

FINDING THE UNITY IN HUMANITY

| THE STORY OF US

WITH MORGAN FREEMAN



*For community screenings, panels, and workshops,
and college courses and seminars*



JOURNEYS IN FILM
educating for global understanding



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Introduction to *The Story of US with Morgan Freeman*

After the success of his series *The Story of God*, Morgan Freeman continues with his global travels to answer questions about our human world. Concerned with the splintering within our own society and the separation, even hostility, that seems to be growing around the world, he asks about the forces within us that all human beings share. He wants to know, not what drives us apart, but what unites us in a common humanity, even though the manifestation of

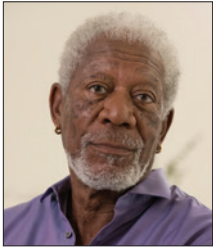


these common ideals and goals seems unique to each culture. Among the questions his investigation seeks to answer are:

- What drives people to fight for freedom? Can we find liberty even when bound in chains? And when will people be free to be who they really are?
- Can we put an end to the sacrifice of soldiers' lives? Is war inevitable? Can we ever hope for a lasting peace? Is technology making war more likely and more deadly? Is peace simply the absence of war? Can we ever move beyond our urge to fight?
- What happens when we don't have love? Why are we willing to suffer for love, even die for it? Should passion be left to fate? And can love reach everyone?
- Is tribalism just part of human nature? Or can we bridge the divide that separates "us" from "them"?
- What makes a good leader? Why do leaders betray our trust? Is democracy really the best way to run society? What is the social contract between leaders and followers?
- What makes a rebellion succeed? What makes a rebel? Is it determination? The number of "true believers"? Or the justice of the cause?

These questions seem at first glance so grand as to be almost impossible to answer. But as Morgan Freeman takes the viewer along on his travels, we learn about individuals and groups that have found ways to address these challenging issues and to formulate ideas, develop rituals, and cross boundaries in their own ways. This discussion guide has been prepared to help you understand more about what you see on the screen and to follow up with additional reading on the topics that stir your interest as you yourself consider "the ties that bind us and the common humanity inside us."

A Letter From Morgan Freeman, Lori McCreary, and James Younger



Dear All,

Last year, as our team finished our six-part series *The Story of God*, the 2016 presidential election was in full swing. The usual fractures and divisions among our different views of the role of government seemed to metastasize into bitter partisanship. The economic divide between the wealthiest and the poorest citizens yawned even wider. Many began to “unfriend” others on social media, to avoid having to hear views that conflicted with their own. Many listened only to television anchors and talking heads who echoed and reinforced their own views.



But democracy does not, and cannot, work that way. Our centuries-old democracy functions best when we

listen to other opinions, not just to those who share our own; when we weigh each other’s arguments and reason with each other; when we celebrate each other’s fundamental humanity rather than exaggerate our differences.

And so our team turned from the divine in *The Story of God* to a study of what makes us truly human. In this time of growing social, racial and cultural division, *The Story of Us with Morgan Freeman* reveals how we are bound together by our common humanity. We wanted to tell intimate stories about how we are all connected and how similar we all are in love, in freedom, in war and peace.

The interviews we conducted ranged over many important questions. What drives people to fight for freedom? Can we achieve a true and lasting peace? How does love transform us? How do we overcome the fears that drive tribalism? What makes a good leader? Why are some people driven to rebel? To answer these questions, we traveled thousands of miles. We listened to a former prison inmate from Louisiana who survived 43 years of solitary confinement and to an escapee from a North Korean slave labor camp who made a new life for himself in Colorado. We heard how a former member of the Westboro Baptist Church rejected the teachings of hatred. We learned about arranged marriages in Pakistan and orphanages in Romania and the homeless in London. We found that, despite our differences in language, in experiences, in ambitions, at our core we are all the same.

We hope *The Story of Us with Morgan Freeman* and this discussion guide will inspire you to begin a much-needed dialogue about the ideas, values, and aspirations that all humans share, rather than focusing on our differences. We need to see the divisions in our society as things that can be bridged. We think it starts with empathy, and it starts with compassion. It starts with inviting one another, “I need to understand how you see things.” There has never been a more important time for such a conversation.

Sincerely,

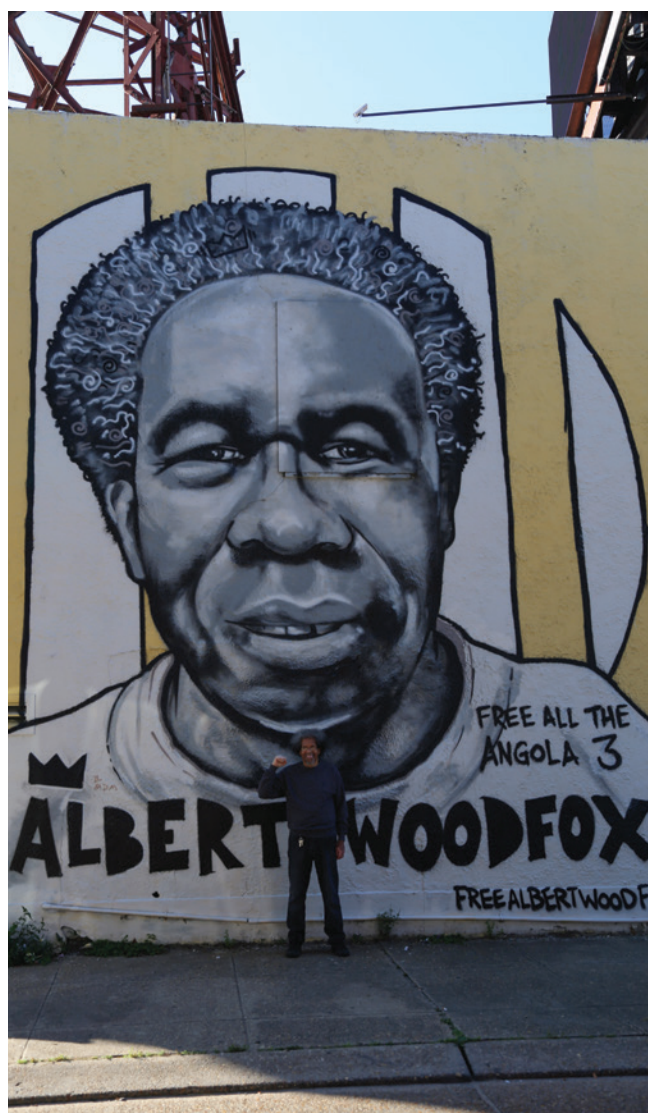
Morgan Freeman, Lori McCreary and James Younger
Executive Producers

The March of Freedom

Around the world, there's a growing tide of freedom. The belief that every person has the right to self-determination is growing stronger and stronger. I wonder, if one day we will all be free.

— Morgan Freeman

1. When the episode opens, Morgan Freeman is strolling beside the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The monument commemorates Lincoln's handling of the Civil War and his Emancipation Proclamation. The Memorial was also the site of Marian Anderson's outdoor concert in 1939, after she had been denied a chance to sing at a concert hall in the nation's capital, and of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963. *What common themes run through these events and this episode of Morgan Freeman's The Story of Us? Do you think this is the best location to open this episode?*
2. The United States military, which had been segregated since its inception, was desegregated by President Harry Truman's 1948 Executive Order 9981, which called for "equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin." Despite this, Freeman says that early in his Air Force years (1955–59), he was denied the opportunity to fly after passing a test to qualify. *Why do you think he says that "no black man could fly with the Strategic Air Command"? What is your opinion about the recent presidential executive order banning transgender people in the military? Why did the President take this step?*



3. Shin Dong-hyuk, a prisoner since birth in a North Korean slave labor camp for political prisoners, never tasted freedom until his escape. 100,000 political prisoners still remain. *What was his life like in the prison camp? How did he feel about his birth family? Why? What prompted him to make his escape? How well has he adjusted to freedom and a new life, first in South Korea and then in the United States? Do you think he understands the concept of freedom now?*
4. Freeman notes that in North Korea, anyone can be jailed for criticizing the leader, Kim Jong-un. In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution protects freedom of speech. *Why is freedom of speech so important, both to the individual and to the country as a whole? Should there be any limits on freedom of speech in this country? Should speakers with unpopular, even racist, views be allowed to speak at public universities? Is symbolic speech, like kneeling during the National Anthem, also protected by the Constitution?*
5. Albert Woodfox, who was arrested on an armed robbery charge, spent 23 hours a day in solitary confinement in a small cell for over four decades. Visited by Morgan Freeman, he explains his early involvement with the Black Panther movement in New York, which he says gave him courage to resist. *What are the usual effects of extended solitary confinement? How did Woodfox manage to preserve both his sanity and his spirit of resistance? Why does he say he had always seen a certain fear in African Americans until he moved to New York? What did he learn from the Black Panther Party in Harlem?*
6. Woodfox's experience in jail reflects widespread treatment of imprisoned African American inmates at that time. Today, there is political unrest over the shooting of unarmed black males by police, and many African



American parents often think they must have “the talk” with their children about interacting with police. *What is the Black Lives Matter movement? What are its goals? Do you think it has been/will be successful? What effect do you think hearing “the talk” has on African American children?*

7. While visiting Philadelphia, Morgan Freeman views one of Jefferson's original drafts of the Declaration of Independence and learns that it was altered to protect slaveholding. However, since its issuance, the Declaration has been the basis for groups other than white males to claim their unalienable rights; Jefferson's document inspired such diverse figures as the French revolutionaries of 1789, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and even Ho Chi Minh. *Have you ever really read the Declaration of Independence from beginning to end? If not, why not? What elements of the admittedly flawed Declaration have served to inspire other leaders in other countries?*
8. Rigoberta Menchú lost most of her family during Guatemala's long civil war (1960-96); her father, mother, and brother were tortured and killed. She escaped and then



dedicated her life to making the world aware of the strife in her country and to defending the rights of indigenous peoples. *Why were Rigoberta's family and other Maya protesting in Guatemala? What were conditions like for them during the civil war? What did they hope to achieve?*

9. After speaking with Rigoberta Menchú, Morgan Freeman says, "In Guatemala, just as in the civil rights movement in the U.S., some people chose to fight for freedom with the sword, while others chose the pen. It is those who

chose the path of peace, I believe, who laid the foundation for real change." *Do you agree with him? Why, or why not? How can one fight for freedom with a pen? Can you think of anyone today who is fighting for freedom with words?*

10. The members of the Russian protest rock band Pussy Riot used music to call attention to oppressive actions by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Nadya Tolokonnikova and her colleagues spent time in prison as punishment for their actions, but today she is free and continues to write and sing in protest. *Can you think of another time when music was used as a vehicle for protest? What kind of music was it? What was its theme? What was the response of the authorities to such music? How did this music inspire its listeners? Is music used for protest today?*
11. Nadya Tolokonnikova says in the film that it is enough to inspire just five people, because then they will in turn inspire five more people, and the movement will grow. *Who are the people who have inspired you? Whom have you in turn inspired? Do you agree with her that this is how movements form?*
12. Victoria Khan grew up in war-torn Afghanistan, surviving a conflict that took the life of her parents. She sought political and physical freedom from the Taliban, a force that is still waging war to regain control in that country. *What kinds of restrictions do the Taliban impose on the personal and political freedoms of Afghans? Do you think military action by the United States can change the situation there permanently?*
13. After achieving her own freedom, Victoria also sought the freedom to live as her true self, undergoing multiple surgeries so that her body would conform to her true female identity. *How did she feel when she put on a burka for the first time? Why? How does the community you live in treat transgender individuals? Do you think attitudes about transgender individuals are changing? Why or why not?*

The March of Freedom: For further reading and study

A short video of Marian Anderson singing “God Bless America” in front of the Lincoln Memorial in 1939
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAONYTMf2pk>

A video of Martin Luther King’s speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnnklfYs>

A brief summary of Morgan Freeman’s military career
<http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/career-advice/military-transition/famous-veteran-morgan-freeman.html>

The United Nations Commission of Inquiry Report on Human Rights Violations in North Korea
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/ColdPRK/Pages/ReportoftheCommissionofInquiryDPRK.aspx>

A summary of main points from the UN report on human rights violations in North Korea
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/16/reddit-michael-kirby-north-korea-human-rights-abuses>

Website of the Reporters’ Committee on Freedom of the Press
<https://www.rcfp.org/>

The American Civil Liberties Union website on freedom of speech
<https://www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech>

A description of Albert Woodfox’s life in solitary confinement
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/01/16/how-albert-woodfox-survived-solitary>

The Black Lives Matter website
<http://blacklivesmatter.com/>

The global influence of the Declaration of Independence
<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/road-revolution/essays/declaration-independence-global-perspective>

Text of Jefferson’s rough draft of the Declaration of Independence
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/declara/ruffdrft.html>

The Nobel Prize lecture given by Rigoberta Menchú
https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1992/tum-lecture.html

A timeline of Guatemala’s civil war
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/latin_america-jan-june11-timeline_03-07/

A page of videos and articles about Nadya Tolokonnikova
<http://www.thelavinagency.com/speakers/nadya-tolokonnikova>

It Gets Better, an organization that supports LGBTQ youth and shares coming-out videos
<http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>

The Fight for Peace

What I've learned, from the remarkable people I've met, is that we have to get better at making peace. When the bloodshed ends, when the dust settles over shattered homes, we must do everything we can to resist taking revenge and instead search for our own humanity.

— Morgan Freeman

1. Morgan Freeman's first visit in this episode is with two Ethiopian tribes that have been warring for generations, the Daasanach and Nyangatom. They are pastoral, subsisting mostly on cattle, with limited grazing lands. *What are the reasons why the men of the villages fight each other? What kind of weapons do they use? How does one recognize a warrior among the Daasanach?*
2. There is a generational divide among the Daasanach on the subject of war. *Why does this divide exist? Do you think generational divides exist in other societies, including our own, as well? What are the elements of the peace ceremony organized by the elders? What do they symbolize? What do you think are the prospects for a lasting peace between these groups?*
3. If climate change continues, African people will find themselves increasingly short of water and pastureland. Some researchers believe that dislocation and migration may lead to civil war and other conflicts. *Do you think this is a likely outcome? What can the United Nations and other agencies do to prevent conflict among tribal groups or even nations in Africa?*
4. Morgan Freeman reports that in the last few decades, the United States has targeted over 4,000 suspected terrorists using drone strikes, which serve to protect our soldiers and airmen. Opponents claim that there are far more casualties than are reported and that drones are an impediment to peace, making warfare safer and therefore more likely. *What are the consequences of using high-tech "killing machines" in warfare? What is your stance on the question of how and when drones should be used? Why? What impact do they have on the soldiers who operate them?*
5. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is usually associated with men and women who have fought on the battlefield. However, Brandon Bryant and many other drone operators, working safely behind computer screens in bunkers, have also been diagnosed with PTSD. *Why has PTSD been an issue for these service members? How has this experience changed Bryant's outlook and goals in life?*





6. Anthropologist Kate Centellas meets Wilbur Danica Fajardo, a Quechua from Bolivia, in the town of Macha for the *tinku*, part of the harvest ceremony in May. (Remember that seasons are opposite in the Northern and Southern hemispheres.) *What is the purpose of the tinku? Why do men fight in this ritual? Do you think it accomplishes its goal of providing an outlet for aggression?*
7. The Roman Catholic Church and the Bolivian government have both tried to limit or end the ritual of *tinku*. *What is your position? Should it be abolished? Does our own society have any activities that are used to channel aggression before it becomes too destructive?*
8. Religious differences, and the discrimination and violence based upon these differences, have shaped Northern Ireland for centuries, since the time of Henry VIII. From 1968 to 1998, during the period known as “The Troubles,” violence between Roman Catholics and Protestants flared in Northern Ireland and over 3,000 people were killed. *Why has the peace accord signed in 1998 not completely resolved the violence? Do you think the walls between Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods were a good idea at the time? Should they come down now? Do you agree with Morgan Freeman that the friendships of individuals like Daniel Walsh and his unnamed friend will eventually “tear down this wall”?*



9. Are there divisions between ethnic groups in your neighborhood? If so, is there any individual or organization trying to cross the divide and unify the various factions? Are schools and other institutions segregated in practice, even if not by law? If so, how might this be changed?
10. Mohamed ElBaradei, the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize winner, meets with Morgan Freeman to discuss nuclear brinkmanship. Because of the prospect of “mutually assured destruction” (MAD), the major powers have avoided nuclear conflict since the start of the Cold War after World War II. *Why does ElBaradei feel that the world is growing more dangerous day by day? What could cause a nuclear attack?*
11. Do you agree with Morgan Freeman that a warlike element is part of our genetic structure as humans? Why does ElBaradei still feel hopeful? Do you agree with him?
12. In 1994, Paul Kagame, now president of Rwanda, and the army he commanded put an end to the horrific genocide in Rwanda, which took as many as a million lives because of ethnic hostility. The majority Hutus attacked and ordered the deaths of the minority Tutsis; several million Tutsis fled to refugee camps in neighboring countries. *How does President Kagame distinguish between justice and revenge? How did he go about promoting reconciliation between opposing groups? How successful has this been in preventing additional violence? Would you be able to reconcile with someone who murdered your family?*
13. In discussing Kagame, Morgan Freeman mentions that the president has also limited both freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and he has suppressed political opponents. Some human rights groups accuse him of worse. *In your opinion, does the end (peace and reconciliation) justify the means?*

The Fight for Peace: For further reading and study

More information about the Daasanech tribe and its culture

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/tribe/tribes/dassanech/>

Research about the links between climate change and conflict

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2017/01/20/does-climate-change-cause-conflict/>

Some articles about the ethics of drone warfare

<http://www.newsweek.com/confessions-lethal-drone-operator-396541>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-mockaitis/drones-and-the-ethics-of_b_8961510.html

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/sunday-review/the-moral-case-for-drones.html?mcubz=o>

<https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdf/PUB1289.pdf>

<https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2016/03/10/ethical-perspectives-on-drone-warfare/>

PTSD among drone pilots

<http://www.npr.org/2017/04/24/525413427/for-drone-pilots-warfare-may-be-remote-but-the-trauma-is-real>

Articles describing a smaller *tinku* in Sacaca, Bolivia, and the larger one at Macha

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/12/world/americas/12tinku.html?mcubz=o>

<http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jul/06/news/adfg-tinku6>

A history of “The Troubles” from Irish and British sources

<http://www.theirishstory.com/2015/02/09/the-northern-ireland-conflict-1968-1998-an-overview/#.WbgcqYWcFPY>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/troubles>

Biography, speeches, and other information on Mohamed ElBaradei

https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2005/elbaradei-bio.html

A history of the genocide in Rwanda

<http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/rwandan-genocide>

Amnesty International 2017 report on the election of Rwanda President Paul Kagame

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/08/rwandas-repressive-tactics-silence-dissent-before-elections/>

The Power of Love

Love is the most powerful force we know. Back when we all lived in small tribes, it kept our extended families together. But it has grown into so much more than that. Today love can reach all the way around the world. It is endlessly adaptable, surprising and healing. It has the power to inspire us, to push our society forward.

— Morgan Freeman



1. Izidor Ruckel lived in a Romanian orphanage from his abandonment at age three until his adoption by an American couple at age eleven. His childhood experiences had a profound effect on his personality and the choices he made later in life. *Why were there so many children in the orphanages in Romania? What were conditions like for these children? How was Izidor able to escape from this life?*
2. In this segment, Izidor recounts his difficulty in adjusting to life with an American family. *Why did he eventually move out? Why did he return? How did this separation alter his perception of himself and of the Ruckel family? How has this affected him in his later life?*
3. As Morgan Freeman visits the Hamar people of Ethiopia, he talks about their customs with the anthropologist Samuel Tefera, who has been living among them. As Freeman witnesses the bull-leaping ceremony that marks a boy's passage into manhood and allows him to marry, Tefera explains what is happening. *What role do the women of the tribe play in this ceremony? Why is Morgan Freeman shocked? When he asks why they do something that seems painful and cruel to him, how do they respond? What does Morgan Freeman mean when he concludes that "the bonds of family are cemented by this form of sacrificial love"?*
4. In many societies, marriages are still arranged by families, with negotiated dowries and other material arrangements. As Morgan Freeman points out, marriages based on romantic love as we understand it today are a relatively recent phenomenon. *What are the advantages and disadvantages of a marriage based on romantic love? How successful are such marriages today, i.e., what percentage end in divorce? What are the advantages and disadvantages of an arranged marriage? Is such a marriage likely to be successful in your opinion?*



5. After a divorce from a husband she had chosen because of a romantic attraction, attorney Hina Belitz threw herself into her work, but she always felt something was missing. While visiting her grandmother in Pakistan, she was introduced to a number of eligible men and eventually decided to marry one of them after knowing him only briefly. *Why did Hina, a modern, Western-educated professional woman, make this decision? How successful a marriage is it? Would you make a similar choice if you were in her shoes? Do you think romantic love can develop after marriage rather than before? What do you think Morgan Freeman means by his question, "Do you think love has to be learned?"*
6. Army Major William Swenson received the Medal of Honor for his actions trying to save fellow soldiers' lives when they came under attack in Afghanistan. *How does he explain the term "brothers in arms"? How does service in the military, even on the battlefield, create this bond? How did you feel when he described the death of Sergeant First Class Kenneth Westbrook? Why?*



7. Joshua Coombes is a barber in London who takes his trade to the street to give haircuts and shave some of the homeless who are living there uncared for. Morgan Freeman interviews him while he is working with a homeless man named Stewart. *Why does Joshua give haircuts rather than food or money? What does he learn about Stewart in the process? How does Stewart benefit from the haircut? Who is more affected by the interaction, Stewart or Joshua?*
8. The homeless can be found almost anywhere in the United States, and various localities have found different ways of addressing the problem. *Have you had experience with homeless persons? How has this contact made you feel? Do you think your actions had any effect on them? In your opinion, what is the best way to help homeless persons in your community? Do the methods your community uses involve the idea of love?*
9. The ancient Greeks identified and described different kinds of love, including *eros*, a passionate and intense desire for someone or something; *philia*, a kind of friendship or loyalty based on shared goodwill; *storge*, love because of familiarity, like the love between parents and children; *pragma*, a practical love based on a sense of duty; *philautia*, or self-love, which can be either healthy or unhealthy; and *agape*, a love for all human beings. *As you review what you have learned in this episode of The Story of Us, which type of love do you recognize in each segment? Be sure to explain your reasoning.*

The Power of Love: For further reading and study

Izidor Ruckel's website, including information about the history of orphanages and adoption in Romania
<https://izidorruckel.com>

An NPR article about Izidor Ruckel and how his experience shows the importance of parent-child bonding
<http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/02/20/280237833/orphans-lonely-beginnings-reveal-how-parents-shape-a-childs-brain>

A scholarly article about infant-parent attachment from the National Institutes of Health
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2724160/>

More information about the customs of the Hamar tribe of Ethiopia
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/tribe/tribes/hamar/>

Anthropologist Samuel Tefera's research page, with additional articles about the Hamar
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Samuel_Samuel3

Information about Major William Swenson, his Medal of Honor, his unit, and the battle in which he earned this recognition
<https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/swenson/index.html>

The Instagram account and Facebook page for the DoSomethingForNothing network
<https://www.instagram.com/DoSomethingForNothing/>
<https://www.facebook.com/dosomethingfornothing/>

A philosophical discussion of the meaning of love
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/love/>

A layman's guide to the seven types of love
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hide-and-seek/201606/these-are-the-7-types-love>

Us and Them

This journey has shown me just how dangerous it can be to divide into “us” and “them.” But the people I’ve met give me hope that these divides are not impossible to bridge. We are a species that thrives on working together.

— Morgan Freeman

1. Daryl Davis tells Morgan Freeman that he first learned about race prejudice when he was in fourth grade. *Why was this such a surprise to him? How did he learn about it? As the parent of a child who comes from a racial minority, when and how would you explain prejudice to your child?*
2. Daryl Davis has made a habit of seeking out members of the Ku Klux Klan and trying to get to know them; often, the contacts have led to Klan members giving him their robes and leaving the Klan. *How important is the symbolism of the KKK robe? Can people really change their deep-seated*



beliefs? Could outreach like that practiced by Davis help to heal other divisions in our society? Have you ever tried to influence someone who believes very differently from you? If so, was your outreach successful?

3. Scott Shepherd is a former KKK member who now counts himself as a good friend of Daryl Davis. *Why did Shepherd join the KKK? How did membership make him feel? How was he affected by the time he spent in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center?*
4. Daryl Davis says, “We can legislate behavior, but we cannot legislate how they think. The day we legislated for blacks to sit on the bus, after the Rosa Parks bus boycott, did not change the mindset. That came over time, through...grass roots conversation.” *Is he right in this assessment? Are there other issues today for which legislation has preceded a change of people’s attitudes? What else can be done besides legislation to change attitudes?*
5. In Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morgan Freeman meets with prominent television journalist Sénad (SEH-nahd) Hadzifejzovic (HA-jih-FACE-o-vich), who predicted that war would come to Bosnia as Serbia tried to expand its territory. *The journalist refers to pre-war Bosnia as “a blended cocktail of different ethnic groups.” What do you think he meant by this metaphor? Who was Slobodan Milosevic? How did he manage to pit previously peaceful ethnic minorities against each other?*
6. Despite lessons learned in World War II, genocides still occur. *What happened at Srebrenica? How should such crimes be punished? By whom? What places today are at risk for genocide? What can be done to prevent genocide?*



7. In this episode, Morgan Freeman asks, “Is it possible to embrace the promise of globalization without giving up our cultural differences?” *What is your own answer to this question? How is this question affecting life in the United States today?*
8. Former President Bill Clinton says, “Dominant groups, whether ethnic or racial or religious or economic, tend to see the world in zero-sum games. That is, if somebody gets more, I must be getting less. And nobody gives ground willingly.” He believes that expanding the circle of opportunity is more like multiplication rather than addition. *What do you think he means by this analogy? Is he right? Why or why not? What is Clinton’s stance on immigration? What has been your own experience with immigration, either as an immigrant yourself or as someone who has known immigrants? If you have never known an immigrant, why not?*



9. In the village of the Embera in Panama, Morgan Freeman learns about their customs and their way of maintaining their traditional culture in the face of modern influences. *What evidence do you find of such modern influences in the village? How have the Embera managed to hold on to their own culture while interacting with the modern world? Do you think this balance is possible for all indigenous groups to achieve, or do you think that they should strive to integrate themselves more into the modern world? What are your reasons for this opinion? How strong is your own sense of ethnic identity?*
10. Megan Phelps-Roper was born into the Westboro Baptist Church, which was founded by her grandfather Fred Phelps. As a young woman, she fully participated in its demonstrations, picketing at military and other funerals and carrying signs that claimed that each death was God's punishment on the United States for its tolerance of homosexuality. *How did Megan Phelps-Roper come to leave the church? What did her decision cost her? How does her story reflect some of the ideas expressed by Daryl Davis in the opening sequences of this episode?*
11. What are some of the "Us vs. Them" divisions in your own community? How might you begin to address some of these divisions? What practical steps could you take to reach out to others?

Us and Them: For further reading and study

The history, a glossary, and locations of the Ku Klux Klan from the Southern Poverty Law Center

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/ku-klux-klan>

<http://vlib.iue.it/history/USA/ERAS/klukluxklan.html>

An account of Darryl Davis's efforts to hold conversations about bigotry with KKK members

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/03/the-audacity-of-talking-about-race-with-the-klu-klux-klan/388733/>

A podcast in which Daryl David recounts other experiences he has had in bridging the racial divide

<http://loveandradio.org/2014/02/the-silver-dollar/>

Human Rights Watch report on the fall of Srebrenica

<https://www.hrw.org/report/1995/10/15/fall-srebrenica-and-failure-un-peacekeeping/bosnia-and-herzegovina>

Mitchell Hamline School of Law's website on modern genocide, with educational resources and suggestions for action

<http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/>

A website on the culture and history of the Embera people of Panama and Colombia

<http://www.nativeplanet.org/indigenous/embera/>

Background information on the Westboro Baptist Church

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/westboro-baptist-church>

Megan Phelps-Roper's TED talk about her life

https://www.ted.com/talks/megan_phelps_roper_i_grew_up_in_the_westboro_baptist_church_here_s_why_i_left

The Power of Us

We choose leaders to help us work together, to enforce the rule of law, and protect us from harm. We give up some of our individual freedom for the sake of the common good. It's a social contract we've been making for thousands of years.

— Morgan Freeman

1. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau were 17th and 18th century philosophers who developed theories of the “social contract.” For Hobbes, a monarch was necessary because of the brutality of the State of Nature. For Locke, Nature was more beneficent, and men unite in commonwealths to preserve life, liberty, and property. Rousseau held that all men are equal and the only just government is one that citizens have agreed to by covenant. *What do you think Morgan Freeman means by the term “social contract”? What kinds of individual freedoms do we surrender for the common good? How do we “agree” to such a contract?*
2. The first society Morgan Freeman visits in this episode is the Embera, a semi-nomadic indigenous group in Panama; they have probably been in that area since before the arrival of the Spanish. Despite colonial efforts to eradicate native customs and the impact of modernization, the Embera strive to maintain their unique culture. *How do the Embera choose their leaders? Do you think this is an effective system for them or do you think a more modern system, like a secret ballot, would be better? Why do you favor one system over the other?*



3. According to the newly elected leader of the Embera, what are the most important qualities of leadership? Are such necessary qualities the same as those needed by leaders of much larger and more modern societies? Are there other attributes the leader of a larger society should have? If so, what are they?
4. Former President Bill Clinton discusses with Morgan Freeman the responsibilities and difficulties of leadership in a modern democracy. *In your opinion, should a representative of a state or district vote as the people of that state or district would prefer? Or should a representative use his or her best judgment on a given issue? What do your own senators or your representative think about this question?*



5. *What unpopular decisions did President Clinton feel he had to make? Why did he choose to decide this way? Do you think he made the right choice? How does he think a President should handle such a situation with respect to the citizens he represents when they disagree with the President's policies?*
6. *Oleg Dusaev and Dmitriy Stepanov are a gay couple who left Russia because Oleg was fired and they were threatened when Oleg came out publicly about his sexual orientation. The Russian government had already passed a law banning so-called "gay propaganda" and violence against LGBTQ people had increased. How was their experience in the United States different from what happened to them in Russia?*
7. *Morgan Freeman says that once the shift in attitudes about LGBTQ people happened here, change came rapidly. Is he correct? What evidence can you cite to show that public attitudes have changed over recent decades? What evidence do you have that the change is not yet complete?*
8. *In 1971, General Idi Amin took control of Uganda, which had been a colony of the British for over 130 years. How did he earn the nickname "The Butcher of Uganda"? According to Henry Kyemba, why did he want to stay in power? How did Kyemba escape? What did he do to help overthrow Amin? What do you think: Is the pen indeed mightier than the sword?*



9. Morgan Freeman says, “The specter of Amin is still with us; around the globe strong men still covet power, will do anything to get it and anything to keep it. We must be ever vigilant against leaders who want power for themselves, not for us ... the people. When people are robbed of their power, when they lack a voice in their own fate, they face a choice – accept it or fight back.” *Can you think of situations around the world today where this is happening? Will “the people” eventually take back their government?*
10. Political Science Professor Faith Ogeto Orwa has visited the small community of Umoja in northern Kenya, which was established in 1990 for women only. As resident Rebecca Lolosoli explains, the women in this community have suffered abuse from men and wish to have a safe community where they can live freely. *What difficulties did they have in establishing their village? How do they earn their living? What are their hopes for their children? How are they trying to make those hopes become reality?*
11. Morgan Freeman says, “In countries around the world, corporate lobbyists buy influence and subvert the relationship between representatives and their constituents. Does the power of lobbying erode the very foundation of democracy?” *What is your answer to this question? Why do politicians accept money from lobbyists? What insights do you gain from the interview with Jack Abramoff, a former lobbyist convicted for his efforts to influence politicians? Do lobbyists serve any useful purpose? What impact has the Citizens United v. FEC case had on the use of money to gain influence?*
12. Abramoff feels that term limits for members of Congress are a good idea. *Why does he think this? Do you agree with him? Why, or why not? Would the imposition of term limits help or hurt the democratic process?*
13. In his interview with Evan Williams, the co-founder of Twitter and Blogger and founder of Medium, Morgan Freeman asks if technology can help ordinary people take back power from leaders who are monopolizing it. *To what extent has Twitter improved or hindered the democratic process? How do clickbait, trolls, and fake news affect democracy? To what extent do you engage in the political process through the use of social media? How do politicians use it? Why do oppressive governments seek to regulate social media? Are they successful?*

The Power of Us: For further reading and study

A history of the social contract theory from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/soc-cont/#SH2b>

A website on the culture and history of the Embera people of Panama and Colombia
<http://www.nativeplanet.org/indigenous/embera/>

Background to the conflict in Kosovo (written in 1998)
<http://www.historytoday.com/robert-bideleux/kosovos-conflict>

A timeline of the Kosovo conflict
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html>

National Geographic's special issue *Gender Revolution*
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/01/>

The BBC timeline of events in Uganda's history
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14112446>

An obituary of Idi Amin that contains a full report on his reign of terror and subsequent life
<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/17/world/idi-amin-murderous-and-erratic-ruler-of-uganda-in-the-70-s-dies-in-exile.html?mcubz=0>

A closer look at the women's village of Umoja in Kenya
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/aug/16/village-where-men-are-banned-womens-rights-kenya>

The Supreme Court blog on the Citizens United case
<http://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/citizens-united-v-federal-election-commission/>

Evan Williams' blogging and publishing website Medium
<https://medium.com/>

The Spirit of Rebellion

As long as there are rules, be they from government or from society at large, there will be rebels to break them.... Rebellion is how society sheds its skin and transforms into something new and better.

— Morgan Freeman

1. For Americans who witnessed the violence that attended the enrollment of James Meredith, a black Air Force veteran, at the University of Mississippi in 1962—violence that resulted in two deaths—it is hopeful to note that Ole Miss now maintains a web page celebrating that very event. The opening text of the page reads “His persistence opened the door for thousands of African-Americans who followed and set an example for every student, of every background, about what even one individual can accomplish.” *To what extent have doors to educational opportunity been opened for African Americans in the years since the civil rights movement? What changes are still needed? What can we do to improve equality of education for all our citizens?*
2. John Kiriakou, a CIA analyst who served as chief of U.S. counter-terrorism operations in Pakistan after 9/11, was the first CIA officer to confirm publicly that the agency had a torture program. *Why did he keep silent about this program for more than five years? What finally prompted him to speak up in 2007? Do you think he should have been prosecuted for his actions? Why, or why not? How have his actions changed U.S. law? Would you have made the same choice he did?*
3. Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden are well-known whistle-blowers who leaked military and government secrets to Wikileaks, which published them. *What is your stand on their actions? On Manning’s imprisonment and the subsequent commutation of her sentence by President Obama? Are whistle-blowers important to society or are they committing crimes? Should reporters who publish information from whistle-blowers be forced under subpoena to identify their sources?*
4. Morgan Freeman interviews Hector Monsegur, a hacker who sees himself as a “hacktivist.” After hacking the U.S. Navy website to stop the bombing of Vieques with spent-uranium bombs, he joined an online hacking group and was eventually arrested by the FBI. *Why did he see hacking as a form of rebellion? Do you agree with Monsegur that hacktivism creates chaos but not lasting change?*
5. Mabrouka Khedir, the journalist who covered the Arab Spring uprising in Tunisia despite government censorship of the press, felt an obligation to risk her life to tell the story. *What started the rebellion in Tunisia? Why was it successful there, although not in the other countries that had similar rebellions? What still needs to be done to make Tunisia a true democracy, according to Mabrouka?*



6. Many journalists have been arrested, wounded, or killed in the pursuit of an important story. *How important was Mabrouka Khedir's coverage to the Tunisian Arab Spring? How important is freedom of the press in our country? What are the reasons behind recent assaults and arrests of journalists? To what extent do you yourself support a free press?*
7. The United States has been engaged in a war against the Taliban in Afghanistan since 2001; in fact, it is the longest war in our nation's history. In Morgan Freeman's interview with Paradise Sorouri, the first Afghan female rapper, they discuss the status of women under Taliban rule. *How did the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan affect women? How did women generally respond to this? Why? What motivated Paradise to rebel and then later to leave Afghanistan? What effect do you think her music will have on the struggle for women's rights?*
8. Patrisse Cullors, a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement with Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi, was affected early on by an incident in which her brother was beaten by police and by the Rodney King riots in her own town. The movement the three women founded after the acquittal of George Zimmerman grew exponentially over the years. *Why do you think the movement grew so quickly? How important are social media in promoting social activism? How effective has the BLM movement been at bringing about change? What additional changes do they hope to achieve? What is your response to the slogan "All Lives Matter"?*

9. Morgan Freeman asks Patrisse Cullors to compare Black Lives Matter to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. *To what extent are the goals and character of the movements similar? How are they different? Do you agree with Patrisse Cullors that some people are born rebels and others are made that way by circumstances?*
10. In interviewing Evo Morales, the first indigenous President of Bolivia, Morgan Freeman asks about how he was able to gain political power in a country that had previously been ruled by colonizers and political and economic elites. *How important is coca to the indigenous people of Bolivia? Why did the government crackdown on coca growing? How did the Bolivian coca farmers' protest help to bring about political change? What does Evo Morales hope to accomplish in his administration?*
11. *By the end of this episode, what has Morgan Freeman learned from the rebels he has interviewed? Can you add any other general observations about rebellion from your own experiences or knowledge?*



The Spirit of Rebellion: For further reading and study

The story of James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi and the struggles that followed
<http://www.npr.org/2012/10/01/161573289/integrating-ole-miss-a-transformative-deadly-riot>

An archive of original photographs and documents relating to James Meredith's enrollment at Ole Miss
http://crdl.usg.edu/events/ole_miss_integration/?Welcome

FAQS about the McCain-Feinstein Amendment on torture
<http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/faq-mccain-feinstein-anti-torture-ndaa-amendment>

A master's thesis on hacktivism from Texas State University
<https://digital.library.txstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10877/5378/MIKHAYLOVA-THESIS-2014.pdf?sequence=1>

A history of hacktivism from McAfee computer security company
<https://www.mcafee.com/us/resources/white-papers/wp-hacktivism.pdf>

A study guide and resources on the Arab Spring in Tunisia from Cornell University
<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=31688&p=200750>

Freedom of the Press report by the American Civil Liberties Union
<https://www.aclu.org/issues/free-speech/freedom-press>

News on current attacks on the free press from the Committee to Protect Journalists
<https://cpj.org/>

The most recent Human Rights Watch report on Afghanistan, including information about women's rights
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/afghanistan>

Recent articles about women in Afghanistan from the *New York Times*
<https://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/women-in-afghanistan?mcubz=0>

The website of the Black Lives Matter movement
<http://blacklivesmatter.com/>

A BBC profile of Evo Morales
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-12166905>

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