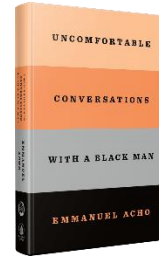


Online Book Study & Discussion

Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man

By Emmanuel Acho



Introduction

Emmanuel Acho wants to talk. He believes that the most crucial part of the cure to systemic racism and inequality in America – is to be in conversation.

Acho– the son of Nigerian immigrants – was raised in a predominantly white, upper-middle class suburban neighborhood of Dallas, Texas. He went to church every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. His first real introduction to “black” or “African-American” culture took place as a football player, first at the University of Texas, and later as a professional in the NFL.

He considers himself fluent in white and black cultures and, therefore, a helpful conversation partner for those of us who might have questions; and believes that by listening, sharing, and believing, the world can be changed – together.

Chapter One – The Name Game: Black or African American?

How do you bring race up with minorities? I honestly have so much fear of saying something wrong and being labeled as a “racist.” I’m sure things will come out wrong, or sound unaware because they are. But how will I learn if we can’t discuss – Melissa

What black people have been called – and call themselves – has a long, complex history. From colored to negro to black to African-American to BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color). The first two have faded from popular use; the last three are largely a matter of preference.

Acho’s conclusion: “There’s no one label that will satisfy all, but there is usually an opportunity to ask someone their preference. Yes, it might be uncomfortable, but it’s the right thing to do...Each person you meet might not have a preference, but maybe they do. Trust me, language matters.”