



Are We Really Crabs in a Barrel?: The Truth and Other Insights about the African American Community

Rodney D Smith

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Are We Really Crabs in a Barrel challenges a long-held belief that has permeated the African American community that suggests that Blacks, generally, are not supportive of each other. Author and educator, Rodney D. Smith, tenaciously confronts the age-old myth that African Americans stand in the way, and even thwart the progress of other African Americans, similar to what has been viewed as analogous behavior in crabs--the marine life form.

The gaze of Black America is the central target of the book as it aims to get the Black community, collectively, to see itself differently. Smith astutely asserts that "we [Blacks] often compare ourselves to crabs without giving full consideration to either life form, humans or crabs." He states further that "we must consider that crabs are not intended to live in barrels, and neither are humans." Throughout the book, Smith implores the reader to see the proverbial barrel as one and the same with the dire conditions many African Americans find themselves in today. America's racialized history of degradation, marginalization and discrimination is understood as, not only the backdrop to contemporary setbacks, but is recognized as the key determinant for many of today's barriers and obstacles.

In the end, *Are We Really Crabs in a Barrel* is a direct challenge to Black America and an inferred challenge to the rest of America to interrogate some of the conditions history has caused. It is also a call to action. It urges Black hands and minds to concentrate their energies on collective transformation in order to combat the long-standing effects of racism. Above all, Smith encourages African Americans to question, and in due course, change their less than favorable attitudes and behaviors toward each other.

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