I Will Not Fear: My Story of a Lifetime of building faith under Fire by Melba Pattillo Beals

In 1957, Melba Beals was one of the nine African American students chosen to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. But her story of overcoming didn’t start—or end—there. While her white schoolmates were planning their senior prom, Melba was facing the business end of a double-barreled shotgun, being threatened with lynching by rope-carrying tormentors, and learning how to outrun white supremacists who were ready to kill her rather than sit beside her in a classroom. Only her faith in God sustained her during her darkest days and helped her become a civil rights warrior, an NBC television news reporter, a magazine writer, a professor, a wife, and a mother.

In The Perils of “Privilege,” Phoebe Maltz Bovy examines the word “privilege” and it’s contemporary usage. Does calling out privilege help to change or soften it? Or simply reinforce it by dividing people against themselves? And is privilege a concept that, in fact, only privileged people are debating? The Perils of “Privilege” explores how this word is deployed, and offers ways to begin anew so many of the conversations it has silenced.

Podcast: Code Switch from NPR

Ever find yourself in a conversation about race and identity where you just get...stuck? Code Switch can help. We’re all journalists of color, and this isn’t just the work we do. It’s the lives we lead. Sometimes, we’ll make you laugh. Other times, you’ll get uncomfortable. But we’ll always be unflinchingly honest and empathetic.

A Kind of Freedom by Margaret Wilkerson Sexton

In “A Kind of Freedom,” Sexton pursues a family’s history in a downward spiral, with three alternating plot lines that echo one another along the way. The novel opens in 1944, with the budding love of Evelyn, a daughter of a well-to-do family (her mother is Creole, her father a black doctor who has raised himself to respectability), and Renard, a young man from a poor Twelfth Ward neighborhood who works menial jobs at a restaurant but aspires to study medicine. Their courtship, though ardent, reveals the strictures of a class and color-riven society that suffocates ambition and distorts desire.