

Book Review

Ford, D. Y., (Ed.). (2017). *Telling our stories: Culturally different adults reflect on growing up in single-parent families*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

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In the introduction, Ford tells us her impressions of rereading the Moynihan Report (1965) five decades ago. Her response then, and the point of this collection five decades later, is that she is “professionally and personally offended” by the evaluation of the outcomes for single parent families—essentially labeling them all as “negative and hopeless” situations. She questions the national obsession with putting the focus on marriage as the curative social movement for poverty and inequality. The author tells us the intent of the collection is not to glorify single parenting, but to highlight successes, help dispel negative stigmas—and get “educators, sociologists and policy makers to listen and learn” (p. xi).

The edited book is a collection of 24 vignettes about being raised in single parent families by persons who were all “at risk,” “beat the odds,” “never gave up,” and whose caretakers decidedly refused for them to be subjugated to the assumed outcomes. The stigma of coming from a “single parent” family is a societal label, and need not be internalized or accepted is the overarching emphasis of this collection.

And that is the editor’s point, why are these the assumed outcomes? Why do we tell all persons in these categories that they are going to be another statistic? The vignettes are by both males and females, whose overriding themes include resiliency, tenacity, and the importance of the “village,” be it immediate or extended family, school, or the community.

This book does not provide a roadmap for escaping poverty or the other societal ills correlated with being from a single parent family. Many of the stories of their childhoods cite or reference journal articles and other readings—all of the authors are in academia as administrators and/or faculty. This is a collection of success stories about beating the odds. Great credit goes to the caregivers and the children themselves (now adults)—these stories can offer hope and courage and highlight the importance of hard work and “grit.”