



Eight Habits of the Heart: Embracing the Values that Build Strong Families and Communities (African American History (Penguin))

Clifton L. Taulbert

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In his trilogy of memoirs that includes **Once Upon A Time When We Were Colored**, **The Last Train North**, and **Watching Our Crops Come In**, Clifton Taulbert introduced us to a host of relatives and friends--affectionately known as the porch people--who were an integral part of his upbringing in his native Glen Allan, Mississippi. Although these people were limited in financial resources, they were rich in love and wisdom and taught him lessons that proved to be invaluable. Using his own success as proof that by building strong communities, we build strong individuals, Taulbert revisits these elders and their lessons in **Eight Habits of the Heart : Embracing the Values that Build Strong Families and Communities** (Penguin Books; January 5, 1999; \$9.95). **Eight Habits of the Heart** grew out of a commencement speech that Taulbert delivered in 1995 at the North Shore Country Day School in Winnetka, Illinois. Wanting to leave a lasting impression on America's future leaders, but not knowing exactly what to say, Taulbert illustrated the community building practices that he learned from Poppa Joe, Ma Ponk, Preacher Hurn, and others in his beloved Mississippi Delta. He realized that a lot of the good will that these people showed one another was habitual and was offered out of love and respect. And that if we all practiced those same acts of kindness-- habits of the heart--in our day-to-day lives, not only would we build a strong community for ourselves and future generations, but we would have the potential to build a strong nation. With rich and poignant personal stories, **Clifton Taulbert** illustrates each habit and shows readers how to embrace these values: Nurturing Attitude: "Unselfish caring, supportiveness, and a willingness to share time" despite hardships; the ability to give our children "the best of what has been provided to us."

Dependability: "Being there for others through all the times of their lives, a steady influence that makes tomorrow a welcome event."

Responsibility: "Showing and encouraging a personal commitment to each task."

Friendship: The ability to bind together and "take pleasure in each other's company." Listening, laughing, and sharing good times and bad.

Brotherhood: Reaching beyond comfortable relationships "to extend a welcome to those who may be different from yourself."

High Expectations: "Believing that others can be successful, telling them so, and praising their accomplishments."

Courage: "Standing up and doing the right thing, speaking out on behalf of others, and making a commitment to excellence in the face of adversity or the absence of support." Hope: "Believing in tomorrow--because you have learned to see with your heart."

Taulbert also includes a series of "Exercises for Reflection" that can be used by families, businesses, schools, worship groups, reading clubs, and others to help motivate the building of stronger relationships and communities. His voice shines through as a refreshing guide to the spiritual core we as a society seem always to be seeking.

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