

# Review on james baldwin's story "notes of a native son"

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Growing up is very difficult already without added difficulties, due to the fact you are finding yourself while also trying to do what others ask of you. I believe that this period in many people's lives impacts a large aspect of their virtue. These core years define who you are, while also putting you on the path for the person you will later be in life. In the process of growing up many of us discover or find many things that make us happy, and as we grow we continue to take out or focus less on the things that we do not feel a connection or drawn too. For some focusing on what makes you happy or content is easy, for others, it only comes with difficulties and thwarts.

I personally felt as though in the process of growing up I had little opportunity or freedom to do what I was the happiest and most content with. I myself grew up in a very strict disciplinarian household. The order in which my priorities went were School, Work, and sports then leaving whatever time I had left for myself. I had and still do to this day I believe much resentment towards my parents for this, due to the fact I cut many people out of my life because I could not make time for them. My father was raised with the mentality that your career comes first then your family. This being said he only has impacted my life in the sense of providing for me, and ensuring I do the same as him. This has created much of my resentment for him due largely to the fact of what transpired last year. When my college admissions process rolled around he felt that schools I had been accepted to were not good enough this being said he refused to pay the tuition for them. This leading to me attending community college because I now must pay for my own tuition until I am accepted into a school he approves of so he will pay for

it. This has created much hate and hostility towards my father, dissolving our relationship.

This being said when I read James Baldwin's story "Notes of a Native Son" I felt a strong connection to the relationship he has with his father. I know that he himself faced much more issues due to the fact of the time period, his race, and economic situation. But at the core level of him "hating" his father, I connected with it. It impacted me so much when he takes a step back and realizes why his father was the way he was. When he states, "It was better not to judge the man who had gone down under an impossible burden. It was better to remember: Thou knowest this man's fall, but thou knowest not his wrassling." It signifies that a father-son relationship is very difficult. As a child, you expect a lot from your parents, and it kills you more than anything when they fall short of your expectations, but it is hard to remember that parents expect the same of their children likewise. No parent wants their child to fail, and they especially hate to see us struggle. This is represented when his father speaks of segregation and the white man wanting to oppress Baldwin. It is hard to remember when our parents restrict us they think they are doing it for our best interest. I know my father wants me to succeed deep down, but his mentality of getting there and the process to achieve that I do not agree with, largely due to the fact it is very old fashioned and a different era in my opinion of methods to be successful. I am sure Baldwin realizes this with his father as well, appreciating what he did for him but not the way he did it.

I too like Baldwin fear of becoming my father, in my case I fear to have a work mentality where I permanently push people out my lives because my job and success comes first. I would like to be able to focus on my virtue and acknowledge if I am content and happy first rather than if I am succeeding at my job, which is not a bad thing, but can be when it is too the extent of my father where that is the only thing he must succeed in.

From a young age, my parents have always pushed me to work in finance or business because they are, well paying, respectable, steady fields. Until recently I have never had a problem with that, I felt that was what I wanted to do. But recently I have been thinking, is that what I feel called towards. I especially have felt this question jump out and be emphasized too me through Baldwin's autobiography, and the thought "What is Virtue," it has drawn questions out of me that I have never really had or given attention to. And although the idea of not knowing what I have wanted to always do with my life seems frightening, I have never felt at more peace to doubt that. Why do something you do not love or are not drawn to? Where would Baldwin be if it was not for pursuing and leaving behind his safety net? Risk takes passion and is never easy, you will face hate, pushback, and everyone kind of impediment to stop you. This should not relinquish your fire but rather fuel it as Baldwin iterated. Because when you succeed and put to rest all those who doubted you, it feels that much better.

People hate because they fear what they do not know, this is very clearly seen throughout Baldwin's story and I believe my upbringing. My parents feared the idea if I went out with my friends or were to attend a small liberal

arts school that I would fail. Society hated African Americans during Baldwin's time because they feared what they were capable of intellectually, professionally, and in society. I am not saying that the fear I have been raised around compares or even comes close to what Baldwin and African Americans had to go through, but I think the idea of what we hate, we are also afraid of coincides. And this hate we receive we emit as well, because we fear why we are hated thus we reciprocate the feeling, and it is hard to remove ourselves from this feeling and just focus on succeeding.

Through reading Baldwin's story and focusing on "What is Virtue" I feel more at peace because it has helped me draw to mind at the end of the day I can use hate as motivation to do even better. This reading of James Baldwin speaks very loudly about the man you can succumb to being or the man you can choose to be. It made it very evident to me that yes my parents have a large influence on my life, but at the end of the day, I choose my path. I can choose the impact on society, and my family I want to be left behind. And although my parents have instilled some great values in me, I do not have to mirror them to succeed. Because if all I do is hate my family and hold on to that I will not be able to see the larger picture in front of me because I will be blinded by so much anger. This key lesson is the main point I connected with from Baldwin's story. Until recently I had very unknown feelings about much of my hate and resentment towards my father. It has made it very difficult for me to respect what he has done for me, and look beyond what blinds me with anger.

This being said after reading Baldwins story it helped me draw to mind all these feelings and help me pinpoint why I feel this way. This has made me more grateful of what I do have as well, because it has also brought to mind to me that things could be much worse. I may not have all that i need or want, but I do have the resources to achieve everything I do and Baldwin's story has made me very grateful for that.