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African American Culture

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Where you are determines the amount of black history you learn. I lived in Washington, D.C. about 13 years. I had assumed all blacks were alike, that we all had the same perspectives. The minute I went to the east coast, I had the shock of my life that blacks there were so drastically different. There was no closeness, just cliques. In Atlanta, I felt--for the first time in my life--I met some people who seemed like it was just right out of a book.

We as black people have a tendency to not know black history. We don't have a very good and diversified perspective on certain events that even occurred in our lifetime. It's a lot of leftover slavery mentality. The whole concept of Malcolm X, many blacks disassociate with him because he was too radical at the time. We have this perspective that we psychologically divorce ourselves from it.

Ask the average black about their history, even in their lifetime, either they don't have one or it's based on other things. It's a leftover mentality from slavery. You have to reach a point of coming to grips with it. You have to be brave enough, psychologically, to come to grips with it. A lot of people don't understand this. It's leftover brainwashing from slavery.