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An invitation inside the mind of an educator.

Profound Gentlemen [profoundgentlemen@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 11:35 AM

To: [Steve Johnston](#)

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Vincent Hale teaches music at Our Lady Queen of Angels School in East Harlem. He is pursuing a graduate degree in educational leadership in the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program at the University of Notre Dame and is an impact leader for [Profound Gentlemen](#), an organization supporting male educators of color in creating a cradle to career pipeline for boys of color.

I invite you on a journey through the mind of a thirty-year-old Black male educator, born and raised in the Bible Belt, currently residing in the Big Apple. There are so many thoughts, emotions and ideas swarming around in my head.

Sometimes I feel like I might explode if I don't let them out. Then on the other hand, I want to pack them into a tightly sealed vault. This personal narrative is serving as a therapeutic opportunity to be O.K. with not being O.K..

As young Black boys, we are taught to live above the standard. Never give "them" a reason to suspect malicious activity from you. We are taught to smile and suppress our "negative" emotion so as to not be labeled an angry Black man. We are taught to remain calm even in the face of danger from those who are supposed to protect us.

While I cannot speak for the entire community, this has been my lived experience. I was encouraged to pursue higher education because that was the best way to get out of the "hood." I was told that my unique gifts, skills and interests set me apart and would open up a world of opportunity.



Yes, that is true, and I still believe those things. But it becomes increasingly difficult to travail through this journey called life when something that I have absolutely no control over—the color of my skin—can be the sole reason that I am forced to take my final breath.

What happens when you've done it right? You obtained the degrees. You share your joy. You pay your taxes. You serve the community. You show up day after day. But deep down on the inside, you know it's ultimately not enough.

The recurring instances of racial and social injustice, police brutality, and weaponized white privilege are infuriating. This country is supposed to be the land of the free and the home of the brave; however, countless Black and brown lives lie victim to systemic oppression and discrimination.

I do not have all the answers, but I do know these events call for a time of reflection. Inclinations to say and do something are crippled so much by the pressure of wanting to do it right, to the point of paralysis. We cannot run away from the uncomfortable nature of difficult inner and interpersonal conversations.

We need a revival that turns this country on its head. Identifying our implicit biases is an initial step. Our actions are a result of our subconscious thoughts on race. Stereotypes and unwarranted attitudes toward others affect our decision making. Our lived realities stem from how we view ourselves, our neighbors, and our world.

A goal of Partnership Schools is to help change the lives of students from historically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The families we serve are affected by these tragic events, and people are hurting. Righteous anger is boiling through our veins, but we cannot let the sun go down on our wrath. In addition, this is not a time for isolation; problems are resolved in dialogue.

In response to the trauma and pain, we rely on our belief that we are made for each other in the image and likeness of God. The Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are the epitome of community; no one is greater than the other as they all serve a specific purpose. The world needs more of this idea of solidarity.

Our network of schools animates that principle by fostering community between

stakeholders from various backgrounds and respecting our God given differences. By instilling gospel values, we embolden our students to appreciate their unique heritage, strive for excellence, maneuver confidently in pursuit of their passion, and to become upstanding global citizens.

As the Vatican's document on [Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools](#) explains, "To organize schools like gymnasiums where one exercises to establish positive relationships between the various members and to search for peaceful solutions to the conflicts is a fundamental objective not just for the life of the educational community, but also for the construction of a society of peace and harmony" (#43).

Attached you will find a [resource](#) from [Building Movement Project](#) that can help you understand and define your place in the movement. We all play a role and are responsible for the climate and progression toward social change. Silence is a cop out! Your voice is a gift the world needs to receive.

Based on this framework, I would classify myself as a Weaver, Caregiver and Storyteller. My desire to connect people from different walks of life is supported by my belief that joy is a catalyst for change. My medium and platform to elicit that change is the performing arts: music, theatre and dance.

As a Black man, I am frustrated. I feel like my hands are tied behind my back and I can't break free. However, as an educator, I am inspired. I find motivation in the vocation of shaping the minds of today's youth and tomorrow's leaders. And on top of that, as a Christian, I am a disciple with hope to bring. I pray that the love of Christ permeates the hearts of his people and saturates the lives of those yet to believe.

This story was originally posted on [PartnershipNYC.org](#).

More PG Updates

- **My Voice Matters: Juneteenth Virtual Celebration:** June 19 from 2-4 pm. Youth-led discussion and celebration organized by Its Our Turn Now. [Learn more and RSVP](#).
- **[PG Impact Leader, Archie Moss, Appeared on Ellen!](#)** (and defended his dissertation yesterday!) Congrats, Archie!
- **Developing the Diverse and Supportive Teacher Pipelines Students Deserve.** June 23 from 10:00 A.M. Virtual Zoom Webinar featuring Panellists Jason Terrell, Dr. Constance Linsday, & Darryl Bradshaw. Presented by TNTF & Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. [RSVP](#)

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