

In My World...BLACK LIVES MATTER

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I am here today to speak of inequalities and injustices in America. It's not just about the whipping of slaves or the 5,000 lynchings or senseless police brutalities and other atrocities. I'm here to speak about the *perception* of people of color throughout U.S. History. There appears to be a belief system by some that defines one race of people less human than others. There is a social acceptance of indifference because of our appearance. There is a growing consensus that many of us are not deserving. As a result, violence from this racial conflict has been our reality. A vicious cycle of white brutality against blacks. Historical, discrimination, prejudices and segregation *still* send a message to me that Black lives *did not* matter.

But then I think about the hypocrisy. How can White America heap the benefits of African American contributions and not acknowledge the importance of our existence? How can you ignore that your lives have been changed by our inventions? Or that you have grown wealthy by African American economics, entertainers and sports figures. What part of us matters to you then? And what about those of us who are not as fortunate with money or fame? Those who are entangled in the vicious cycle of poverty and crime...What gives police officers the power to shoot to kill for a misdemeanor crime and not do jail time? Is it because that type of black life did not matter?

I am here today to ask, 'How do I make my presence matter to you, White America' ? I can't erase my face. What is that I have to do? Maybe the absence of our movements in your world and all of our positive contributions in your life might convince you that...Black Lives Matter! Our struggle is real. We defend ourselves and shout verbal retaliations because we are descendants of powerful warriors majestic Kings and Queens...Yes, our lives matter!

Therefore, since this appears to be a social problem, we, as African Americans need to change how society perceives us. We need to use the system to improve the system...Did you know there is an Alliance for Police Accountability and an Office of Municipal Investigations? We need to support them and report misconduct by those who are suppose to protect us. How many of you know your rights *or* the best way to interact with police? We need to learn this... Teachers it's time to educate your students. Mothers it's time to tell your children how beautiful and intelligent they are. Tell them everyday! Fathers share positive stories of black history in your communities... Imagine how powerful we will become when we are enlightened. Imagine what will happen when *we* believe that we matter...There is an African proverb that says a single bracelet does not jingle. So collectively, aggressively and deliberately let the world hear our voice. Everyone *will* hear our voice when we shout...Black lives matter! We will *not* surrender our self-worth... because, Black Lives Matter!