



# Road to Self-Confidence College Scholarship

## Essay Submission

**Devin Suttles: 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner**

**\$500 Scholarship Award**

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### Essay Prompt

Please identify three social, economic or community issues in today's society; analyze each issue and discuss how would like to resolve each one.

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### Essay Response

"I always thought it was me against the world and then one day I realized it's me against myself" - Kendrick Lamar. I realized no one could ever take away my vision or underestimate the power of my mind. No one could deny my culture or history and deprive me of my motivation to succeed in life, except me. But in reality, society has very low expectations for young Black people, especially Black men. Imagine a world where a student's unfortunate circumstances within their childhood or their inability to receive financial opportunities were not mis-conceptualized when assessing potential. A world where stereotypes and labels never existed and student's cultural bias about one another was not based on race, but the inclusion and personal relationships of one another. Imagine a world where every flower got to be represented in the bouquet.

Someone once said, "My story is filled with broken pieces and ugly truths. It's also filled with major comebacks, peace, and saving grace." From the tears of a little black child with a fractured heart to the seemingly inevitable separation of his parents to the dreadful days that he resided in isolation, fearful that either his mother or father would overstep their boundaries and shift the balance between disorder and peace. He lived in a house where his parents refused to stay on the same floor, drifting apart like two halves of a crashed ship now pulling between the different tides. When his parents got divorced, it created a ripple effect that would eventually help him discover his compassion and self-love. Yet he held within him a determination to turn his pain into art. This was my story but sadly, not every student receives guidance to continue to strive to be the best version of themselves, which isn't their fault. The burden of their tribulations and the lack of family support is what often leads to the inability to focus on academic and career goals. Creating this unsurmountable cycle of hopeless and unfilled dreams in lower-class communities. The way that we can address this issue lies within systematic flaws within our school systems. Schools need to expand career gateway opportunities, exclusive scholarships, and rigorous test preparation to students that may not have previously qualified or weren't made aware. Doing this will not only decrease the number of students that make decisions that could negatively impact their future but also reveal the unseen potential within every student that didn't get the opportunity to shine before.

"The land of the free and the home of the brave". Yet our society places stereotypes and hatred upon and the ideology of racism still lies deep within the undertones of what we call the "American Dream". From police brutality, the Black Lives matters movement, and the issues on gun violence, to the societal discrimination against Native Americans, the way The United States can start to make progress in the first steps of solving these issues is by stopping the hate. We need to take the time to learn from one another because, at the moment, we fear what we don't understand. These issues can only be fully addressed and solved through sit down conversations where all voices can be heard in an environment without judgment. Our nation has proven time and time again that we are strongest together and it is with the inclusion of all people that we can call ourselves "The land of the free and the home of the brave".

As a kid, seeing black superheroes in the comic books or movies ignited a drive within me that aspired me to inspire those who would come after me. Seeing Barack Obama our nation's 44th president and first African American President take office reminded me to continue to strive for excellence and keep my dreams in mind. Seeing successful figures that represent your culture not only your motivation, it also can contradict some of the perceived stereotypes that society has created. But minorities in America need to have more of a voice that would allow them to leave their mark on the very society that they too helped build. So I believe that we need to find more ways to include all races in every aspect of life. This will allow us to become the United nation it claims to be. So let the Muslim, African American, Caucasian, LGBTQ, Native American voices be heard. So that we can finally let every flower bloom in the bouquet.