

# 2017 Reading Together

*Writings on the Wall* by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

## Discussion Guide

Kalamazoo Searching for a New Equality Beyond Black and White

**Thank you for reading and discussing *Writings on the Wall*.**

**We hope you'll continue to engage with the book by talking about it with your family, friends, co-workers, and even strangers. If you are seeking other ways of participating in Reading Together 2017, please go to [www.readingtogether.us](http://www.readingtogether.us) where events will be posted as they are finalized and where you can tell us how you'd like to be more involved.**

One of the reasons *Writings on the Wall* was selected for Reading Together is because the author provides concrete suggestions—see below—that are perfect springboards for continued discussion in book groups and throughout the community. (This also makes the book ideal for more in-depth conversations about just one or two chapters, depending on the specific interests of each group.) For starters, we encourage you to ponder the following questions, and then see where the conversation goes!

- Do you agree with the suggestions?
- How do (or don't) they apply to Kalamazoo? What are some specific examples?
- What are some actions we can take in our community to affect change?

### *Chapter 1 - American Politics: The Broom of the System*

1. Teach the children well.
2. Stop encouraging people who don't want to vote to vote.
3. Fact-check politicians as often as possible when they speak publicly.

### *Chapter 2 – Racism: Make We Wanna Holler*

1. Teach public awareness.
2. Apply social pressure.
3. Pass and enforce anti-racist laws; block enactment of racist laws.
4. Peacefully protest every racist action.
5. Support affirmative action.
6. Press for more minorities in TV and movies.

### *Chapter 3 – Religion: Worship at Your Own Risk*

1. Make and enforce strict hate-crime laws.
2. Speak up.
3. Create more interfaith activities.

*Chapter 4 – Gender: The View from the Front Yard*

1. Convince people of the causes of inequality.
2. Pass new laws and enforce existing ones that protect gender identity.
3. Reduce the emphasis on physical beauty.
4. Include all classes of women.

*Chapter 5 – Class Struggle: Another Day in Paradise*

1. Reduce occupational regulations to provide more jobs.
2. Raise the minimum wage to \$15.
3. Protect unions in order to safeguard jobs and benefits.
4. Reform the bail system to stop punishing the poor.
5. Provide equal education for all income brackets.
6. Increase voting to increase political clout.

*Chapter 6 – Sports: Are You Not Entertained?*

- Youth Sports
  1. Establish better training for youth coaches.
  2. Improve the quality of parental participation.
  3. Bring the costs down to make sports more inclusive and competitive.
- College Sports
  - Emancipate college athletes by paying them.
- Professional Sports
  - Give athletes freedom of speech on social and political causes.

*Chapter 7 – News Media: I Read the News Today, Oh Boy*

1. Stop pandering
2. Do not move the integrity line.

*Chapter 8 – Seniors: The Aging of Aquarius*

1. Shore up Social Security.
2. Raise our voices.
3. Bury the stereotypes.

*Chapter 9 – Dear Generation Z: Unsolicited Advice for America’s Youth*

