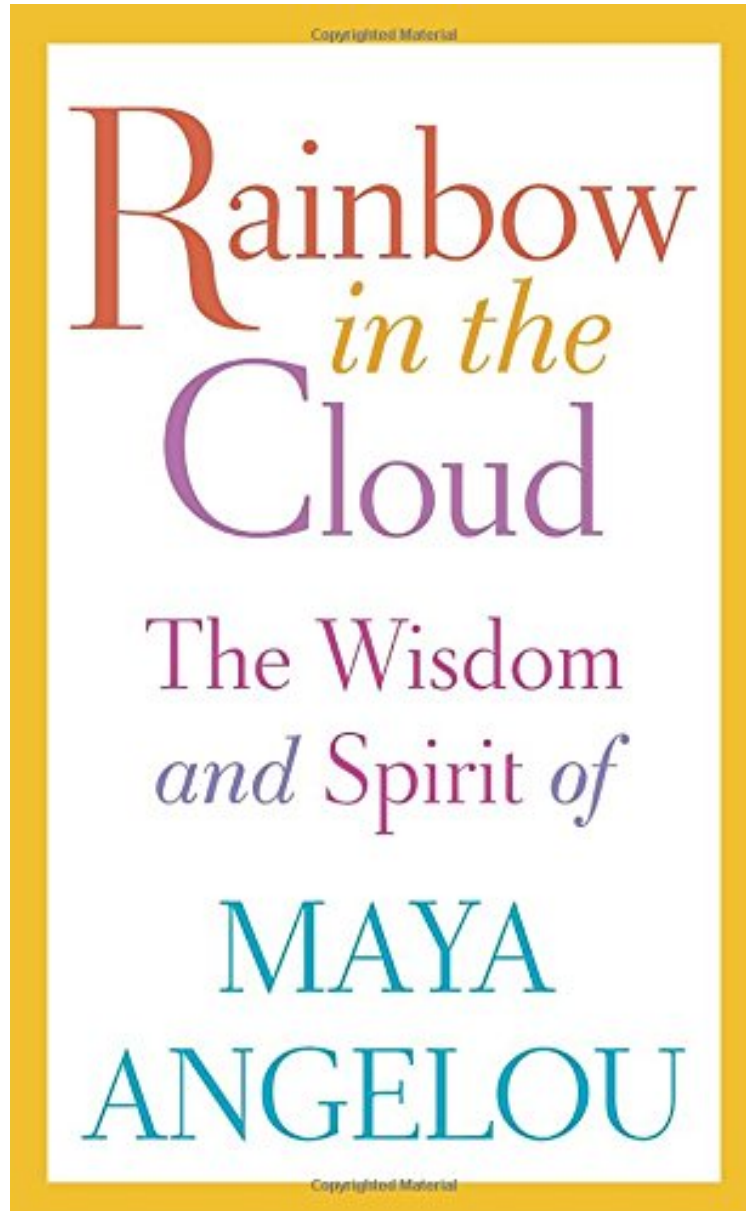


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Rainbow in the Cloud: The Wisdom and Spirit of Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou

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#43111 in Books Maya Angelou 2014-10-28 2014-10-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.15 x .70 x 5.201, .0 #File Name: 0812996453128 pages Rainbow in the Cloud The Wisdom and Spirit of Maya Angelou | File size: 35.Mb

Maya Angelou : Rainbow in the Cloud: The Wisdom and Spirit of Maya Angelou before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rainbow in the Cloud: The Wisdom and Spirit of Maya Angelou:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great and heartfelt words from the late Maya By Michelle Bought this as Xmas gifts for others. Finally bought myself one so I wouldn't be tempted to read the 'gifted' ones. Great and heartfelt words from the late Maya Angelou 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By T. Bueltman Good read 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Bookworm Thank you for offering this book. It is such an inspiration and quiets the soul!!

Words mean more than what is set down on paper, Maya Angelou wrote in her groundbreaking memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Indeed, Angelou's words have traveled the world and transformed lives inspiring, strengthening, healing. Through a long and prolific career in letters, she became one of the most celebrated voices of our time. Now, in this collection of sage advice, humorous quips, and pointed observations culled from the author's great works, including *The Heart of a Woman*, *On the Pulse of Morning*, *Gather Together in My Name*, and *Letter to My Daughter*, Maya Angelou's spirit endures. *Rainbow in the Cloud* offers resonant and rewarding quotes on such topics as creativity and culture, family and community, equality and race, values and spirituality, parenting and relationships. Perhaps most special, Maya Angelou's only son, Guy Johnson, has contributed some of his mother's most powerful sayings, shared directly with him and the members of their family. A treasured keepsake as well as a beautiful tribute to a woman who touched so many, *Rainbow in the Cloud* reminds us that if one has courage, nothing can dim the light which shines from within.

About the Author Maya Angelou was raised in Stamps, Arkansas. In addition to her bestselling autobiographies, including *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and *The Heart of a Woman*, she wrote numerous volumes of poetry, among them *Phenomenal Woman*, *And Still I Rise*, *On the Pulse of Morning*, and *Mother*. Maya Angelou died in 2014. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. chapter 1 Childhood Parenthood A child's talent to endure stems from her ignorance of alternatives. Everything of value takes work, particularly relationships. If a mother and daughter don't understand each other, and further don't have sympathy for each other's lack of understanding then the task is to build a bridge across the chasm of misunderstanding. Home is the nest where children are raised and the place where they are the most important inhabitants. In homes in which this is not true, the parents are not making the sacrifices which are necessary. I believe that one can never leave home. I believe that one carries the shadows, the dreams, the fears and dragons of home under one's skin, at the extreme corners of one's eyes, and possibly in the gristle of the earlobe. I love my son and I loved him when he was growing up, but I was not in love with him which means that I did not dote and I was willing to make the hard decisions. One should never let the love of one's child prevent or hinder the vital and necessary work of parenting. If our children are to approve of themselves, they must see that we approve of ourselves. Independence is a heady draft, and if you drink it in your youth it can have the same effect on the brain as young wine. It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength. We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter their color; equal in importance no matter their texture. Of all the needs (there are none imaginary) a lonely child has, the one that must be satisfied, if there is going to be hope and a hope of wholeness, is the unshaking need for an unshakable God. Parents who tell their offspring that sex is an act performed only for procreation do everyone a serious disservice. The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned. Our young must be taught that racial peculiarities do exist, but that beneath the skin, beyond the differing features, and into the true heart of being, fundamentally, we are more alike, my friend, than we are unlike. The Black child must learn early to allow laughter to fill his mouth or the million small cruelties he encounters will congeal and clog his throat. The command to grow up at once was more bearable than the faceless horror of wavering purpose, which was youth. This is no longer my house, it is my home. And because it is my home, I have not only found myself healed of the pain of a broken love affair, but discovered that when something I have written does not turn out as I had hoped, I am not hurt so badly. I find that my physical ailments, which are a part of growing older, do not depress me so deeply. I find that I am quicker to laugh and much quicker to forgive. What child can resist a mother who laughs freely and often? When I was young I often wondered how I appeared to people around me, but I never thought to see myself in relation to the entire world. Black Identity Although as Black people we had a dignity and a love of life, those qualities had to be defended constantly. Although there was always generosity in the Negro neighborhood, it was indulged on pain of sacrifice. Whatever was given by Black people to other Blacks was most probably needed as desperately by the donor as by the receiver. A fact which made the giving or receiving a rich exchange. Black Americans of my generation didn't look kindly on public mournings except during or immediately after funerals. We were expected by others and by ourselves to lighten the burden by smiling, to deflect possible new assaults by laughter. Hadn't it worked for us for centuries? Hadn't it? Black entertainers have had to be ten times better than anyone else, historically. Black women whose ancestors were brought to the United States beginning in 1619 have lived through conditions of cruelties so horrible, so bizarre, the women had to reinvent themselves. They had to find safety and sanctity inside themselves or they would not have been able to tolerate such torture. They had to learn quickly to be self-forgiving, for often their exterior actions were at odds with their interior beliefs. Despite the

harshness of their lives, I have always found that older Black women are paragons of generosity. The right plea, arranged the right way, the apt implication, persuade the hungriest Black woman into sharing her last biscuit. How could I explain a young Black boy to a grown man who had been born White? I do not believe the N word should be used at all ... It is time to retire the N word and rely on our vocabulary to speak to people without calling them any racial pejorative at all. I don't go for that hate talk. Negroes ain't got time to be hating anybody. We got to get together. I was born to work up to my grave. But I was not born to be a slave. I, with millions of other Americans, have the same dream Martin Luther King Jr. had; when I wake up I wish some of the things I dreamt would be true. I wish that little Black and White boys and girls would hold hands without being shocked at their nearness to each other and say in a natural way, We have overcome. It was a traditional ruse that was used to shield the Black vulnerability; we laughed to keep from crying. Malcolm X was America's Molotov cocktail, thrown upon the White hope that all Black Americans would follow the nonviolent tenets of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Prejudice is a burden which confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible. Most Black Americans ridicule and revile the Uncle Toms they see on film and television or read about. What they don't realize is that these people stepped and fetched in a nation and time that it was hard for Black people to survive, much less find a decent job. Rarely is consideration given to the sacrifices these people made in order to feed their families, what it cost them in self-respect to make sure the next generation survived. It is these circumstances that make Mr. Paul Dunbar's poem, We Wear the Mask, so poignant. My people had used music to soothe slavery's torment or to propitiate God, or to describe the sweetness of love and the distress of lovelessness, but I knew no race could sing and dance its way to freedom. Since we were descendants of African slaves torn from the land, we reasoned we wouldn't have to earn the right to return, yet we wouldn't be so arrogant as to take anything for granted. The Africans say that Only a fool points to his history with his left hand. What this means is that you must know and respect where you came from. How can you truly respect yourself if you do not know or understand the struggles and trials your people surmounted for you to be here? The drums began. The audience pounded out the rhythm, moving it, controlling and possessing the music, the orchestra and me. Uh, uh, oh huh. O yea, freedom, Uh huh. Uh huh. As the song ended, the small crowd thundered a hot appreciation. Even as I bowed, I knew the applause was only in a small part for me. I had been merely the ignition which set off their fire. It was our history, our painful passage and uneven present, that burned luminously in the dark theater. The man who is a bigot is the worst thing God has got. Through the centuries of despair and dislocation, we had been creative, because we faced down death by daring to hope. Unbidden would come the painful reminder. Not all slaves were stolen, nor were all slave dealers European. Unfortunately, fortitude was not like the color of my skin, given to me once and mine forever. It needed to be resurrected each morning and exercised painstakingly. It also had to be fed with at least a few triumphs. We are not our brothers keeper; we are our brother and we are our sister. We must look past complexion and see community. We must ask questions and find answers that will help us to avoid dissolving into the merciless maw of history. Whites had been wrong all along. Black and brown skin did not herald debasement and a divinely created inferiority. We were capable of controlling our cities, our selves, and our lives with elegance and success. Whites were not needed to explain the working of the world, nor the mysteries of the mind. American and Southern Black American women can exude a charm which acts as a narcotic on their targets. Appearances to the contrary, there is a code of social behavior among Southern Blacks (and almost all of us fall into that category, willingly or not) which is as severe and distinct as a seventeenth-century minuet or an African initiation ritual. There is a moment to speak, a tone of voice to be used, words to be carefully chosen, a time to drop one's eyes, and a split-second when a stranger can be touched on the shoulder or arm or even knee without conveying anything more than respectful friendliness. A lone woman in a new situation knows it is correct to smile slightly at the other women, never grin (a grin is proper only between friends or people making friendship), and nod to unknown men. This behavior tells the company that the new woman is ready to be friendly but is not thirsting after another woman's mate. She should be sensual, caring for her appearance, but taking special care to minimize her sexuality. Every family in our country has someone, a daughter, a son, a nephew, a niece, a cousin, who has served or is serving in the armed services. These relatives have risked or are risking their lives in foreign places few of us have ever seen or can even spell. These heroes and sheroes deserve our heartfelt gratitude for holding the flag of freedom high in the foreign air. If growing up is painful for the Southern Black girl, being aware of her displacement is the rust on the razor that threatens the throat. I'm grateful to be an American. I am grateful that we can be angry at the terrorist assault on 9/11 and at the same time be intelligent enough not to hold a grudge against every Arab and every Muslim. I believe that there lives a burning desire in the most sequestered private heart of every American, a desire to belong to a great country. Our country is grieving. Each child who has been slaughtered belongs to each of us and each slain adult is a member of our family. It is impossible to explain the horror to ourselves and to our survivors. We need to hold each other's hands and look into each other's eyes and say, I am sorry. In response to the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, on December 14, 2012 The South of the United States can be so impellingly beautiful that sophisticated creature comforts diminish in importance. The Stars and Stripes was our flag and our only flag, and that knowledge was almost too painful to bear. Values among Southern rural Blacks are not quite the same as those existing elsewhere. Age has more worth than wealth, and religious piety more value than beauty. We must wage a ceaseless battle against

the forces of greed and hatred which are the foundations of all political inequality. When cane straps flog the body dark and lean, you feel the blow. Community Culture All people use food for more reasons than mere nutrition. Blithering ignorance can be found wherever you choose to live. Dont be a prisoner of ignorance. The world is larger, far more complicated, and far more wonderful than ignorance allows. Each one of us has lived through some devastation, some loneliness, some weather superstorm or spiritual superstorm, when we look at each other we must say, I understand. I understand how you feel because I have been there myself. Hold those things that tell your history and protect them. In an unfamiliar culture, it is wise to offer no innovations, no suggestions, or lessons. The epitome of sophistication is utter simplicity. Often we feel we must have infuriated nature and it has responded by bringing havoc upon our communities. I think it is unwise to personalize nature. I think when we dont know what to do its wise to do nothing. Sit down quietly; quiet our hearts and minds and breathe deeply. Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try to understand each other, we may even become friends. The onus is upon us all to work to improve the human condition. Perform good deeds, for that is truly the way to battle the forces of entropy that are at work in our world. The composite of all our efforts can have an effect. Good done anywhere is good done everywhere. Though theres one thing that I cry for I believe enough to die for That is every mans responsibility to man. Thus we lived through a major war. The question in the ghettos was, Can we make it through a minor peace? Together, we may be able to plan a less painful future. Separate, we can only anticipate further ruptures and deeper loneliness. We are social animals. When we unite in purpose, we are greater than the sum of our parts. Everything that divides or isolates us prevents and obstructs us from realizing our potential as a species. Love Relationships A conversation between friends can sound as melodic as a scripted song. Always be concerned when a naked man offers you his shirt; a person cant love you if he or she cant love him- or herself. Boys seem to think that girls hold the keys to all happiness, because the female is supposed to have the right of consent and/or dissent. Its interesting that they didnt realize in those yearning days past, nor even in the present days of understanding, that if the female had the right to decide, she suffered from her inability to instigate. That is, she could only say yes or no if she was asked. From the moment you leave this house, dont let anybody raise you. Every time you get into a relationship you will have to make concessions, compromises, and theres nothing wrong with that.