

I think we can all agree that being a parent is one of the greatest joys in life. Knowing that out of love (and let's be honest, sometimes irresponsibility), that we have created a life that will walk this Earth and have experiences and contributions to humanity's story, is amazing. Being a parent is truly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, joy in my life.

But along with this joy comes many fears. Even with my youngest children entering their teens and my oldest ones finding their way in adulthood, I often question if I have given them the right tools to make it in this world. I've taught them the importance of wearing a seatbelt, not falling into peer pressure, being kind, keeping an open mind, knowing their history, and that touching a hot stove is a really bad idea. Teaching all of these things was to protect them.

Those are things that, hopefully, all parents try to convey to their children. But being a Black parent of some beautiful Black children, there are things out there that I cannot protect them from.

Being kind and 'well-spoken' will not keep them from being judged by their color. Being honest will not keep them from getting followed by store security. Being a good driver will not keep them from being stopped by the police. Being polite and compliant with officers will not keep the 'blue knee' off of their necks.

We are currently dealing with multiple pandemics. So be it coronavirus or racism, America needs to wake up! As Black Americans, we are sick of getting the short and pointy end of the stick. As Black Americans we are sick of getting the legal noose wrapped around our necks. Because no matter what precautions and measures we may take, there is a good chance that it is still coming for us.

We are tired of quarantining our very essence because others have problems with us because of our skin color. We are tired of staying in a mental lockdown for fear that you will lock us up. We are tired of social distancing because society won't let us be.

My teenage Black daughter should not be punished at a higher rate than her white classmates. My Black sons should not be 2.5x more likely to be killed by the police. My adult Black daughter should not have to live with the fear that if she does decide to have children, that she would have a greater chance of dying in childbirth than her white peers.

You have a unique opportunity to make history here. You have an opportunity to say, "No more!"

Do the right thing. Declare, without any equivocation, that racism is a public health crisis.

--David Jones

Father of 4 beautiful Black children