

Aunt Bossy

Written by Susan Murphy
Wednesday, 27 July 2016 06:37



Small Steps, Big Difference

Dear Aunt Bossy,

I am an African-American man who has no hatred toward anyone. I have never had a problem because of my skin color, except for being stopped more frequently by police officers than my white brothers. Since young men of color seem to be up to more mischief than others, I understand the stops. I don't like it, but I have never had a problem with it.

It does worry my heart that my race has such a bad reputation, and I pray that I won't get resentful over that. I have noticed that white people are getting more wary of me if they don't know me, and I really want that to stop.

□□□□□□□□□□ *The situation in our country is getting me down. When I see people like President Obama, Senator Tim Scott, Dr. Ben Carson, our first female Secretary of State, Condeleeza Rice, etc, reaching the top through all the hardships, I do not understand why the young ones can't see that all is possible with hard work and God-fearing living.*

□□□□□□□□□□ *What can I do to help?*

Darnell

Dear Darnell,

Thank you so much for taking the time to write. This is a heartbreaking problem for all of us, and we all long for an answer to your question.

Firstly, you, as well as the rest of us, can make a difference every day by reaching out, making eye contact, giving a smile and a kind word to every single person you encounter. Sounds like little, but imagine if everyone did that. The world would be a better place. It is especially essential to encourage those with entry level jobs, which tend to be a little boring, so they don't get turned off work and understand how every job has value and can lead somewhere.

Secondly, if you can possibly mentor someone in your community, maybe a young man who needs your attention and can understand that you care, do that. There are great organizations that can give you some direction in finding the right young person to help. The Boys and Girls Club is one.

Thirdly, you can act politically, but don't waste your time marching in the street. That is a lot of fun and makes people feel important, but generally just annoys the very folks who need to be convinced that we have people who need help.

Write your local and state politicians, or call them. Tell them that we must do everything necessary to make sure every child learns how to read, write, do basic math, and develop responsibility, even for small things. This is not related to money. It is related to parents and others in every community demanding that the money we already spend on education for every child is well spent on the teachers and the classroom.

Each day that we fail to do this, some fall further into the crack of desperation. We can't
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do it because so many kids have already been allowed to enter a life of no skills and no jobs. We have to start right this moment and measure the progress in millimeters. We have been practicing what Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D. NY) called the “soft bigotry of lowered expectations” for too long. The change will not happen overnight, but there are enough of us who want it to happen, so it can.

I know there are people who will be outraged by my thoughts and tell me that I have no right to speak because I don't know what it is like to be black. Well, I don't know what it is like to be a tall blonde with a flat stomach, either. It is never possible for any of us to understand exactly what another person is going through, but we don't have to understand that to support our fellow human beings.

We are all in this together, we all want the same things – to be validated, safe ,well-fed, and useful – and, until we start thinking like that, no matter where we are in the circle of life, nothing will change.

Good luck, and thank you for caring.

Aunt Bossy

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