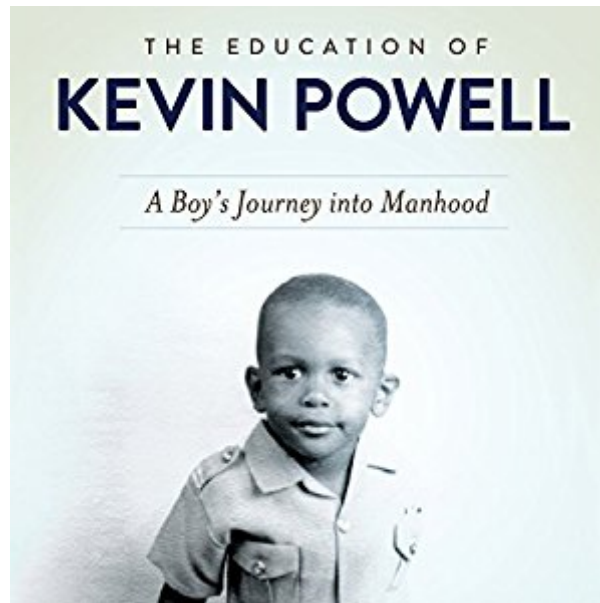




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# The Education Of Kevin Powell: A Boy's Journey Into Manhood



## Synopsis

In the spirit of Piri Thomas' *Down These Mean Streets* and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, this powerful memoir by writer and activist Kevin Powell vividly recounts the horrific poverty of his youth; his struggles to overcome a legacy of anger, violence, and self-hatred; and his journey to be a man and a voice for others. Driven by his single mother's dreams for his survival and success, Kevin Powell became the first in his family to attend a university, where he became a student leader keenly aware of widespread social injustice. But the struggle to define himself and break out of poverty continued into adulthood, with traumatic periods of homelessness and despair. As a young star journalist with *Vibe* magazine, Powell interviewed luminaries such as Tupac Shakur, writing influential chronicles of the evolution of hip-hop from his eyewitness view. Now, with searing honesty, Powell examines his troubled relationships, his appearance on MTV's first season of *The Real World*, his battles with alcohol and depression, his two campaigns for Congress, and the uplifting trip to Africa that renewed his sense of personal mission. Finally, Powell embarks on a search for the father he never really knew in a redemptive passage from abandonment to self-discovery. A striking memoir by a child of post-Civil Rights America, *The Education of Kevin Powell* gives eloquent testimony to the power of the soul to heal.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 9 hours and 1 minute

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: May 24, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01FWNRMQE

Best Sellers Rank: #360 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Social Activists #480 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Artists, Writers & Musicians #1481 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Personal Memoirs

## Customer Reviews

In a world that appears to be more and more polarized, it is often a struggle to see reality from someone else's perspective. Often the assumption is that there are simple answers, of the "one size fits

all" variety. The brilliant thing about this book, is how much the book isn't about the author- but the journey and the education- and that makes it stunningly easy to find oneself able to identify with the impact felt by both the author, and the incredible array of others. I suggest, implore, and invite you to read this book, prepared to discover a new example of manhood- strong, honest, willing to explore and engage in true dialogue- that ultimately celebrates what is extraordinary about being alive.

I began reading "The Education of Kevin Powell: A Boy's Journey into Manhood" Saturday night and finished Sunday afternoon. I couldn't put the book down. Besides sleep and Sunday necessities I had to complete, I was reading every word Powell chose to share about his life. He is brave to expose his journey in such a raw and honest way. Reading Powell's story made me think about my own life experiences and whether or not I'd be able to open up the way he did. No, I thought, too painful. But as I read each chapter and witnessed his evolution, so to speak, I realized that he was being liberated by this writing experience. I found Powell's style of writing so engaging. It was almost as if we were talking over a cup of tea (I don't drink coffee) as I asked him, 'How did you become the person you are today?' And he gave me an explanation. I can go on and on and in detail, so I'll get to the point: the book is phenomenal. Thank you, Kevin Powell, for writing it. You have no idea how many people you will positively impact.

This is a book of contradictions that really works. There is blunt honesty as well as crafted writing. There are experiences totally foreign to me as a white man, but there are also points of connection and empathy. Powell takes you to urban America of the 1970s, NYC of the 1990s, and contemporary Africa with the same care and skill that he uses to describe his inner emotional life. It's a deeply personal story that's also quite a page turner.

Most people are familiar with Kevin Powell as a charter member of MTV's *The Real World* or his now legendary jailhouse interview with Tupac Shakur. But in this powerful and stirring new memoir, Kevin Powell recalls how he overcame poverty, homelessness, addiction, violence, self-hatred and depression to become a powerful journalist, community leader and advocate for youth. Told with unflinching honesty, Powell also deals with his complicated relationship with his mother, his time on *The Real World*, his days writing for *Vibe Magazine*, a life-changing trip to Africa, reconnecting with the father he never knew and his two campaigns for Congress. But the book mainly deals with struggles to define himself, identifying and working out issues that plagued him throughout his life to become a stronger, more compassionate person. Raw, open and riveting, Powell has put together

his strongest work to date.

So I loved the rich and vivid memories of Kevin's youth, that was great, but made the book somewhat slow, but very personal and focused on the key elements that showed why he went through so many struggles as an adult, and like many of us, fell back into the same pitfalls over and over again. I appreciated the honesty and candor of growing up black in America with the constant struggles all African American men face. I also noticed his frequent conflicting thoughts and words he used throughout his life. It was interesting his connection with Tupac, and his back and forth behavior, and Kevin's mirroring of similar issues and situations in his life. I think that is something many men go through, and I connected with similar bouts of misogyny, frustration, anger throughout my life as well. Good book, this has encouraged me to finally take a stab at reading some must read books that has shaped Mr. Powell's life. Seeing Kevin speak in person, and then reading this much into his life was fantastic, it really made me think about my life, struggles, failures and successes, and how we have to keep going and striving for something greater.

I remembered him from "the real world" show on MTV. That was the first and only season I watched. I also heard him on a radio show with Tim Wise and decided to read his book. I enjoyed the book and his life story.

This book should be a rite of passage for every member of the family! I read this book from cover to cover in less than 24 hours! No matter who you are or where you come from you will be able to connect with Kevin Powell's fight to navigate life's challenges while taking time to honestly reflect on the strengths and flaws of the human spirit by pondering his own shortcomings as well as others. Read this book and be inspired to live, to overcome and to press forward no matter what life brings your way!

This book was so eloquently written! It is a story anyone can relate to no matter what age, race or sex. It touches on so many different levels of the challenges you can experience on basically living on this earth. He shares a story that gives hope to the hopeless, faith to the faithless and love to the unloved. I would highly recommend reading this book if not for yourself but to possibly gain enough knowledge and understanding afterwards to help someone you love and care about.

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