

Insights

The Great READ: Reading, Exchange and Dialogue



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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.

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.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22857246-black-man-in-a-white-coat>

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.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6493208-the-immortal-life-of-henrietta-lacks>

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.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/52470.Makes_Me_Wanna_Holler

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.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/385255.Random_Family

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.

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/42040559-what-the-eyes-don-t-see>

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.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8171378-the-warmth-of-other-suns>

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.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3245249-whatever-it-takes>

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.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/43708708-white-fragility>

Looking for more resources?

- Register for NICHQ's new webinar, [From Awareness to Action: Strategies for Combating Racism in Health Systems](#).