

What Black Lives Matter Means to Me

by Dezrene Thompson

Black Lives Matter is a social movement that has been around for years now. People who are part of this movement focus on advocating and fighting for the rights of the black community. The black community would include black women, men, children, and black people who intersect with the LGBTQ community. Within this organization are activists who are fighting for justice for those who have lost their life due to police brutality and all racially motivated violence against black people. This issue is something that has such a huge impact on my life and I believe needs to be brought more awareness to.

For centuries now, black people have been facing bias, discrimination, and oppression from people outside of the black racial group. This is something that impacts me because every day of my life, I have to worry about how I will get treated because of the color of my skin. Though I have never been physically impacted, seeing people of my racial group become victims of police brutality, or be treated unjustly, impacts me mentally. I remember the first time I heard about the murder of Trayvon Martin. Hearing this incident on the news and all over social media made me break down crying because I did not understand why or how someone could easily kill a person because they were black. I have no connection or relation to Trayvon Martin, but I still felt the pain and sorrow of his death. Not to mention, the man who murdered him, George Zimmerman, faced no consequences of this crime. There was no justice for Trayvon so the black community protested and fought for his justice since he couldn't do that for himself. This was an eye-opener for me and showed me how little politicians care about African-American people. I came to realize that systemic racism is real.

For the past years, I feel like nothing has changed. Police are overusing their authority and power, specifically towards the black community. When someone in your community is being attacked, it feels like the whole community is being attacked as well. Every day, when I go on social media I feel like I see a new black victim of police brutality. What makes matters worse is the fact that the police officers who committed the crime are facing little to no consequences. No one is being held accountable for these murders or attacks of innocent human beings. I see videos of black people being treated like animals, being thrown and tased by the police. My heart breaks and I find myself crying looking at these videos and end up having to log out for the day. Every time I see a hashtag on instagram saying "Justice for..." I get angry because why is it that African-Americans have to constantly fight for justice? Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Jamar Clark, Elijah McClain, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. This isn't even a quarter of the list of black people who have lost their lives to police brutality and received no justice at all.

I should not feel like my civil rights are at risk, but unfortunately I do. My heart should not drop every time I see a police officer driving behind me, but unfortunately it does. What is happening towards people within my racial group greatly impacts me because it puts me in a position where I fear for my own life. Not only do I fear for my life, but I fear for my family's lives as well. I fear that one day my dad, my brother, my mom, or my sister will become a hashtag on instagram. I fear that my one year old nephew will have to grow up in this world understanding that people will treat him differently for the way he looks. This is why I fight. I fight for the lives that have been lost, I fight for my life, my family's life, and all the lives of the black community. I protest

and I try to educate others hoping that my voice can be heard. Hoping that the black community can all be heard. Racism is an issue that needs to be tackled and dealt with once and for all. Police officers need to be held accountable for their actions and the black community deserves their justice.

I do hope that one day as a country we can move forward into a new world where racism doesn't exist in any forms. However, it will take the effort, support, and fight from every single racial group in the U.S. Without that, there is no way we will be able to overcome this. I am very hopeful that this is possible, which is why I will never stop fighting until justice is served.