

Societal Perceptions

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This book is dedicated to:

1. Social workers working with at-risk populations who are striving to change the world one individual and one family at a time.
2. Police officers who risk their lives daily to protect the lives of others.
3. Teachers who are educating students, managing behaviors, and sometimes functioning as parents within the classroom setting.
4. Individuals, groups, communities, organizations, and humanitarians who advocate against injustice, oppression, and racism.
5. Women and men who recognize that skin tone and hair texture do not define beauty.
6. Individuals who value culture and heritage.
7. Men and women of integrity who embrace work ethic, education, marriage, family, diversity, and inclusion.
8. Individuals who challenge stereotypes.
9. Single parents who are doing their best to provide for their children independently without support from an absent parent.
10. Victims of domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and bullying.
11. Children who have been exposed to domestic violence or substance abuse.

12. Foster parents, kinship placements, and adoptive families who take care of children who have been placed in the foster care system.
13. Victims of police brutality and racial profiling.
14. Confident women who know their value and worth who refuse to alter their body with Brazilian butt lifts, hydrogel injections, silicone butt injections, hyaluronic acid fillers, saline breast implants, liposuction, nip tuck, Botox, and Photoshop.
15. Minorities who have experienced racism and discrimination while pursuing a degree at a predominantly white college or university.
16. Victims of any form of abuse who are bold enough to tell their stories and seek justice.
17. Men and women who are faithful to their spouse and have not engaged in infidelity during marriage.
18. Men who embody manhood by being fathers, husbands, providers, mentors, and positive role models.
19. Individuals who have been incarcerated serving time for crimes they did not commit.
20. Individuals with criminal records who have turned their lives around in a positive direction.
21. Individuals who have legal history as a result of being wrongfully accused of a crime they did not commit.

22. Individuals who believe that racism is a learned behavior that can be unlearned and choose not to teach racism.
23. Individuals who recognize that love has no race or ethnicity and that love is more than sexual acts and physical attraction.
24. Dreamers who pursue their dreams to make their dreams reality.
25. My life experiences and everyone who has contributed to my growth and development as a woman, daughter, sister, friend, professional, mentor, wife, and parent.

Preface

There are individuals within society who do not recognize bias perspectives and innate behaviors until those actions and perceptions are confronted or challenged. The book utilizes experiences, observations, and narratives to explore how societal perceptions impact individuals, families, cultures, communities, and associations. *Societal Perceptions* was written to help readers connect with various experiences and identify misperceptions within society. This book examines how society idolizes sex, nudity, bigotry, oppression, skin complexions, socio-economic status, stereotypes, violence, divorce, money, fame, body image, and elitism in comparison to embracing authenticity, family, work ethic, marriage, equality, diversity, and cultural differences. Readers are urged to examine their thinking and actions which effects families, communities, institutions, and environments. *Societal Perceptions* poses questions for readers to ponder and answer. The information provided within the book is a compilation of my research, personal experiences, and my faith. When reading the book, some of the topics will provoke an emotional response, but the information within the book is to inspire readers to consider how individuals of different backgrounds and experiences struggle to live in unity within a world that promotes division.

Introduction

There is a strength that evolves from culture and heritage. Often times due to the challenges of society particularly America's ideal society, minorities tend to remain oppressed, overlooked, misunderstood, discriminated against and separated. Minority families, marriages, finances, education, careers and churches remain under attack. There is a struggle amongst minorities to build each other up in comparison to tear each other down. Often minorities divide amongst each other without noticing the division and prejudices amongst themselves. The perception of beauty has been distorted due to societal norms and assimilation into dominant culture's depiction of beauty. The images that have been planted in minorities' minds continue to break them down to fuel self-hate and to get them to adapt to what they are expected to be instead of remaining true to who they are, their community, culture, heritage and values. The book encourages readers to examine how societal issues affect societal views as well as challenge change.

Change requires transformation of thinking and alteration of actions in order to achieve different outcomes. Change is intimidating to everyone, no matter the gender, race, ethnicity, profession, religion, socio-economic status or sexuality. Privileged elite fight change because change affects their position as well as authority over others. Change within an individual contributes to change in others, change in family, change in community, change in environments, change in children, change in relationships and change in the world. By the end of *Societal Perceptions* readers will understand how viewpoints, behaviors, thinking, and experiences constrain individuals, families, communities, cultures, and race relations within

society. The book encourages readers to take the initiative to change thinking and actions to change societal views.