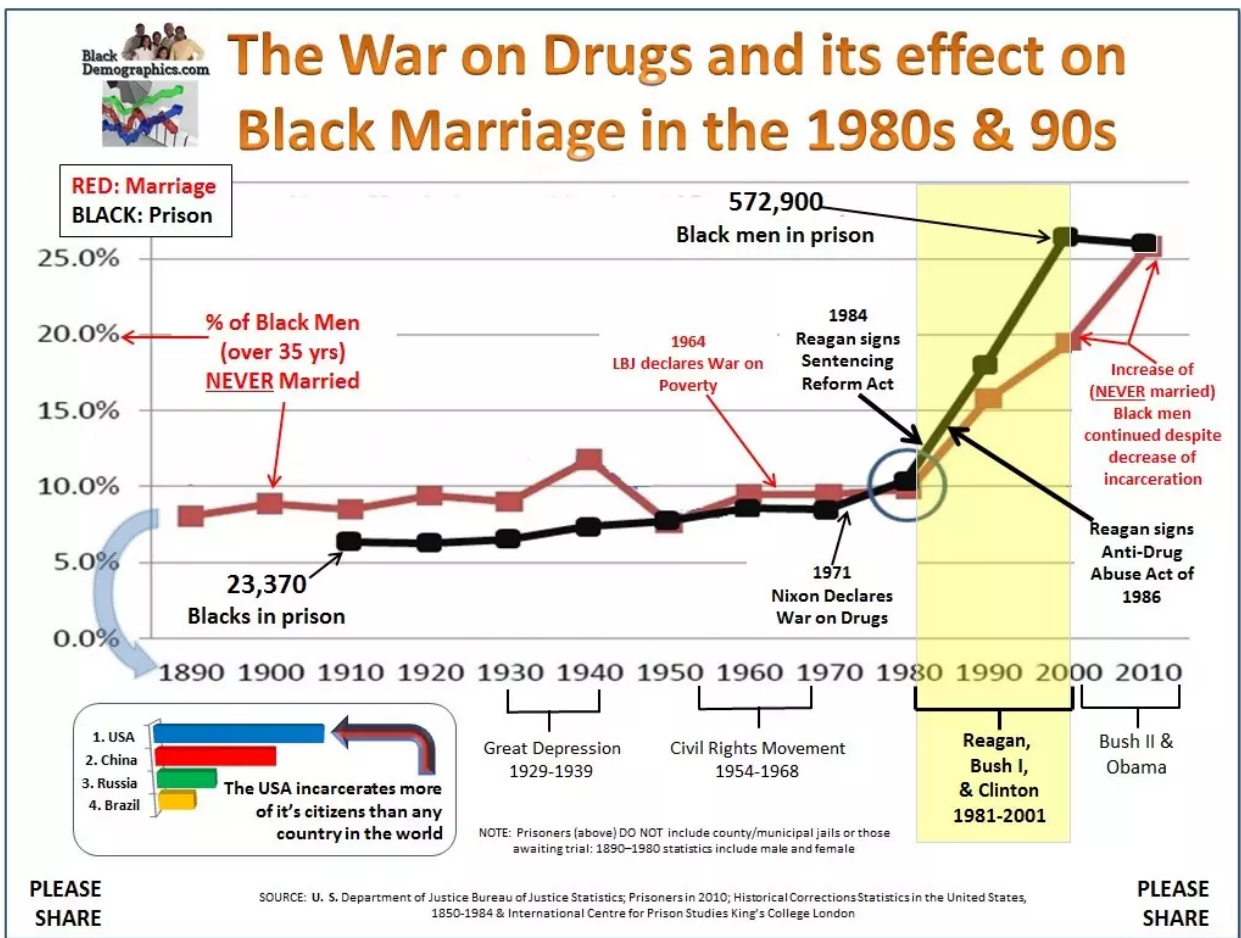


Heading reformatted and posted by BlackDemographics.com

Source: U.S. Decennial Census (1890-2000); American Community Survey (2010). For more information on the ACS, see <http://www.census.gov/acs>

Chart created by: United States Census Bureau

BLACK DEMOGRAPHICS



A man with a goatee and short hair, wearing a black sleeveless t-shirt and black shorts, stands with his hands clasped in front of him. He has a thoughtful expression, looking slightly to the side. The background is a dark grey gradient.

**WHAT'S ON MY
MIND?**



RESILIENCE

What words, images, and people come to mind when you think of the word *resilience*?



Psychology Today in Positive Psychology

"Resilience is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes."

Merriam Webster

"An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change."

American Psychological Association

"Process of adapting well in the face of diversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress--such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors."



RESILIENCE

THE KID IN THE "SLOW CLASS"



JARVIS SHEFFIELD

Founder, Black Science Fiction Society

I cannot help but think back to when I was placed in the “slow class” while growing up. Yeah, I was the “slow” kid in class, and at one point had to leave regular class to go to “supplemental reading” to get on track. I credit reading comics as a pivotal point that put me on the path to success. I started reading comics with my cousins. Comics were a way for me to read without feeling pressured. I could do this on my own time and read whatever title suited my interests. The same kid that hated reading (because I wasn’t so good at it) began to excel in the basics and add big words to his vocabulary that comics often use to make everything exciting.

I was fortunate to have a few teachers that I could rely on for encouragement and support. If you do not already have people in your life who encourage you and support your growth in life, seek them out. Stay away from anyone who puts you down. It could be siblings, parents, neighbors, friends, or anyone. Limit your time with them and focus on your aspirations. Surround yourself with those who support you and your goals. Never give up on your goals and aspirations. When you set a goal, research, plan and execute. No matter what, take at least one hour a day to focus and do something toward your goals. I found that by doing this, I have been able to accomplish more things in life than I ever dreamed. If you can go to school or work for a company for eight hours a day, surely you can make time, not find the time, but make the time to further your goals.

JARVIS SHEFFIELD

Founder, Black Science Fiction Society

With that said, to date, I have been able to do some really interesting things, such as completing advanced academic degrees; participating in independent films; publishing a magazine; hosting a radio show; publishing two books and founding an international science fiction society.

These are a few of the accomplishments I've been blessed to achieve over the years. I mention these not to bolster myself, but to show the impact of reading, planning, and taking action in helping achieve your goals, including the power of being consistent. God truly helps those that help themselves. You simply have to get started, surround yourself with good people, and things will fall into place over time. Oh, and be kind, you never know who will cross your path that you can help or can help you. Living by the Golden Rule, which simple states to treat others the way you want to be treated, will take you far in life. It has for me and continues to do so to this day. Not bad for a kid in the "slow class."



"There is no better than adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance next time."

Malcolm X



THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

Reflect on a time in your life when you weren't as resilient as you wanted or needed to be.

What were the consequences?
What were the barriers to your resilience?
What lesson(s) did you learn?



**THE STRUGGLE
IS REAL**

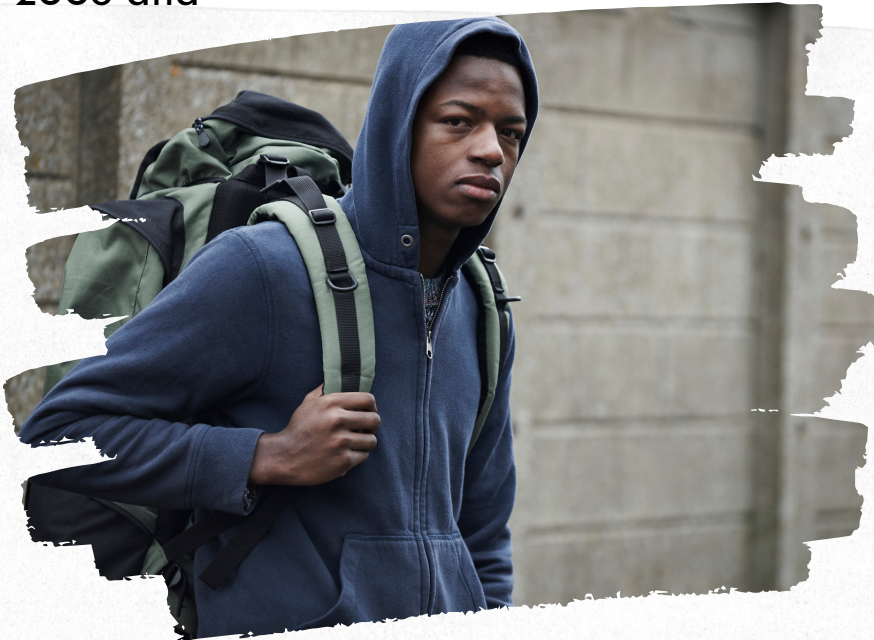
"Binge drinking, smoking (cigarettes and marijuana), illicit drug use and prescription pain reliever misuse are more frequent among Black and African American adults with mental illnesses."

"Black and African American people living below poverty are twice as likely to report serious psychological distress than those living over 2x the poverty level."

MENTAL HEALTH

"Serious mental illness (SMI) rose among all ages of Black and African American people between 2008 and 2018."

"Adult Blacks and African Americans are more likely to have feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness than adult whites."





"The death rate from suicide for African American men was more than four times greater than for African American women, in 2017."

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (2019), *Mental and Behavioral Health - African Americans*

MY MENTAL HEALTH



MY MENTAL HEALTH



MY MENTAL HEALTH



A photograph of a Black man with a goatee, wearing a black sleeveless t-shirt and black shorts. He is standing with his hands clasped in front of him, looking slightly to the left with a thoughtful expression. The background is a dark grey gradient. A white rectangular box with a grey border is positioned in the upper right corner, containing the text 'WHAT'S ON MY MIND?'.

WHAT'S ON MY
MIND?



MY RESILIENT SELF

Reflect on a time in your life when you felt truly resilient.

What happened?

What supports were available to you?

What lesson(s) did you learn?



MY RESILIENT SELF

TYPES OF ABUSE



CULTURAL IDENTITY

PHYSICAL

ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL

SEXUAL

MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL

VERBAL/EMOTIONAL

RESILIENCE

Cultural Identity

A person's cultural identity is used to harm them (Ex: use of racial slurs; denial of religious practices; use of homophobic language; anti-dreadlock or braids policy)

Economic/Financial

An exertion of power and control via financial means (Ex: creation of debt; denial of access to bank account; prevention of employment)

Mental/Psychological

Words and actions that serve to diminish a person's sense of self and mental sanity (Ex: repeat accusation of being "crazy"; denial of factual events; lectures; digital spying)

Physical

Harm to a person's body or a threat of harm (Ex: hitting; kicking; strangling; reckless driving)

Sexual

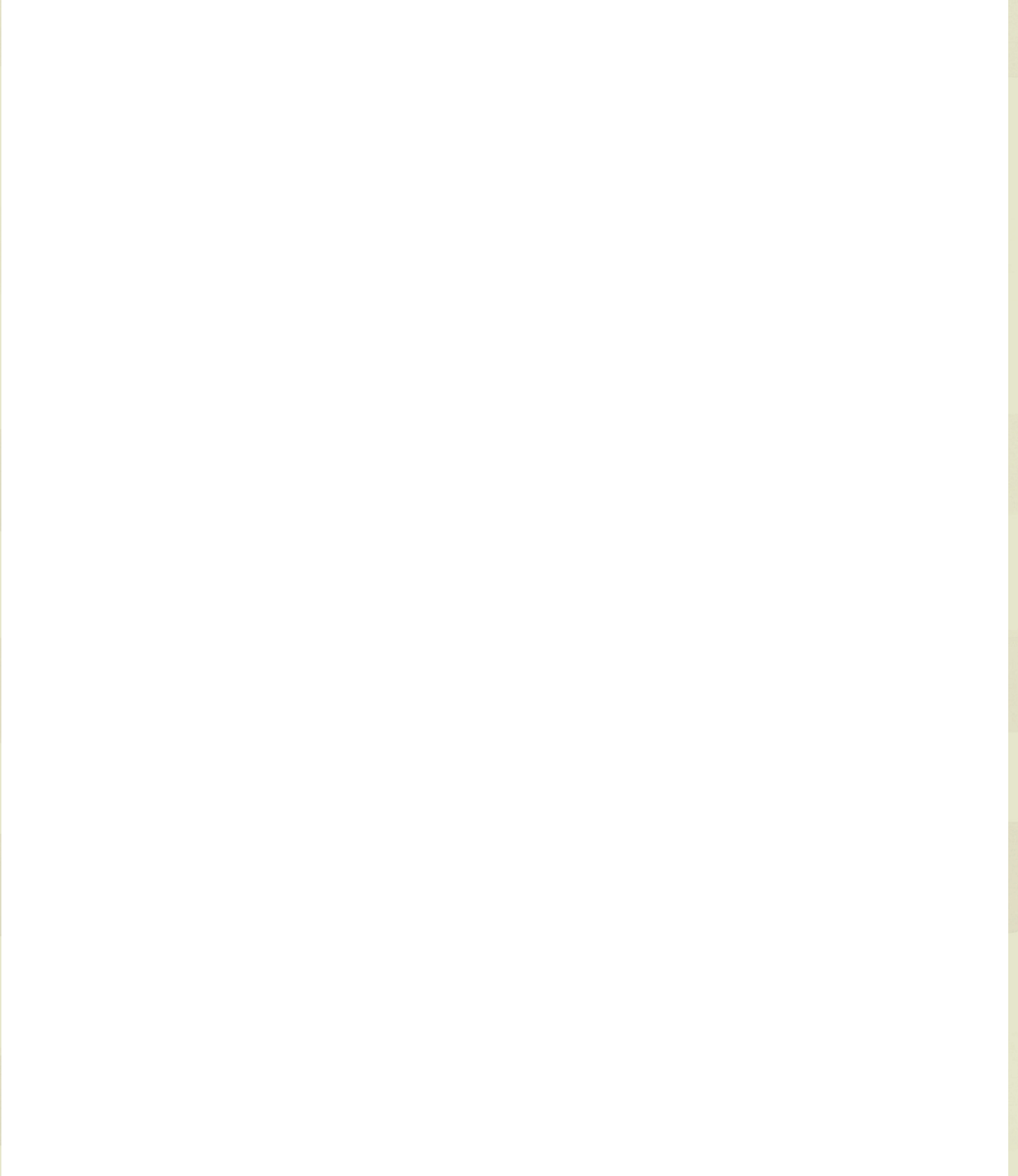
Forced sexual acts and/or using sex as a weapon (Ex: rape; criticism of sexual performance; restriction of access to birth control and condoms)

Verbal/Emotional

Words used that can damage a person's sense of self and self-esteem (Ex: name-calling; derogatory "pet names"; public embarrassment)

Source: Reach Beyond Domestic Violence (2016)

HEART'S CANVAS



WHAT DOES RESILIENCE ...

FEEL LIKE?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



SOUND LIKE?



LOOK LIKE?

A man with a goatee and short hair, wearing a black sleeveless t-shirt and black shorts, stands with his hands clasped in front of him. He has a thoughtful expression, looking slightly to the side. The background is a dark grey gradient.


**WHAT'S ON MY
MIND?**



"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. *Strength to Love* (1963)

MY EDUCATION GOAL(S)



- What is holding me back from achieving my education/skill goal(s)?
- What roadblocks to achieving my goal(s) are within my sphere of influence and control?

MY EDUCATION GOAL(S)



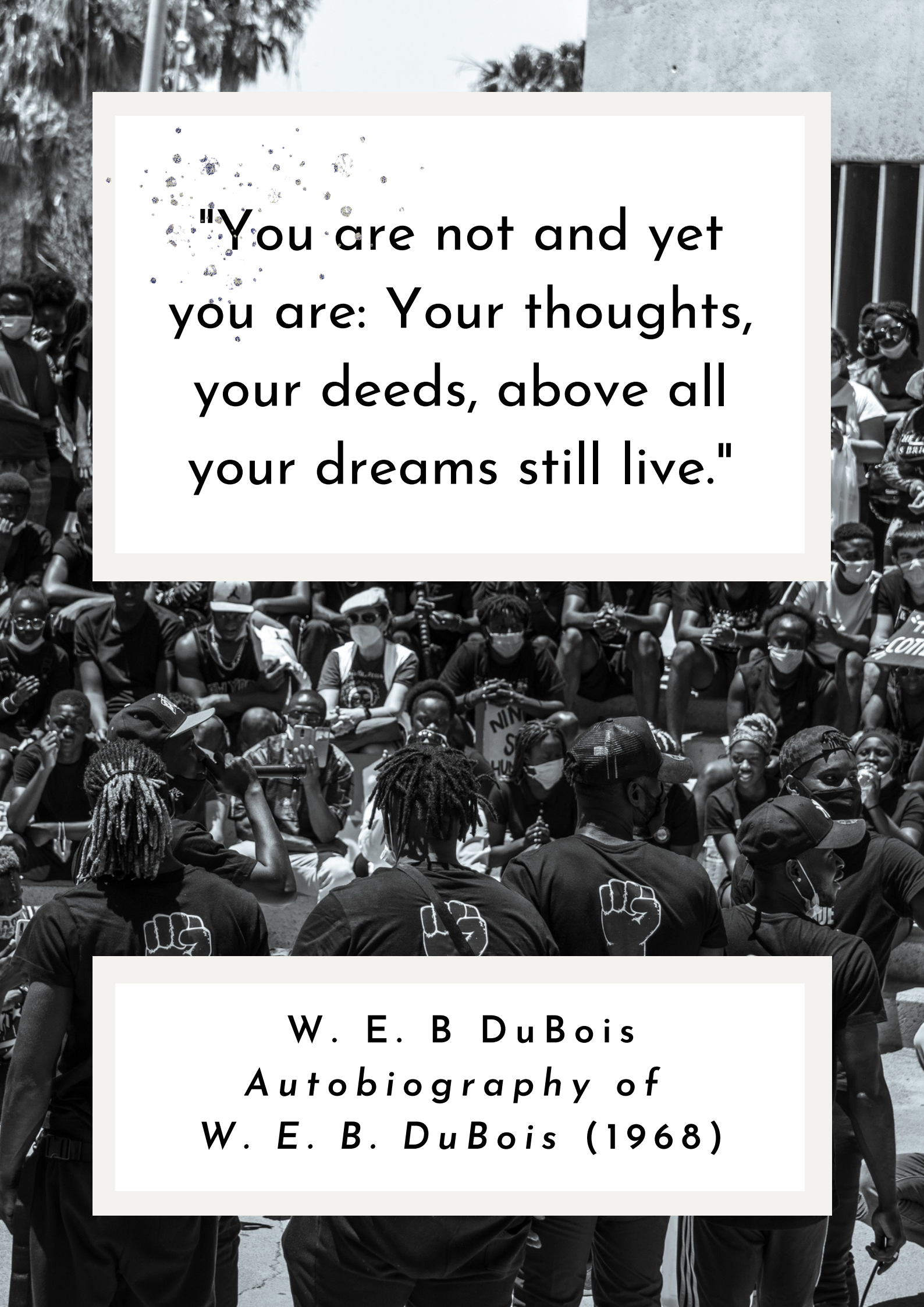
MY CAREER GOAL(S)



- What is holding me back from achieving my career goal(s)?
- What roadblocks to achieving my goal(s) are within my sphere of influence and control?

MY CAREER GOAL(S)





"You are not and yet
you are: Your thoughts,
your deeds, above all
your dreams still live."

W. E. B DuBois
Autobiography of
W. E. B. DuBois (1968)



The Man in the Mirror

What Do I See?

I AM ... POWER



BOMANI WEATHERBEE-KELLEY
Poet. Songwriter. Gamer.

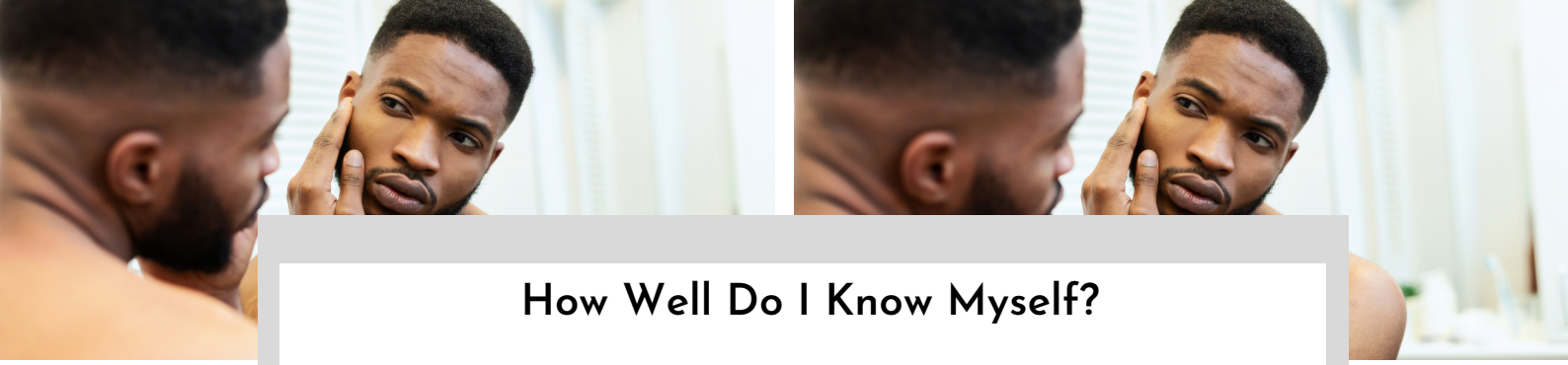
I am in search of Power.
I wonder the limits of my reach as I extend to the End
I hear people say one day there won't be Hate anymore, but all
I see is War
I want Change but
I am in need of Power

I pretend I am already strong
But I feel wrong because when
I touch the handle of my door
I worry that I might not walk back through again, and so
I cry as
I am continuing the struggle for Power

I understand that I can't control everything cause sometimes when
I say I'm fine, I'm not,
I dream inside my hope filled cot as
I try to hold on to the hope I've got
I hope and pray that one day I'll get to say that
I am Power

WHAT'S MY WHY?





How Well Do I Know Myself?

Strongly Disagree (1)

Disagree (2)

Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)

Agree (4)

Strongly Agree (5)

I see a man who knows his core values and their impact on his life.

I see a man who knows his strengths and areas of growth.

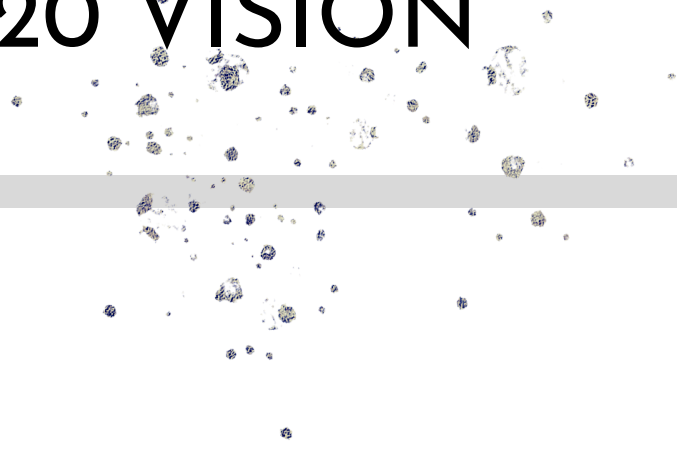
I see a man who understands the effect of white privilege and racism on his life.

I see a man who knows his purpose in life.

I see a man who knows how to manage his emotions effectively.



20/20 VISION



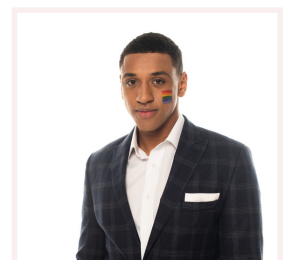
I AM ...

I AM ...



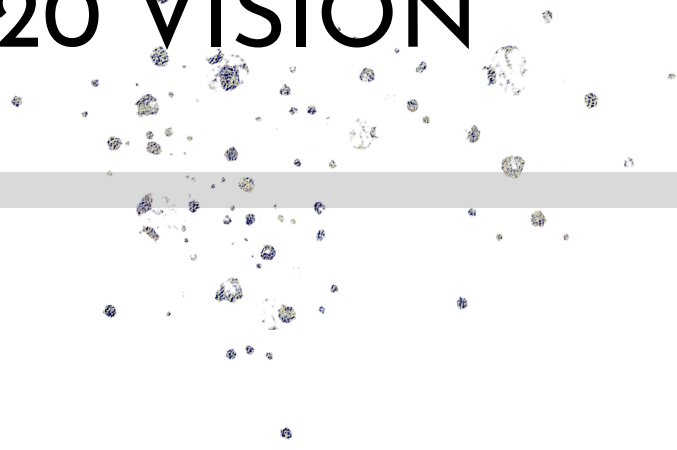
I AM ...

I AM ...





20/20 VISION



I LOVE ...

I LOVE ...



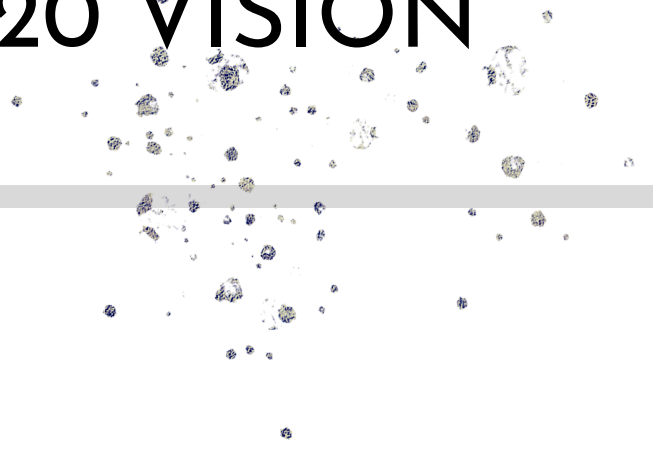
I LOVE ...

I LOVE ...





20/20 VISION



I DISLIKE ...

I DISLIKE ...



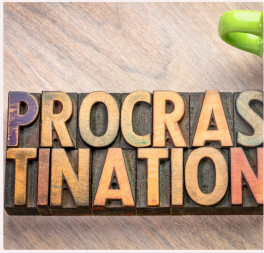
I DISLIKE ...

I DISLIKE ...





20/20 VISION



I WANT TO STOP ...

I WANT TO STOP ...



I WANT TO STOP ...

I WANT TO STOP ...



A man with a goatee and short hair, wearing a black sleeveless t-shirt and black shorts, stands with his hands clasped in front of him. He has a thoughtful expression, looking slightly to the side. The background is a dark grey gradient. A white rectangular box with a grey border is positioned in the upper right corner, containing the text 'WHAT'S ON MY MIND?'.

WHAT'S ON MY
MIND?

HEART'S CANVAS





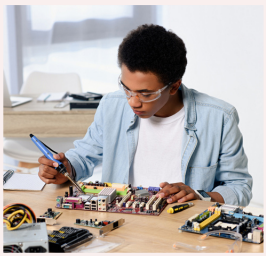
"Where there is no vision, there is no hope."

George Washington Carver



20/20 VISION

I WANT TO CONTINUE ...



I WANT TO CONTINUE ...



I WANT TO CONTINUE ...



I WANT TO CONTINUE ...



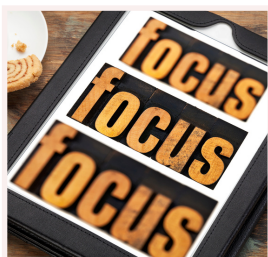


20/20 VISION



I WANT TO BEGIN ...

I WANT TO BEGIN ...



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APTITUDES, INTERESTS, & STRENGTHS

At Work



APTITUDES:

A natural ability or talent



INTERESTS:

Something or someone that sparks attention



STRENGTHS:

Skills, knowledge, talents, and proficiencies that are learned



APTITUDES, INTERESTS, & STRENGTHS

At School



APTITUDES:

A natural ability or talent



INTERESTS:

Something or someone that sparks attention



STRENGTHS:

Skills, knowledge, talents, and proficiencies that are learned

VALUES LIST

Acceptance	Credibility	Giving
Accomplishment	Curiosity	Goodness
Accountability	Decisiveness	Grace
Achievement	Dedication	Gratitude
Adaptability	Dependability	Greatness
Altruism	Determination	Growth
Ambition	Devotion	Happiness
Assertiveness	Dignity	Hard work
Balance	Discipline	Harmony
Beauty	Drive	Health
Boldness	Effectiveness	Honesty
Challenge	Efficiency	Honor
Charity	Empathy	Hope
Cleanliness	Empowerment	Humility
Comfort	Endurance	Humor
Commitment	Enjoyment	Imagination
Common sense	Enthusiasm	Improvement
Communication	Equality	Independence
Community	Ethical	Individuality
Compassion	Excellence	Innovation
Competence	Exploration	Inquisitive
Confidence	Fairness	Insight
Connection	Family	Integrity
Consciousness	Fearless	Intelligence
Consistency	Feelings	Intuition
Contentment	Fidelity	Joy
Contribution	Focus	Justice
Control	Foresight	Kindness
Conviction	Fortitude	Knowledge
Cooperation	Freedom	Lawful
Courage	Friendship	Leadership
Courtesy	Fun	Learning
Creation	Generosity	Liberty
Creativity	Genius	Logic



MY TOP 10

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |



MY TOP 5

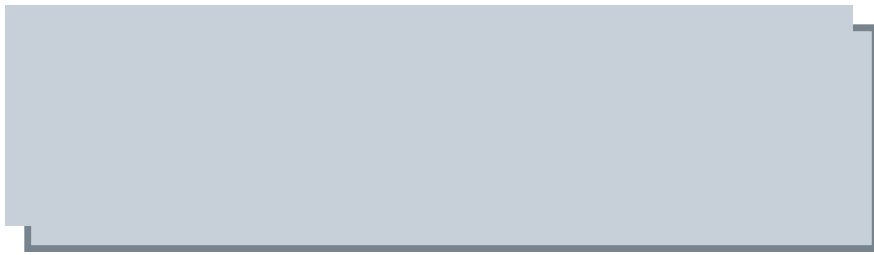


MY TOP 3

WHAT'S MY WHY?



MY FINANCIAL GOAL(S)



- What is holding me back from achieving my financial goal(s)?
- What roadblocks to achieving my goal(s) are within my sphere of influence and control?

MY FINANCIAL GOAL(S)

