

Narrative of fredrick douglass

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



The greatest thing about reading Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass is that there are many different and interesting themes to learn from.

Throughout Douglass' story he teaches us many lessons and motifs, but one thing that stays constant is his belief in the fact that all men and women should be created equal, with equal rights without any constraints to his or her own individual freedom.

The treatment of Douglass himself and the other slaves he worked with was unbearable and under such horrible circumstances that after reading his autobiography; it really makes me wonder what other types of things other slaves had to endure during their experiences. Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass shows its readers that even though times can get extremely hard, there will still always be hope even when you think there is none. One of the most important ways slaves were kept in bondage was not simply the threat of physical brutality; rather, it was through deep and sustained ignorance.

Slaves were not allowed to read and write and were therefore generally not aware of the events outside of the plantation, could not communicate with each other well to provoke rebellion or conduct escape plans, and could not reach the sense of self-sufficiency and pride that came from being educated. Literacy brought with it an understanding of the larger world. It opened up before a slave the idea of justice and an understanding of history. Reading the Bible led to a truer comprehension of Christianity. Douglass was able to first engage with abolitionism when he attained literacy.

He also became fully aware of the reality of slavery; he wrote "[Literacy] had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened

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my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity" (Page 56). Ignorance was thus a way for slaveholders to keep their slaves manageable, happy, calm, and content. Once a slave moved beyond such darkness into a world filled with understanding, he was only able to do what Douglass eventually did - attempt to escape from his ties.

While reading Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass it is almost like reading about how white men dehumanized their slaves. The first example of this is shown in Chapter 1 when Douglass' mother passes away. " Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of [my mother's] death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger" (Page 43).

This quote explains that Douglass, like many other slaves, never had much of any relationship with their birth mothers. Considering that some slaves are taken away from their birth mothers only a few short years after they are born it is easy to understand why Douglass felt this way. It's extremely sad to read how a child can feel almost no emotion after hearing of such a tragic loss. I imagine if that were to happen to me and how I would feel and can only feel disheartened by the fact that most slaves never got to have relationships with their mothers.

Another example of such degrading behavior by the slaveholders is simply how they scarcely feed their slaves. They expect so much work and cooperation from them and think that any amount of food, big or small, will help them to get their work done. Slaveholders instill in the minds of slaves

that being unfed, whipped and called awful names is the best kind of life they will ever have. These were horrible characteristics of slavery but were well depicted by Douglass in his autobiography. According to Nathaniel P.

Rogers' Southern Slavery and Northern Religion: February 11, 1844 (Page 139), it is explained that Douglass arrives to give a speech and to tell his story to an audience who is very apprehensive and uncertain about hearing him speak. However, they were very curious to see him. After giving his speech, which was well received by the audience, he was asked more and more questions and they wanted to know more about his life and journey through slavery in general. " There was great oratory in his speech-but more dignity and earnestness than what we call eloquence.

He was not up there as a speaker-performing. He was an insurgent slave taking hold on the right of speech, and charging on his tyrants and bondage of his race" (Page 141). Reading this review makes me really happy to know that while he had an awful time as a slave, escaping and gaining freedom was the best thing that ever happened to him. It is satisfying to read that others can feel for Douglass, though not come close to imagining what he had gone through, but having some sort of sympathy and realization that he and many other slaves are great human beings with inspiring stories to share about he freedom they all deserve. He teaches us that while we all go through horrible things; there is always a silver lining and something to be learned. Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass has really taught me a lot about myself and about a whole other kind of people that I really had no knowledge of. I truly believe that Douglass makes his audiences believe in what stands for; all men and women should be created equal, with equal

rights without any constraints to his or her own individual freedom. This autobiography has a lot to teach a person and I would recommend it to anyone.

It is thoroughly enjoyable and is the kind of book that makes you look past just the text. It makes you think about your own life, putting it in perspective and realizing what is really important. It is an interesting story that not many have heard themselves and really know little about its topic. I suggest to anyone who wants to read this narrative that they keep an open mind no matter what their previous views, religious or not, are so that they can fully understand and accept this person's journey through slavery.