



NANCY: A brilliantly written discussion of what is wrong with the USA, pointing to directions for improvement. Her impressive research and analysis underscore the role of racism in the history of our country. She lifts up the many ways that racism damages not just people of color, but most of us. I was so impressed with her ability to consolidate so much information into a very readable and prophetic treatise. This book illuminates our path forward.



KATHARINE: When you look at the big picture, it doesn't bode well for us, does it? Certainly not the way we teach American history in our schools, but it should be, moving forward. I'm going to recommend that every freshman student at Mainline College read this book. Actually, if we could get all college students in the country to read it, wouldn't that help?



JANE: I gotta think about this one for awhile. Strong stuff, here. I realize that we aren't always the good guys, but I didn't think we were this bad. Yes, I'm going to ruminate on this for awhile.



PRISCILLA: Jane, we just need to improve the Grand Old Party a little. You know we save unborn babies, keep America safe and keep prayer in the schools. We just need to tweak what we do a little bit. You know, the Golden Rule.



MOLLY: Yes! Yes! Yes! This book. Heather tells it all. I hope enough white people read this book to start taking some action. The history is depressing, but her research uncovers solutions around the country. We just need to start to implement them everywhere.



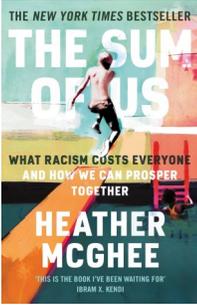
ABIGAIL: Beautiful book! Quite a sobering introduction to the USA. We have so much work to do, ladies. It makes me want to get involved in politics again and build a broad-based coalition. I still believe that we can make this democracy work, but it won't happen if we sit back and do nothing. What do you think, ladies? Could we take the lead?



SALLIE: Where do we begin? Perhaps we could do one of those Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Efforts in River City. Maybe that's a good place to start. I'm with Abigail. We need to do something, NOW, for the children, for the future, for us all.



Discussion Guide



About the Book

Title: The Sum of Us: Why Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together
Author: Heather McGhee
Published: One World ,Penguin Random House, 2021
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Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. What is the Zero Sum Game and why does the author say it's a lie? How has this idea been used in politics?
3. The author asserts that the United States of America has never been a real democracy. Why does she say this and do you agree? Why or why not? What would it take to change the problems with our democratic system?
4. In the chapter Big Sky, the author suggests that environmental justice issues impact us all. What is her point? Are you aware of these problems? What does she recommend doing about them?
5. McGhee analyzes many sectors of our society to show how the Zero Sum game has failed us in arenas such as: public services and infrastructure, home ownership, the environment, and politics. What surprised you? What did you learn?
6. What is the role of white supremacy in the USA according to the author? Do you agree/disagree? Explain.
7. The author recommends a process called the "Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Effort/ TRHT". (Page 265) How did this work in Dallas? Would you like to see this in your community? Why or why not?
8. On pages 254-256, the author recommends five directions to resolve the problems which include: 1. Aim for a solidarity dividend. 2. Refill the pool of public goods. 3. Admit that "one size never fit all." 4. Realize we truly do need each other. 5. Know we must get on the same page before we can turn it. Discuss how this approach could help us.
9. Read over the MAMs perspective on the book. With whom do you most agree and why?
10. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?

Listen to Heather McGhee'on YouTube: Her Ted Talk: "Racism has a cost for everyone | Heather C. McGhee" (14:21). Heather speaks on the book: **How Racism Drives Inequality for Everyone | Heather McGhee (5:52)**. On the Daily Show: **Heather McGhee - "The Sum of Us" & The True Cost of Racism | The Daily Social Distancing Show (9:00)**.