

Melanin MeetUps Edition 1: Template

Issued, 9/17/2022

We hope that you will use this template as a guideline to live out your experience. This is a living breathing document and is used as a format for our Melanin MeetUps. By adhering to the 10-point plan, we believe that this will create emotional availability to ideate solutions and move us forward.

The information below was refined and administered through a series of Melanin MeetUps, working with members to come together and create a template to help move us forward in the 21st century. We hope this template will expand to other groups and benefit society, upon it first touching every single member of the Community.

Outlined are our Mission Statement, Vision, 10-Point Plan, Problem, Solution and Promises.

We define our Mission statement as such:

To Rewrite the Narrative means to create a foundational identity, by acknowledging, changing or removing one's self from social constructs, culture or laws, that impede and/or have impeded the advancement and establishment of Community and psychological identity (self-esteem, self-image, individuality).

We define Community as such:

Melanated individuals in the Western world and throughout the African Diaspora, that currently identify as Black or are of African ancestry with a connection to the Atlantic Slave Trade or a direct connection to the continent Africa itself.

Vision:

Our vision is to create a foundational narrative around the African Diaspora and Community through our platform so as to:

- 1) Outline a stronger ask

- 2) Heal and advance from historical, social, political markers, and/or institutions — that have inhibited self-progression and self-actualization
- 3) Create a new world of possibility in our image, domestically, internationally and beyond.

10 Point Plan

- 1) We accept our experience
- 2) We come to rely on a higher power as it means to us to move forward in our experience
- 3) We acknowledge society and world has yet to fully recognize empathy
- 4) We recognize we are not a monolith and to share our experience helps us connect, heal and find worth in a world that is slow to do so
- 5) We slowly recognize the beautiful burden of this experience which requires emotional availability, great sensitivity, and conscious activity
- 6) We understand denial prevents progress and promotes insane behavior, so we validate our experience, emotions and feelings
- 7) We understand our identity is malleable and creativity is a divine gift for change to suit and define our narrative on our terms
- 8) Through our experience, a standard can be created or moved or questioned if it does not serve us, our narrative, and/or the greater good
- 9) We understand society lives in denial which promotes insane behavior, and continues trauma, yet we are responsible for ourselves which affects how we will be treated, our narrative and our collective narrative as they are connected

10) We carry the 10-point plan with us daily, treating ourselves and community with kindness and know that safety and protection is a birthright

Problem:

We come to know that we live in a world that has yet to fully recognize empathy, operates with denial sometimes at our own expense, and for now is unable to heal its collective trauma which may directly or indirectly threaten our existence from time to time.

Solution:

Our solution is to be responsible spiritual beings, taking inventory on our Experience, our own lives and connecting with one another to help, heal and advance our community. It is important for us to take care of ourselves first, followed by our loved ones and our community in an honest manner in order to rewrite the narrative — until the world is ready to healthily address differences. This starts by understanding self-worth and self-esteem and being connected to who we are. Through this, we cultivate and honor our intuition and feelings to heal ourselves. This makes space to ideate and advance ourselves which can help shape the collective narrative and direction for Community.

Melanin MeetUps Promises

The Melanin MeetUps Promises are guaranteed promises as a result of being a part of Melanin MeetUps and adhering to our 10-point plan and overall message. We use James Baldwin's quote to remind members of Community that we are enough – and always will be. And with that, given the turbulence of the current time Melanin MeetUps was birthed, a reminder that the country you reside in is yours. That the tactics from systems of abuse and/or other that of external forces are meant to be broken and/or separated from to gain clarity and to have greater agency – at whatever the cost.

“For this is your home my friend. Do not be driven from it.”

- James Baldwin, *A Letter To My Nephew*

- 1) We will discover and connect with our real identities by loving and accepting ourselves.
- 2) Our self-esteem will increase as we give ourselves and our Experience approval on a daily basis and connect with one another.
- 3) Fear of external forces and the need to “people-please”, acquiesce, and/or assimilate will leave us as we easily discern situations that may be harmful or good for us.
- 4) Our ability to share and cultivate intimacy will grow inside us and amongst members of our community.
- 5) We will be attracted by strengths and become more tolerant of weaknesses.
- 6) We will enjoy feeling stable, peaceful, and financially secure and more connected with ourselves and our community.
- 7) We will learn how to play and have fun in our lives, becoming grateful for this journey and Experience.
- 8) We will learn to accept the differences and make-up of our diverse community, acknowledging each member brings their own unique experience of this Experience which can only help us understand more about ourselves, Collective Narrative and Community
- 9) Fears of failure and success will leave us, as we intuitively make healthier choices aligned with our true and authentic Self.
- 10) With help from our Melanin MeetUps support group, we will slowly release our own dysfunctional behaviors, and society’s toxic elements, learning to expect the best, get it and share. This is love.

Melanin MeetUps Forums:

Melanin MeetUps Forums are meant to shape our world and narrative in our image. These spaces, followed by Community guidelines, are meant to express ourselves so that we may clear out any harmful residue in our Experience; connect with one another and build community; as well as develop solutions that are aligned with individual and Community.

We adhere to Toni Morrison's quote to remind our members that in sharing their views, thoughts and opinions, to question why they want to share or connect first. And that when building or creating, to question where this desire is coming from. While we are not licensed therapists, it is important to listen to your body and your responses and to create, vent or network from a space of true sincerity.

To remember that you are enough, and that we no longer need to create a seat at the table, yet also have the option to create our own table in our image and ensuring that our creation, as best we can, is not a reflex from those that have kept us out.

“The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and you spend twenty years proving that you do. Somebody says your head isn't shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of this is necessary. There will always be one more thing.” - Toni Morrison, Portland State University, 1975

Guidelines for Forums:

1) Build our world. What does the new world look like? What is our ask? Find it here and build it.

- 2) Share your experience by staying on topic as best you can. Conversations are best served when we answer and provide relevant solutions to the right questions. The more we share our experience, the more we can connect and build. Don't post irrelevant links, pictures, or comments.
- 3) Question why you'd like to comment, share or network before posting. This helps to practice our responses as we move out into the world from behind the screen.
- 4) We encourage all passion! Passions may differ from yours, so we will remember to respect all opinions and thoughts on those in the group.
- 5) Miscommunication happens. Please read the post or article before participating in the conversation before jumping in so mitigate it as best as possible. Learn to walk away when the conversation is going nowhere.
- 6) Practice compassion with one another. When we share, we grow and learn and find we have much more in common than we think.

- *MMU Team*