

The Heavy Lift of Healing

For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be denounced.

-Fredrick Douglass

The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro

Typically, the national anticipation of a new President and administration in our country would be a less complicated and more exciting time. Surely, there would be more celebration in anticipation of the first female, first HBCU graduate, and first woman of color to be Vice President in our history. But the violent attack on the Capitol has left us all trying to make sense of the deep divisions in our country.

A now fatigued nation must muster every ounce of itself during a time of unprecedented crisis in healthcare, the economy, and police involved shootings, to immediately begin the reparative work of reconciliation. It brings forth the painful truth that Reconstruction only physically rebuilt our war-torn country after the Civil War, but it never addressed the moral stain or the beliefs and hatred that became our customs and laws.

Episodes of violence, deceit in the practice of medicine, and the disparate response to protest, have made us confront difficult issue and face hard truths. While we are reminded that our United States are bound together by a fragile democracy and values that are routinely undermined by racial double standards, we are also reminded that our government has vested its power in the people, and we the people have a duty to our country.

This is a watershed period in our nation's history, and we are bearing witness to the mettle of our country and her people being tested. We must push ourselves to answer those seemingly impossible questions: Where do we go from here, and how do we heal? The lift of healing requires a reckoning that belongs to us all. It is our collective duty to take up the mantle, no matter how broken, to repair this country and secure better outcomes for our children, and their children, and beyond.

The path to reconciliation and racial healing will not be the same for us all. Many are seeing, for the first time, how racial double standards do not only exist, but prevail in undermining progress and the equality promised in our constitution. Therefore, our path will require that we work toward honest healing individually and collectively. We must be as gracious in our listening as we are vulnerable in our truth-telling. And that is where we must begin: with truth.

For transformative healing that allows us to push through and finally crush the enemy within, our next steps must be intentional, honest, and preceded by careful and daily introspection. We must allow the truth the moment it requires to dictate the path forward, and to facilitate justice and healing. Our memory must be long and vivid, that we may never forget the deadly legacy of racism. Our work to root and stamp out all remnants of othering that prevents this country from embracing all her citizens, must be targeted and enduring. As we begin a new year, we must do so bearing the weight of the responsibility to right this ship, and set this country on a new course, one where greatness is accessible to everyone and justice is possible for all.



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