

# **we want to do more than survive book**

We Want to Do More Than Survive is a powerful and thought-provoking book by Dr. Bettina L. Love that challenges the educational system and advocates for social justice in schools. Through her compelling narrative and insightful analysis, Love explores how the current educational landscape often fails to serve Black children and other marginalized communities. Aimed at educators, policymakers, and activists, the book provides a framework for understanding the systemic inequities that persist in education and presents a vision for a more just and equitable future.

## **Understanding the Core Message**

At its heart, We Want to Do More Than Survive is a call to action. Love articulates a vision for education that transcends mere survival; she argues that Black children and other marginalized students deserve to thrive. This vision encompasses not only academic success but also emotional, social, and cultural well-being. Love's approach is grounded in her personal experiences as well as her professional background in education.

## **The Concept of "Surviving" vs. "Thriving"**

Love distinguishes between two critical concepts in the educational experience of marginalized students:

1. **Surviving:** This refers to the bare minimum of what educational institutions provide. It often includes:
  - Meeting basic academic standards.
  - Managing behavioral issues without addressing underlying causes.
  - Providing safety but failing to nurture a sense of belonging or identity.
2. **Thriving:** This concept encompasses a holistic approach to education that includes:
  - Emotional and psychological support.
  - Culturally relevant teaching and curriculum.
  - Opportunities for leadership and community engagement.

By framing the discussion in this way, Love emphasizes that the goal of education should not just be to help students get by, but to empower them to excel and reach their fullest potential.

## **Historical Context and Systemic Inequities**

To fully understand the issues at play, Love provides a historical context that outlines the systemic inequities in education. She delves into the historical and sociopolitical factors that have shaped the current educational landscape for Black children and other marginalized groups.

## **Key Historical Events Impacting Education**

- Brown v. Board of Education (1954): This landmark Supreme Court decision aimed to desegregate schools but often led to further marginalization of Black students.
- The War on Drugs: Policies from the 1980s onward disproportionately affected communities of color, leading to increased incarceration rates and a cycle of poverty that impacts educational access.
- No Child Left Behind Act (2001): While well-intentioned, this law emphasized standardized testing and accountability without addressing the root causes of educational disparities.

Love argues that these historical events have created a deeply entrenched system where educational inequities persist, and students of color often find themselves in environments that are not conducive to genuine learning or growth.

## **The Role of Educators and Activists**

Educators play a crucial role in changing the narrative around education for marginalized students. Love emphasizes the need for educators to become activists, advocating for systemic change within their schools and communities.

## **Strategies for Educators**

1. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Educators should incorporate students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum to make learning more relatable and meaningful.
2. Building Relationships: Establishing strong, trusting relationships with students can help create a safe space where they feel valued and heard.
3. Community Engagement: Schools should collaborate with families and community organizations to create a support network for students.
4. Advocacy for Policy Change: Educators should not only focus on classroom practices but also advocate for policies that address systemic inequities.
5. Professional Development: Continuous learning about race, equity, and

social justice is essential for educators to effectively support their students.

## **Personal Narratives and Shared Experiences**

Throughout *We Want to Do More Than Survive*, Love includes personal narratives and stories from students, educators, and community members. These stories serve to humanize the statistics and theories she discusses, providing real-life context to the issues at hand.

### **Examples of Impactful Narratives**

- **Student Voices:** Love shares stories from students who have faced discrimination and marginalization, illustrating the emotional toll that these experiences can take.
- **Teacher Reflections:** Educators share their journeys toward understanding their roles in perpetuating or challenging systemic inequities.
- **Community Activism:** Accounts of grassroots movements and community organizations highlight the power of collective action in advocating for educational justice.

These narratives not only enrich Love's arguments but also serve as a source of inspiration for readers who seek to enact change.

## **Practical Framework for Change**

Love provides a practical framework for educators and activists who want to move beyond survival and create a thriving educational environment for all students, particularly those from marginalized communities.

### **Key Components of the Framework**

1. **Equity Audits:** Conducting regular assessments of school policies, practices, and outcomes to identify and address inequities.
2. **Restorative Practices:** Implementing restorative justice approaches to discipline that focus on healing rather than punishment.
3. **Inclusive Curriculum Development:** Collaborating with students and community members to create a curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives and experiences.

4. **Mentorship Programs:** Establishing programs that connect students with mentors who can provide guidance, support, and inspiration.

5. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Using data to inform practices and policies, ensuring that decisions are based on the needs of students rather than assumptions.

## **Conclusion: A Call to Action**

*We Want to Do More Than Survive* is not just a book; it is a movement towards educational equity and social justice. Dr. Bettina L. Love's passionate advocacy for marginalized students urges educators, policymakers, and community members to recognize the systemic injustices present in the education system and to take action toward meaningful change.

In a world where survival often seems like the best outcome for many students, Love's vision serves as a reminder that we must strive for more. By fostering an environment where all students can thrive, we not only uplift individuals but also strengthen our communities and society as a whole. Through collective effort, we can transform the educational landscape and ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed, not just survive.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the central theme of 'We Want to Do More Than Survive'?**

'We Want to Do More Than Survive' focuses on the need for transformative justice in education and addresses the systemic issues that affect marginalized students, emphasizing the importance of thriving rather than merely surviving.

### **Who is the author of 'We Want to Do More Than Survive'?**

The book is written by Dr. Bettina L. Love, an education scholar and advocate for social justice in education.

### **What audience is 'We Want to Do More Than Survive' aimed at?**

The book is aimed at educators, policymakers, and anyone interested in social justice, educational reform, and the experiences of marginalized communities in the educational system.

## **How does Dr. Bettina L. Love propose to change the educational system?**

Dr. Love advocates for a shift from a survival mindset to a thriving mindset, calling for educational reforms that center the voices and experiences of Black and marginalized students.

## **What are some key concepts introduced in 'We Want to Do More Than Survive'?**

Key concepts include 'liberatory education', 'culturally relevant pedagogy', and the idea of 'intersectionality' in understanding the complexities of student identities and experiences.

## **How does the book address the impact of systemic racism on education?**

The book discusses how systemic racism creates barriers for marginalized students and presents strategies for educators to confront and dismantle these barriers to foster an inclusive learning environment.

## **What role does community play in the vision outlined in 'We Want to Do More Than Survive'?**

Community is seen as a vital support system that can bolster the efforts of educators and students alike, fostering environments where all students can thrive and feel a sense of belonging.

## **What actions does Dr. Love encourage readers to take after engaging with the book?**

Dr. Love encourages readers to become advocates for change in their communities and educational institutions, actively working towards creating equitable and just learning environments.

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