

African American Families & Incarceration
**Strategies for Change Grounded by Bryan Stevenson,
Shaka Senghor, & My Own Narrative**
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A. Engage in Reading

- Shaka Senghor found human moments in the literature he read.
- Bryan Stevenson requires his clients to read books.

B. Commit to being Proximate

- Be committed to being proximate to the concerns before us.
- Get close to the people who have been harmed.
- Advocate for others.

C. Recognize and Use the Power of the Narrative

- We must acknowledge and recognize the need to confront our history of racial conflict and injustice.
- The U. S. became a slave society that created a narrative of racial injustice (Stevenson, 2015).
- If we do not change the narrative of hate, fear, anger, and injustice, then we will continue to have racial and other conflicts.
- Ensure that our research, teaching, and practice include the narrative of humanity. For example, we may teach family policy using books, such as *Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court Nomination that Changed America* by Dr. Haygood (2015).

D. Discover Pathways to Protect Hope

- We must discover pathways to protect hope, justice, love, reconciliation, grace, and humanity.
- Do what is right although it is uncomfortable and may come at a price.
- Bryan Stevenson (2016) stated, "Injustice prevails where hopelessness exists."

E. Protect Human Rights Requires Being Uncomfortable

- Stevenson suggested that we do what is right although it may feel uncomfortable.
- Doing what is right oftentimes comes with a price. The greater price is ignoring the problem.

Selected References

- Achor, S. (2013). *Before happiness: The five hidden keys to achieving success, spreading happiness, and sustain positive change*. New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group.
- Haygood, W. (2015). *Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court nomination that changed America*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knoff.
- Senghor, S. (2013, 2016). *Writing my Wrongs: Life, Death, and Redemption in an American Prison*. New York, NY: Drop a Gem Publishing.
- Stevenson, B. (2016, February 19). Just mercy: a story of justice and redemption. Video found at [Bryan Stevenson: "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption"](#) .



Stevenson, B. (2015). *Just Mercy. A Story of Justice and Redemption.* New York, NY: Penguin Random House LLC.