

The wes moore



The book "The Wes Moore", tells "the story of two boys living in Baltimore" who shares a similar life history within the "same black community", in addition to having identical names (Moore & Smiley, 2010). Written by Wes Moore and Tavis Smiley, it recounts the real life stories of the two "Wes Moores", the different journeys and destinies of their life. One Wes Moore ends up as a "phi beta kappa graduate of the John Hopkins University", a "white house fellow", an "army officer" and as the co-author of the book (Sragow, 2010). The "other Wes Moore" ends up as a thief, drug dealer and "a convicted killer"; a sharp difference in comparison to the life of the "lucky" Wes Moore (Moore & Smiley, 2010). As can be seen in the book, it is not luck that determines their different fates in life, but rather a number of factors that could also ensure other African Americans succeed as opposed to failing in life (Moore & Smiley, 2010).

The juxtaposition of their two lives clearly indicates the distinctly and extremely different paths that the two take in their separate lives. This leaves the reader further questioning on what could have happened to save the "other Wes Moore" from making such destructive choices in his life (Moore & Smiley, 2010). Having shared similar background, both would have most likely ended up with similar results; so what really makes the difference in their lives? This would provide essential information on what could be done to motivate many of the African -American to succeed in life; right from their education, their relationships with others, leading to better future. Reflecting on their lives and how they respond to challenges, in the context of the prevailing circumstances sheds light on the same.

Education is an imperative to future success as is seen in the life of the "lucky" Wes Moore. His mother notes his failing performance at school, which also connects with his delinquencies and suspensions from school (Moore & Smiley, 2010). The mother hopes for a better future for her family and "makes great sacrifices in sending him and his sisters to private schools", which are perceived to perform better than the public (Sragow, 2010). It is the mother's decision to send him to the "military school in Pennsylvania" that forms the first step towards a better life. Valuing education and ensuring the young African Americans are motivated to value the same would be driving force in achieving satisfactory results in their lives. According to Moore and Smiley (2010), the great rate of dropout from school is a huge problem in the black communities that further lead to the high delinquency and crime rates. Facing the challenges that poverty presents in their lives, forces many of the youth to look for money to buy food and other necessities; with crime being an easier way out. This is what happens in the life of "the other Wes Moore", who drops out of school and finally ends up in crime to provide for himself and family (Moore & Smiley, 2010). His story would have had a better end, had he continued with his education despite what he faced.

The community at large and the family in particular play a huge role in shaping the lives of the young black Americans. The family unit forms the basic foundations for the development of all children. Both face challenges brought of growing up without the essential presence of a father within the family set up. The mother of the "lucky" Wes Moore takes up the challenge and does not leave her children to make their own decisions. She as a mother, makes all the choices concerning their future with the

foreknowledge that " their tomorrow depends on their today". The absence of a father resonates with the absence of authority both of the " Wes Moores", and both exhibit delinquency problems in their youth (Sragow, 2010). What makes the difference in their lives is seen to begin at this point in their lives; as one is taken to the military school, as the " other Wes Moore" gradually grows in this antisocial behavior (Moore & Smiley, 2010). Any turn at this point would have ensured that his life does not end tragically in crime and save him from the possibility of spending time in jail (Sragow, 2010). The community's role in providing important guidance and advice to the youth and ensuring negative influences such as crime and drugs are kept at bay protects the youth from leading such destructive lives. This role further reinforces the part played by family in inculcating the right values as the African Americans develop, positively influencing their ability to make appropriate decisions in their lives.

Personal responsibility in each individual's lives is seen to make all the difference in their " final destinies" as indicated by the book (Moore & Smiley, 2010). The " other Wes Moore" makes the conscious decision of using crime in achieving his end. All the personal decisions he makes as he grows into adulthood, are based on the values he adopts along the way according to Moore and Smiley (2010), reinforcing the need to instill the correct values and attitudes in their lives at early stages of their lives. After making " four attempts to escape from the military school within a period of five days", the " lucky" Wes Moore decides to stay, focusing on performing in his study at the school (Moore & Smiley, 2010). The decision lays the foundation for success in all future endeavors as he learns to accomplish his

goals with each challenge (Sragow, 2010). The change of attitude towards his situation in juxtaposition with the "other Wes Moore's" reaction to his sets the ground towards different directions in their lives. Analyzing the myriad of factors that shape their lives from their childhoods, would point out avenues to ensure the younger generations of the black community avoid destroying their lives and attain a successful future instead (Sragow, 2010).