

# Letter - United Negro College Fund Program

**Dear Young Kings,**

You truly are Young Kings.

To make the best of their lives, Young Kings benefit from having wise counsel around them. I'm appreciative of this opportunity to contribute to your learning roundtable, gentlemen. We may never meet directly, but it's my aim this message supports you for years to come.

I was not born from a rich family but had the basic necessities. Food was always on the table, clothes on my back, and I went to school through university. My parents worked hard and provided as needed. Your situation may differ. This doesn't matter.

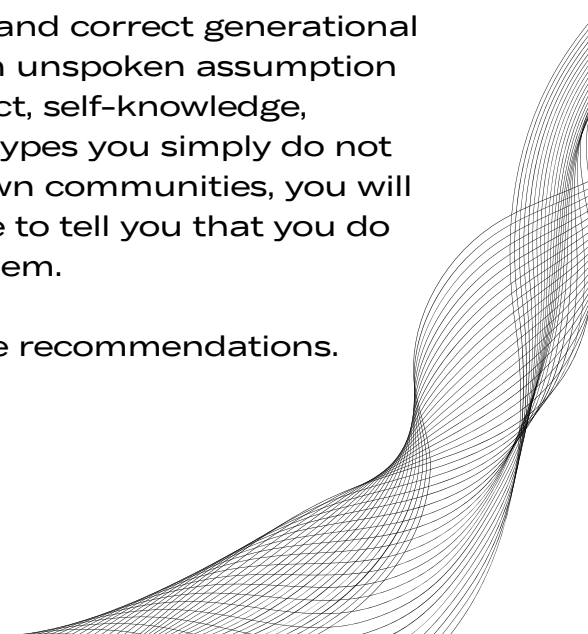
When I was your age, I was involved in many activities you likely are part of now: sports, friend meetups, enjoying time out, music, the usual school life.

My private life was different though. Martial arts training at age 10 and I had a strong desire to understand myself and the world. By day, it was school tests and friendship drama. After school it was meditation, training, reading and testing my talents. These experiences opened my awareness to what was possible, and how I did not have to accept stereotypical paths pushed by media and schools. Through a rigorous self-study program, I was prepared to take on challenges thrown at college youth in general, Black youth, and Black men specifically.

You have the advantage of time right now to explore and correct generational errors. Do not waste this time. In this world, there's an unspoken assumption Black men are expected to be lacking in these: intellect, self-knowledge, health, finances, and skills. There are negative stereotypes you simply do not have to agree to. From the media to people in your own communities, you will find those who expect you to become them. I am here to tell you that you do not, that you can destroy them by evolving beyond them.

My challenge to you, Young Kings, is to consider these recommendations.

Then take action:



## Intellect / Self-Knowledge

**Your history doesn't start with transatlantic slave trades and poverty like the schools teach.** Your lineage goes back thousands of years to the dawn of civilization. Explore the rich histories from the African land. **Book Rec:** *Black Man of the Nile & His Family* (Dr. Yosef A.A. ben-Jochannan)

**Build your personal book collection.** It will expand your mind beyond assumed limitations. There was a time in this country where it was illegal for Black people to read. There's a reason why reading is discouraged and if you want to ruin a people's culture you destroy the books. If you don't have the means yet, visit the local library to start borrowing titles. **Link to a selection from my personal library:** <https://www.iamtrentrhodes.com/bookstacks>.

**Self-image is important.** It's part of your reputation. Your ability to attract future opportunities is partly based on how you carry yourself. That's based on how you think of yourself. Ask yourself the question, "How do you want people to see you?"

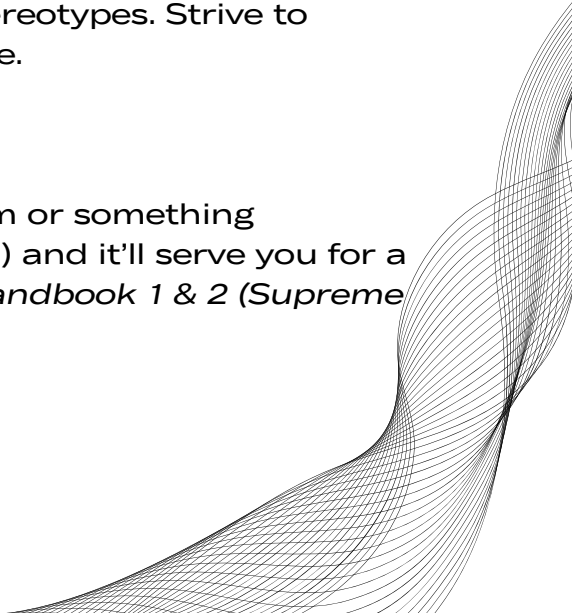
**Find role models who have qualities you want to develop.** Focus on their wisdom and positive impact more than flashy signals like money and luxuries and clout. They can be living and in books. **Recommended Book:** *World's Great Men of Color* (J.A. Rogers).

**Expand cultural interests.** It's easy to stay within the confines of all that you know but learning about other people and cultures will increase social skills. You'll make moves anywhere you go, connect with a broader population and understand how the world works.

**Ignorance isn't cool.** In school and entertainment, you may be worshiped for it. Beyond these, you lose respect and just confirm stereotypes. Strive to become the most intelligent and capable man possible.

## Health

**Exercise and focus on good nutrition.** Running, gym or something competitive. Take care of your body (emotions & mind) and it'll serve you for a long time. **Recommended Book:** *The Hood Health Handbook 1 & 2* (Supreme Understanding).



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## Finance / Economics

Make it a priority for yourself or with a friend group to study economics and personal finance. The Black community suffers by weak economic power. The power comes from financial literacy and taking action. **Recommended Books:** *Richest Man in Babylon + Think & Grow Rich + Powernomics + Rich Dad, Poor Dad + The Psychology of Money + Guide to Investing in Gold & Silver + 10 Commandments of Black Economic Power.*

## Skills

**Learn technology for greater representation.** Black men make up less than 5% of the tech industry. If you're athletically gifted, pair that up with a technical skill. It's a path to increasing career opportunities beyond the arts. Check out African Creation Energy on YouTube and their books for inspiration from an indigenous perspective:

<https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/africancreationenergy>

Take your proper seat, Young Kings.

**Trent Rhodes**

**Founder | Career Coach - MasterLearn, LLC**

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