

A Brighter Day: Empowering African American Students

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Agenda



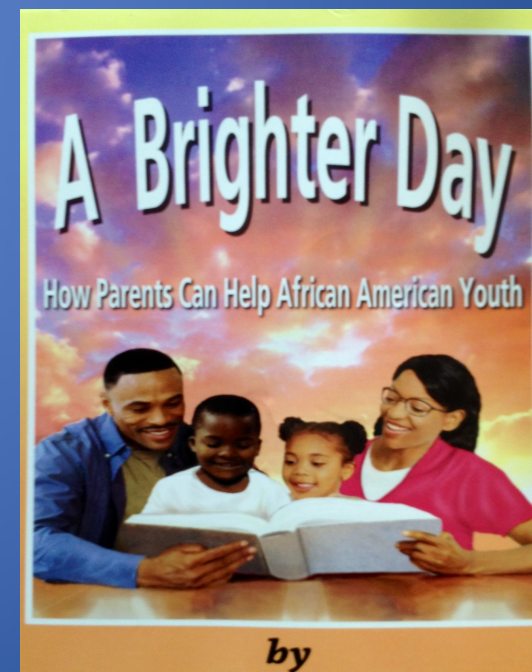
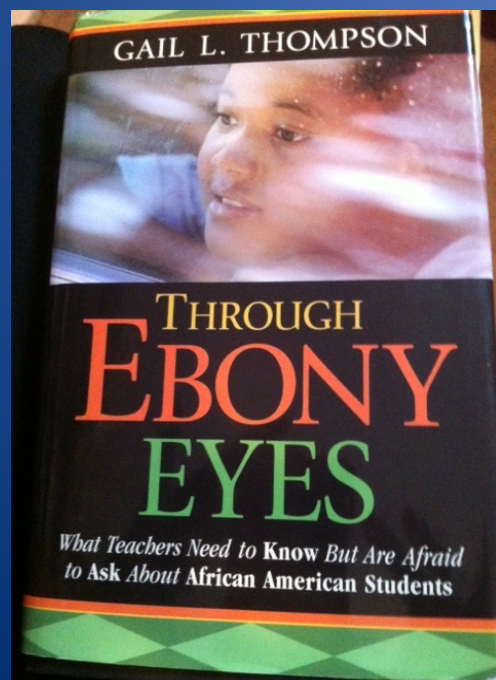
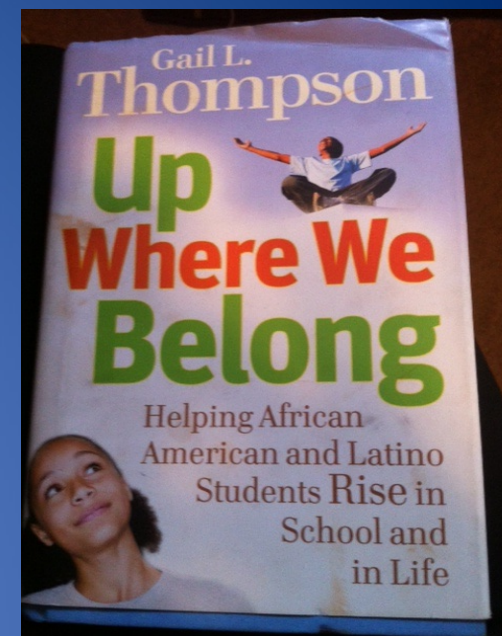
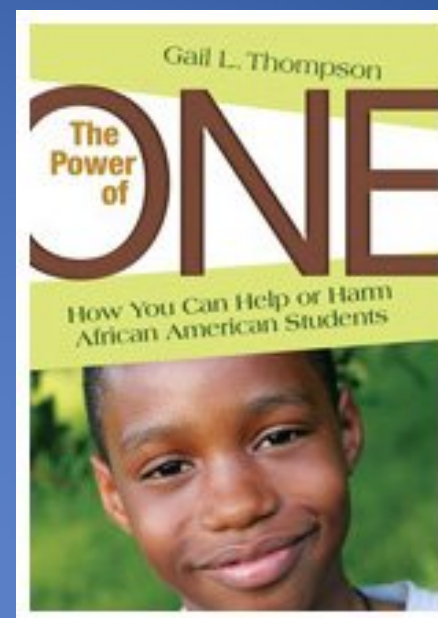
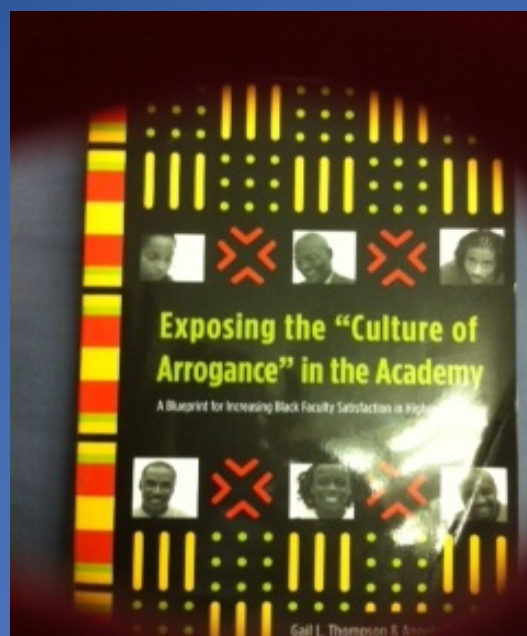
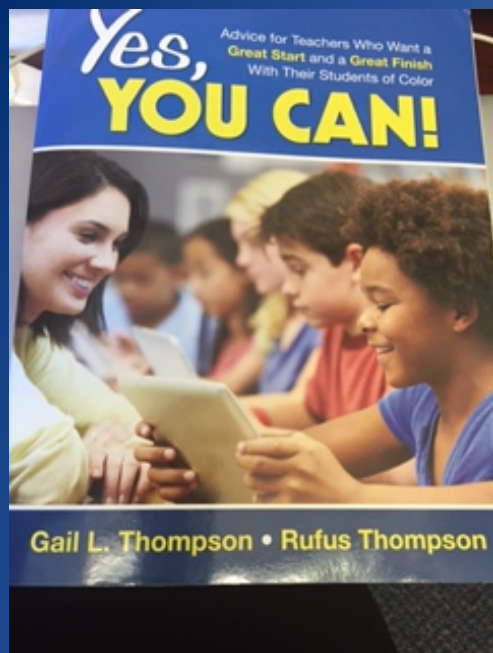
My Story

Theme

Three Ways That Educators Can Empower African American Students

Three Ways That Parents and Guardians Can Empower African American Students

Three Self- Empowerment Strategies for African American Students



Many Strikes Against Me

Strike One: I was verbally and physically abused.

Strike Two: My family was poor.

Strike Three: I flunked first grade.

Strike Four: A lot of people believed that I was dumb.

Strike Five: My father died when I was 13.

Strike Six: I had very low self-esteem.

Because my family was very poor and I flunked first grade, a lot of people believed that I wouldn't turn out well in life, and would have a bad future.

But they were wrong.

The Main Reasons Why I Have Had a Great Life

- Faith
- Hard Work
- Persistence
- My “Turnaround Teacher,” mentors, and supportive loved ones.

October 2018:

What I Told the Audience at Mrs. Tessem's Memorial Service

Mrs. Tessem:

- was the first teacher who treated me fairly and humanely,
- genuinely cared about her other students and me,
- believed in us,
- took us to her home,
- had high expectations for us,
- was strict,
- let me sing in the school chorus that she created, and
- insisted that I plan to attend college.

Theme

No matter who you are, you can empower African American students, and increase their chances of having a great life.

Three Ways That Educators Can Empower African American Students

1. Make the right choices.
2. Do the Mindset Work on an ongoing basis.
3. Use the curriculum and Social-Emotional Learning strategies to empower African American students.

1. Making the right choices includes:

- making a daily commitment to use your power in ways that will help, and not harm African American students
- holding yourself accountable for treating all African American students fairly and respectfully
- striving to build positive relationships with African American students

--giving extra help to struggling African American students

--treating African American parents and guardians respectfully

--practicing the “Golden Rule”

2. Do the “Mindset Work” on an ongoing basis.

Because of racism and stereotypes from the media, history, family members, and peers, most Americans harbor anti-African American beliefs that are rooted in “The Myth of African American Inferiority” and related stereotypes.

This is one of the main reasons why African Americans are more likely than any other racial group to be subjected to hate crimes.

The Myth of African American Inferiority is based on the belief that African Americans are inherently inferior to all other groups.

Because of the systemic racism that has been prevalent in the U.S. for more than 400 years, this belief has been programmed into most Whites and other groups.

Related Stereotypes

African Americans:

- are lazy
- are dangerous and violent
- are prone to criminality
- are inherently dishonest, and can't be trusted

- are less deserving of respect than others
- are less deserving of being hired, promoted, and paid fairly than others
- African American girls and women who are confident, assertive, outspoken, and vocal about racial problems are “Angry Black Women.”
- African Americans who expose racist practices are merely “playing ‘the Race Card.’”

Why These Beliefs are Dangerous

- Many individuals in powerful positions, especially in Education and the Criminal Justice System:
- engage in racial profiling
- treat African American parents and children disrespectfully
- place negative labels on African American children and youth

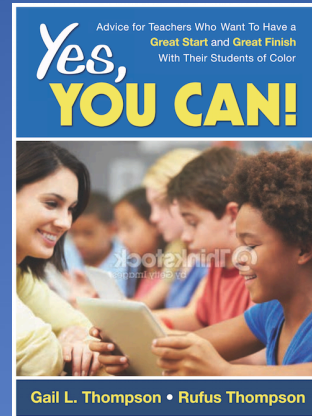
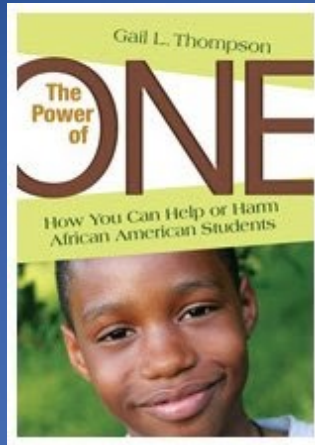
- cause African American students to dislike school
- mistreat African American children and youth
- push African American youth into the prison pipeline
- destroy the hopes and dreams of African American children and youth

Therefore, in order to work effectively with African American children, youth, and adults, it is crucial that you do the “Mindset Work” on an ongoing basis, because your beliefs will determine how you treat them.

The Mindset Work consists of identifying, examining, and addressing your thoughts and behaviors that stem from your belief in The Myth of African American Inferiority and related stereotypes on an ongoing basis.

Related Professional Development Resources

- My website: www.drgailthompson.com
- An Equity Affirmation for Teachers
- An Equity Affirmation for School Leaders
- Equity Talk Newsletter
- Equity and Race-related articles



PD Exercises in *The Power of One*

PD Exercises in *Yes, You Can!* (co-authored with Rufus Thompson)

Inspirations by Gail Podcast: YouTube

- Episode 13-- “The Spirit of Fear: A Roadblock to Success”
- Episode 11-- “You Can’t Be Big If Little Got You”
- Episode 7-- “Your Big Picture: Starting at the End, Instead of the Beginning”
- Episode 9-- “Strong Women and Those Who Fear Them”

3. Use the curriculum and Social-Emotional Learning strategies to empower African American students.

In addition to being underserved in schools, many African American children and youth are subjected to ongoing microaggressions and racism in schools and outside of schools.

These horrible problems create stress and trauma for African American children, youth, and adults.

In 2020, many health care and other organizations declared that “Racism is a public health issue.”

Racism is so destructive that it can cause long-term mental and physical health problems.

It also affects African American students’ ability to learn and affects their behavior at school.

In addition to the effects of dealing with daily microaggressions and racism, many African American children and youth may be carrying trauma caused by other problems, such as bullying, abuse, poverty, family problems, etc.

These problems may also make it difficult for students to concentrate and behave at school.

Decades of resiliency research indicates that educators can mitigate these problems by choosing to use their power wisely.

How Teachers Can Use Social-Emotional Learning Strategies and the Curriculum to Empower African American Students

- Make your expectations clear.
- Be patient with all students, especially struggling students.
- Provide extra academic support to struggling students.
- Use fair and humane classroom management policies and practices.

- Familiarize yourself with “Social-Emotional Learning and Trauma-Informed” online resources and implement related strategies.
- Use Culturally Responsive Lesson Plans that:
 - expose students to resiliency stories
 - teach Conflict-Resolution skills
 - guide students through the process of creating a “Personalized Roadmap for Success”

Three Ways That Parents and Guardians Can Empower African American Students

1. Don't believe the "hype."
2. Keep reminding your child about the importance of making wise choices.
3. Help your child develop a "College-Going Mindset."

1. Don't believe the "hype": Negative Messages about your child/

- If you haven't already done so, change your mindset about your child's potential to become academically successful.
- Look for potential, instead of pathology.
- Identify your child's strengths. (Every child is born with at least one gift or talent.)
- Encourage your child daily. (African American children will encounter enough negativity at school and in the wider society. They don't need to be physically, verbally, psychologically, sexually, or emotionally abused at home or elsewhere.
- Deal with any unfinished personal "baggage" that you have.

2. Keep reminding your child about the importance of making wise choices.

- Dressing appropriately
- Choosing friends wisely
- Avoiding negative behaviors and toxic individuals
- Working hard in school and obeying school rules
- Using his/her spare time wisely
- Treating adults and other students respectfully

3. Help your child develop a “College-Going Mindset.”

- Emphasize the importance of education by making learning activities, academic skill-building exercises, and educational games priorities at home.
- When your child is very young, start explaining what college is and why attending college is important.
- Take your child to visit local colleges and universities.
- Expose your child to college-educated African Americans who are down-to-earth.
- Enroll your child in college-preparatory and summer enrichment programs.

- Make sure that your child is placed in college preparatory middle school and high school classes.
- Make sure that your child takes the required number of courses and the correct math, English, and science courses that are necessary for college admission.
- Help your child learn how to navigate the college admissions process, find out about application deadlines, how to get applications, how to apply for financial aid, etc.
- Use the Internet, bookstores, college graduates, and school counselors as resources.

Students: Three Ways That You Can Empower Yourself

1. Create a “Teflon Coat” and wear it daily.
2. Find ways to manage stress.
3. Create your “Personalized Roadmap to Success.”

1. Create your own “Teflon Coat” and wear it daily.

The “Teflon Coat” consists of **self-protective and self-affirming strategies** that you can use **daily** to build your self-esteem, and prevent yourself from falling into destructive traps, stemming from:

- your own negative beliefs about yourself
- microaggressions, racism, and racial profiling
- peer pressure
- toxic individuals
- mess, stress, and drama, etc.

Strategies to Create Your “Teflon Coat”

Create a Morning Routine, such as:

- Take a “Morning Selfie” and greet yourself in a loving way (“Good morning Beautiful!”, with a hug, etc.)
- Spend time in prayer and meditation before you leave home.
- Sing and/or listen to uplifting music, podcasts, radio, and/or tv programs, instead of the news.

- Read self-help, memoirs, biographies, and/or motivational articles/books.
- Create a list of **Positive Affirmations about yourself**, and read them a minimum of once each week.

I AM BEAUTIFUL
BECAUSE GOD
CREATED ME IN HIS
IMAGE.
I AM NOT INFERIOR TO
ANYONE.
I AM EXTREMELY
VALUABLE!

Daily Affirmations
I AM BEAUTIFUL
BECAUSE I WAS
CREATED IN GOD'S
IMAGE.
I AM TALENTED, HAVE
GREAT POTENTIAL, AND
CAN ATTAIN MY GOALS.
I HAVE AN AMAZING
DESTINY.

I AM BEAUTIFUL
BECAUSE GOD CREATED ME IN
HIS IMAGE.
AFRICA IS AN AMAZING
CONTINENT.
MY ANCESTORS CAME
FROM AFRICA.
I AM PROUD OF MY
AFRICAN ANCESTRY.

I AM BEAUTIFUL
BECAUSE I WAS
CREATED IN GOD'S
IMAGE.
I HAVE AN AMAZING
AFRICAN ANCESTRY.
I LOVE MY
PERSONALITY, SKIN
TONE, HAIR TEXTURE,
FEATURES, AND BODY.

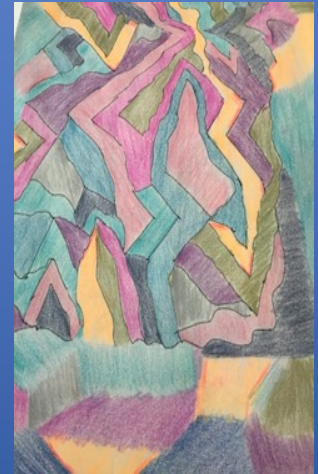
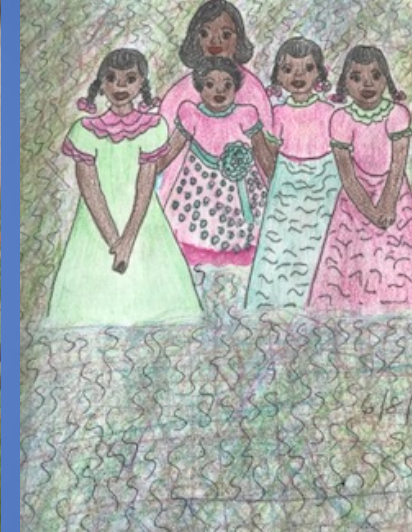
I WILL PUT MY TEFLON
COAT ON DAILY IN
ORDER TO REMEMBER
WHO I AM, WHOSE I AM,
AND IN ORDER TO
PROTECT MYSELF FROM
RACISTS, HATERS, MEAN
GIRLS/BOYS, AND
NAKES-ON-TWO-LEGS.

I AM EXTREMELY
VALUABLE, AND
INTELLIGENT.
I DESERVE TO TAKE
GOOD CARE OF MYSELF.
I CAN ATTAIN MY GOALS
AND I AM SOARING
TOWARDS MY DESTINY.

2. Find ways to manage stress.

Examples:

- Pay attention to your feelings.
- Think about the best ways to handle your emotions, especially anger and sadness.
- Use deep breathing strategies.
- Hum, sing, or listen to uplifting music.
- Get 7-9 hours of sleep as often as possible.
- Eat healthy foods, like lots of fruit and vegetables, instead of junk food.
- Talk to someone whom you trust.
- Take a walk and look at nature.
- Use Art Therapy.



3. Create a “My Roadmap for Success Journal.”

- Decorate it.
- Add a Table of Contents.
- Identify your purpose.
- Connect your purpose with your passion.
- Write your short-term goals.
- Write your long-term goals.

Journal Exercises to Help You
Identify Your Purpose and Connect It to Your Passion
from *Dear Beautiful!*

1. Make a list of your best personality traits.
2. What are your favorite hobbies?
3. What activities are you “naturally” good at?
4. If you didn't have to go to school each day, how would you spend most of your time, and why?

5. If you could create the perfect job for yourself, what would your job description consist of, and why would this be the perfect job for you?

6. Before you leave this earth, what are the main things that you would like to accomplish, and why?

7. Review your answers to the previous questions, and explain what you learned about your purpose(s) and what you are passionate about.

Journal Exercises to Help You Set Short-Term Goals

- Write a paragraph that explains what you would like to accomplish within **three months**, and how you plan to attain this goal.
- Write a paragraph that explains what you would like to accomplish within **six months**, and how you plan to attain this goal.
- Write a paragraph that explains what you would like to accomplish within **one year**, and how you plan to attain this goal.
- Write a paragraph that explains what you would like to accomplish within **three years**, and how you plan to attain this goal.

Journal Exercises to Help You Set Long-Term Goals

- Write a paragraph that explains what you would like to accomplish within **five years**, and how you plan to attain this goal.
- Write a paragraph that explains what you would like to accomplish within **ten years**, and how you plan to attain this goal.
- Write a paragraph that explains what you would like to accomplish within **fifteen years**, and how you plan to attain this goal.
- Write a paragraph that explains where you would like to be in **twenty years**, and how you plan to attain this goal.

Each Month

1. Review your progress.
2. Write the goals that you've accomplished.
3. Find a healthy way to celebrate.
4. Add your "Next Steps."

Reminders for Students

Some people may believe that you will be a failure in life and have a bad future.

But you can prove them wrong.

If you make wise choices, create good goals for yourself, work hard, put on your “Teflon Coat” each day, and follow your “Roadmap for Success,” you can have a great future.

Conclusion

No matter who you are, you can empower African American students, and increase their chances of having a great life.

Contact

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Podcast:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCs91Cj1EwZsnTJA3isAS5PQ/videos>