Insights

The Great READ: Reading, Exchange and Dialogue

Thought-provoking books can pave the way for change by inspiring understanding, compassion, inquiry and conversation. At the beginning of the year, NICHQ’s staff came together to share the books that have most impacted their understanding of inequities and what’s needed to achieve equity. Below, we share their top picks with hope that this list will support our readers on their equity journeys.

We know this list is not all encompassing, in fact it is just a small sample (!), and we are eager to learn from your recommendations. Reach out to us on social media by tagging @NICHQ on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Source URL: https://www.nichq.org/insight/great-read-reading-exchange-and-dialogue
The 1619 Project
*Published by the New York Times, 2019*
A collection of essays covering how many aspects of our culture (e.g., health care, economics, democracy, music, urban city design, prison system) can be traced to enslavement; together, they offer a comprehensive picture of how enslavement has directly impacted the America we know today.
https://store.nytimes.com/products/the-1619-project

Black Man in a White Coat
*By: Damon Tweedy*
*Published by Picador, 2015*
In his memoir, Tweedy confronts what it means to be Black, both as patients and as a doctor, within the health care system. From looking at the impact of socioeconomic challenges on Black patients, to sharing his own reflections on the prejudice he encountered as a doctor, Tweedy paints a profound picture of race and inequity within health systems.

Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People
*By: Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald*
*Published by Delacorte Press, 2013*
Banaji and Greenwald explore how our unconscious perceptions about social groups shape our attitudes, and identify opportunities to acknowledge and address our hidden biases.
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13131582-blindspot

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
*By: Rebecca Skloot*
*Published by Crown Publishing Group, 2010*
Henrietta Lacks was a Southern tobacco farmer whose ancestors were enslaved. Her cells were taken without her consent and ultimately changed the face of modern medicine and saved countless lives; yet Lacks was buried in an unmarked grave and her family never saw any of the profits from the multi-million-dollar industry her cells launched.

Makes Me Wanna Holler
*By: Nathan McCall*
*Published by Vintage Books USA, 1995*
Washington Post Reporter Nathan McCall shares his story, which illustrates the impact of implicit bias across his lifespan from his childhood to his career as a journalist.
Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present
By: Harriet A. Washington
Published by Doubleday, 2007
A comprehensive history of medical experimentation on African Americans, detailing atrocities beginning before enslavement continuing to present day.
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/114192.Medical_Apartheid

Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx
By: Andrian Nicole LeBlanc
Published by Scribner, 2004
A true story that illustrates the realities of people living through poverty and the systems that perpetuate it across generations. Written without judgement and with raw honesty, Leblanc captures so much complexity that would otherwise be impossible to understand unless you've lived through it.

Seeing White (Podcast)
Editor: Loretta Williams
Published by Scene on Radio, 2017
A 14-part documentary series that dives into the concept of “whiteness,” its origins and its consequences.
https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/

What the Eyes Don’t See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance and Hope in an American City
By: Mona Hanna-Attisha
Published by One World, 2018
The story of the Flint Michigan water crisis told by the pediatrician who helped uncover the crisis reveals the dire consequences of system and policy failures. A reminder of the tremendous difference we can make in public health.

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration
By: Isabel Wilkerson
Published by Random House, 2010
Covering interviews with over a thousand people, Wilkerson shares the Pulitzer Prize winning story of the millions of Black citizens who moved across the country attempting to flee the racism and inequities they were experiencing in the South.
Whatever it Takes  
*By: Paul Tough*  
*Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008*

In 1970, Geoffrey Canada launched the Harvard Children’s Zone, a social experiment seeking to end generational poverty in Harlem. Tough explores the project’s impact and findings, looking at the impact and intersections between race, poverty, and education.  

White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism  
*By: Robin DiAngelo*  
*Published by Beacon Press, 2018*

In his deep dive into what it means to be white, DiAngelo explores how the feelings brought on by whiteness—including guilt and shame—can ultimately perpetuate structures that support disparities.  

Looking for more resources?  