

3a – Be Dissatisfied

In the tumultuous years following the Civil War, scores of Black leaders encouraged their communities to seize their rights. Speaking before scores of Black college students in Nashville, Tenn., in 1895, educator John Hope urged African Americans to accept nothing less than full equality.

If we are not striving for equality, in heaven's name for what are we living? I regard it as cowardly and dishonest for any of our colored men to tell white people or colored people that we are not struggling for equality. ... Yes, my friends, I want equality, Nothing less, ... Now catch your breath, for I am going to use an adjective. I am going to say we demand social equality... I am no wild beast, nor am I an unclean thing. Rise, Brothers! Come let us possess this land. .. Be discontented. Be dissatisfied. Be as restless as the billows on the boundless sea. Let your discontent break mountain-high against the wall of prejudice and swamp it to the very foundation.
UNITE AND CONQUER

*This article is reprinted by from the Teaching Tolerance curriculum kit
A Place at the Table.*