



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Is centering Black love and joy the key to building a better society?

Trabian Shorters

In This Episode...

Trabian Shorters, founder of the BMe Community, challenges us to rethink the power of narrative. He advocates for asset-framing — finding solutions that begin with people’s contributions -- and warns against centering whiteness when solving social problems. “Centering somebody else in your own narrative is spiritual death,” he tells Eboo. “How do we help build upon Black people’s love to make a better society for everyone?”

Episode Guest: Trabian Shorters

Trabian Shorters is the CEO of BMe Community, an award-winning network of innovators, leaders, and champions who invest in aspiring communities. He is also a New York Times bestselling author, social entrepreneur, and the leading authority on an award-winning approach to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Impact, called "Asset-Framing."

Suggested Discussion Questions

- Trabian asserts that humans are much more narrative -driven than we give ourselves credit for. He describes how deficit-oriented ways of describing things or people can prime our brains to be fearful of them. Do you ever find yourself describing parts of your personality or life in deficit-oriented ways? How might you change this to asset-oriented language?
- Trabian argues that referring to people by their challenges instead of their aspirations is an obstacle to solving social problems. Can you think of a time when someone saw your challenges but not your aspirations? Do you think that this had anything to do with your identities or life circumstances? How did you feel about it?
- What is an example of something aspirational or positive that you know about, is not widely known, and that you could share around? For example, Trabian mentions the fact that Black fathers are the most engaged fathers in America. How do you think things might begin to shift when there is broader awareness of positive facts such as this one?
- Trabian describes the “cultural fluidity” of his interfaith family, with its American, Nigerian, Christian, and Muslim people and elements. In what areas of your life have you experienced or seen “cultural fluidity”?
- Trabian describes his Black Love project as a venue for Black people to articulate and achieve their highest aspirations. If you are Black, what is your reaction to this project? What things would you put in Trabian’s “buckets” to prioritize? If you are not Black, how do you think you can support the narrative shift of the Black Love project in your thoughts, speech, and actions?