

BLACK CAPITALISTS

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Black Capitalism exists, as defined by the author, as a proactive repositioning within capitalism to create and/or achieve social good, or do you think this idea is a contradiction?
2. How does the author show that it's achievable to thrive in a capitalist system as a Black Capitalist while staying sensitive and responsive to the problems embedded within it? What are some methods people use to cope with the contradictions they may face in achieving this?
3. How can Black Capitalism be a model for financial firms—and corporate America writ large—to bridge the gap between what a company's stated values are and what the *actual* culture is, especially when these spaces often center white culture?
4. What is your opinion of the programs in different industries designed to foster young Black talent and build community, especially given the fact that the extra work required for these programs is often delegated to and executed by existing Black employees?
5. How did the author draw on her personal story and the stories of other Black women to give voice to female Black Capitalists? What struck you about her decision to leave out her interviews with Black women in the finance world in favor of using her own story to ensure representation in an industry where “they cannot work hard enough to work themselves into protection”?
6. Audre Lorde's famous quote is cited: “For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.” How does the author reckon with this assertion?
7. How did “hustle culture” and “grind mentality” become specific to “Blackness in America,” as presented by the author? How have these ideas evolved over time and been adopted by other socioeconomic or cultural groups?
8. The author intimately portrays her upbringing, describing a situation where food was not always abundant and educational standards were high. Her mother, who seems to embody the Black Capitalist mindset, hustled between two jobs, meticulously studied white society and what it took to succeed in America, and moved to be in the right neighborhoods to get her children into the right schools. How does the author's mom's practice of capitalism differ from her own?
9. What did you learn from the portraits of Black entrepreneurs during the antebellum period and how did they compare to your understanding of how Black people are historically portrayed? What do you think of the practice of using the tools of capitalism as an enslaved person to gain freedom, while still enriching the white landowners?
10. How is the author's idea of Black Capitalism—a force that can build collective economic security—achievable if everyone doesn't view capitalism in that way? Is it more achievable within a smaller group? What can be done to evolve individual thinking and a scarcity mindset toward collective thinking and an abundance mindset?

11. Discuss the “soft life” and why it has been so historically difficult for Black women in particular to obtain it.
12. What do you think about the discussions of self-preservation and “lift as they climb” when it comes to obtaining and maintaining financial freedom?
13. How does the author show that moving one’s own life toward financial freedom can also help one’s community?
14. Discuss the tension that the author describes as existing within the Black community throughout history with regard to capitalism, where some want to break the system open and start fresh while others believe that entrepreneurship is a means to “lift” the race out of oppression and/or poverty. Do you think that the Black community is as split as it has always been on this issue?
15. What did you think of the author’s discussion around Ghana’s “Year of Return” and how it was pitched as benefiting the local community versus how it did in reality? How does the author grapple with this?
16. Several of the Black Capitalists highlighted in the book grew up in Africa or are first-generation African immigrants. What did you think of the discussion around cultural differences between Black Americans and African immigrants? What can you point to in the book or in your own experience that is a shared common ground between these two groups that could foster the author’s idea of Black Capitalism?
17. Throughout the book, the author’s first-person perspective weaves the narrative between her own story and the numerous case studies of Black Capitalists. What did you think of this writing style for a book about capitalism? Were there any personal moments that drove home the ideas of the book?
18. How does the book provide “a new framework to consider how everyday Black people equip themselves to confront the trappings of capitalism with strategic ingenuity”? How would you build a better version of capitalism, one in which collective thriving is ensured?

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