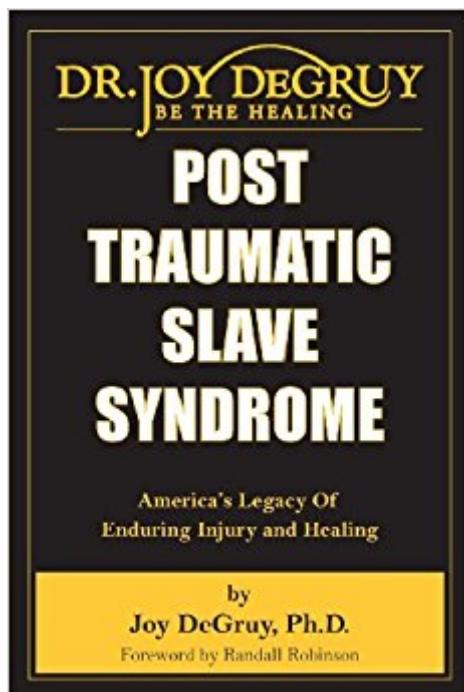


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# Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy Of Enduring Injury And Healing



## Synopsis

From the beginning of American chattel slavery in 1619, until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, Africans were hunted like animals, captured, sold, tortured and raped. They experienced the worst kind of physical, emotional, psycho- logical and spiritual abuse. Given such history, Dr. Joy DeGruy asks, "Isn't it likely that many slaves were severely traumatized? Furthermore, did the trauma and the effects of such horrific abuse end with the abolition of slavery?" Emancipation was followed by one hundred more years of institutionalized subjugation through the enactment of Black Codes and Jim Crow laws, peonage and convict leasing, and domestic terrorism and lynching. Today the violations continue, and when combined with the crimes of the past, result in yet unmeasured injury. What do repeated traumas visited upon generation after generation of a people produce? What are the impacts of the ordeals associated with chattel slavery, and with the institutions that followed, on African Americans today? Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing, answers these questions and more. Dr. DeGruy encourages African Americans to view their attitudes, assumptions, and behaviors through the lens of history and so gain a greater understanding of the impact centuries of slavery and oppression has had on African Americans. "With this understanding we can explore the role our history has played in the evolution of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, both negative and positive. This exploration will help lay the foundation necessary to ensure our well- being and the sustained health of future generations."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dr. Joy DeGruy is a priceless asset to us all. She has lifted the bandages from the 400 year-old abscess of slavery that remains un-healed. Many black and white Americans have been taught that slavery ended by legislative means in 1865 - so the issue is neatly side-stepped in school curricula, print and broadcast media. However, the hallmark of classroom teaching and responsible journalism must be proper context - for full understanding. The removal of the slave shackle is important, but what about the emotional damage suffered by the enslaved? Dr. DeGruy has raised this argument brilliantly, for years, lecturing far and wide. Her many appearances on my program, *Like It Is*, have evoked huge audience reactions from our viewers. Many have told me how coming to understand Dr. DeGruy's message on "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome" has helped them grapple with the multiplicity of problems today. I share those feelings of my viewers. Now Dr. DeGruy has set down her highly important message/thesis in print. And so, to quote this wondrous physician: "Let the healing begin." -Gil Noble, Producer and Host, *Like It Is*, WABC-TV

Dr. Joy DeGruy's Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing is a masterwork. Her deep understanding, critical analysis, and determination to illuminate core truths are essential to addressing the long-lived devastation of slavery. Her book is the balm we need to heal ourselves and our relationships. It is a gift of wholeness. -Susan Taylor, Editorial Director, *Essence Magazine*

Dr. DeGruy's book is seminal research in the field of differential cross-cultural diagnosis for mental health. Cultural Competence is a requirement for mental health and behavioral science workers. This text is required reading for all learners and practitioners. It is a vast reservoir of the how, why what, when, and where for much of the enduring injury and psychic pain of African Americans. This text moves us beyond deficit modeling and pathology; it opens a window to innovative models for healing in our multi-ethnic, pluralistic and linguistically diverse society. -Edwin J. Nichols, Ph.D. Clinical/Industrial Psychologist.

At last, the book that all people who are truly interested in understanding the lingering psychological and social impact of enslavement on Africans and Europeans has arrived. It is no exaggeration to say that Dr. DeGruy's Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome will mark a milestone in the understanding of the relationship between racism and slavery. Read this book again and again and then give it to your friends, family and colleagues who want to understand how the ghost of slavery haunts us all. -Dr. Ray Winbush, Institute for Urban Research, Morgan State University

Dr. DeGruy's mesmerizing, riveting book is vital reading for our time. The corrosive residue on unmitigated and unrelieved atrocities called chattel slavery scours out the very core of our national identity. Neither the descendants of chattel slavery nor its designers have been unscathed. One - doomed to mythologize its meaning, the other - to turn searing pain into

self-loathing. We ignore our history at our own peril. With Dr. DeGruy's potent words we can and will heal. -Adeliade L. Sanford, Vice Chancellor, Board of Regents, State of New York

This was a good read. Though I am quite late on reading this, I imagine that this book likely had a greater impact between 2004-2010 when the idea of intergenerational trauma was somewhat in its infancy. The science behind this concept is still being researched to bolster its validity. I appreciate that PTSS is proposed as a THEORY and that she elucidates the semantics of scientific jargon for those who may be uninformed. She offers her theory to indirectly explain cultural, behavioral, and environmental influences of maladaptive behaviors that are specific to the black community. PTSS is not a clinical diagnosis and she clarifies this. The language carries both a formal and informal ambiance; it's direct and simple enough to comprehend, but it's not underwhelming either. She is honest enough to declare that because of the broadness of this theory, healing (treatment) cannot be simplified to a few tasks. She essentially uses her clinical experience and her cultural/spiritual journey to Africa to inform a social and self healing for African Americans. The historical background is somewhat refreshing, but to the experienced scholar it's more of a review. I also appreciate her using the DSM to explain her theory while differentiating from an actual diagnosis. The book overall is somewhat of a starting point for the African American who is seeking to understand themselves, their culture, and their history. It's littered with many relevant and inspiring quotes from other Black influentials. I warn people to apply her theory very lightly after reading because behaviors can stem from other influences and personal experiences that are not racially motivated. PTSS is essentially a cultural syndrome with a possible genetic basis: a rousing and intriguing suggestion to help a collection of people unify and rise to power without using fear as a weapon. I am coupling this book with Isis Papers (which is more scholarly, detailed, and relevant) to gain more understanding of the oppressive system that has created this cultural syndrome. Highly recommend for any Black student of psychology!

I had came across this phenomenal lecturer on Youtube.com (from the advice of my mentor) and knew instantly that I wanted to hear more of what this woman had to say. This book is a great supplement to her Youtube.com video at <http://youtu.be/PMVRyD4UIHk?t=20s>. The Youtube video could stand alone; whereas, this book is icing. The Youtube seemed more detailed, especially in terms of cognitive dissonance and other things like the postcard pictures of lynchings. I think the video is more recent and therefore there are more supporting facts. Regardless, this should be required reading for African Americans, especially in an academic setting. Even though America has

a tarnished past, especially when it comes to the stain of slavery and the subsequent treatment of African Americans, this book offers hope and concrete steps to heal from PTSS. This book has touched me at a deep level, just hearing about other people's reactions was very validating, especially when it comes to anger seething beneath the surface. One thing that I enjoyed learning through the video that wasn't in the book was that the Statue of Liberty's chains (not shown in most photos or on film) was supposed to symbolize America's abolition of slavery in 1865. We don't hear about that, but this has been a fact verified on the government's website at [www.nps.gov/stli/historyculture/abolition.htm](http://www.nps.gov/stli/historyculture/abolition.htm). This woman is phenomenal and I hope the truth continues to come out.

I had seen some of Dr. JOY talks on YouTube and decided to buy her book. I was not disappointed. Her book was very thorough and thought provoking. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone.

very informative...yet highly incendiary. i never actually finished due to the conflict with my sanity. should be recommended reading for all black folks, if you can stomach the revelations it provides

I learned so much from this book, this changed my understanding about why certain folks react to certain situations. I tell all my friends and family about this book cause it really does educate you about how we as Africa Americans are still healing from slavery. This book is one of my favorites!

Fascinating account of how slavery has affected people on both sides of the coin for over 400 years. Although a scholarly book it is written in everyday English. It has helped me understand why my parents did certain things without knowing why they did it. A powerful critique of how the social construct of race evolved and how it's impacting lives today 400 years later. Kudos to Dr. Degruy

Wow, this book really opened my eyes to a new way of thinking. This book is for everyone black, brown, yellow, red, green or white. I still don't understand why we classify ourselves as a color but I have to use it to get my point across. We are all human and we have all been victims of oppression no matter the shade of our skin. We've been lied to, brainwashed, beaten, manipulated, hated, and the list goes on. This book helps us all realize we need help, this country has pushed the subject of slavery to the back burner and it keeps popping back up to the forefront. The slavery continues and

it's 2017, the hate of colored skin is still potent because no one told our previous generations that they needed to heal mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically. It's basic psychology yet, our education system doesn't teach that. I can't ever tell a person with brown skin to get over slavery or to get over what happened to their ancestors. That's like slapping someone in the face until they bleed and saying this didn't happen, I don't want to hear about it and we are still friends. The U.S. planned on having slavery forever that's why the country is in chaos now, they are trying to push forward with a broken system. Address the lies and the true history so that everyone can heal and grow to be better people.

As I read this book, I couldn't put it down. It was well-written and informative. This book will change your life for the better if you're real about who you are.

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