

Excerpt from "Young, Black Males: America's Most Wanted" by Wendy Kellam

Outside of the Box

“We celebrate the dead but we don’t elevate the living.”
— Wendy Kellam

In the midst of trying to understand this generation, we cannot afford to destroy their creative spirit or their need to be different. We have to stop judging and labeling them according to our version of right and wrong. We cannot keep our youth in the box because we are afraid to step out of it. If Tupac did not think outside the box, we would not have known about “The Rose that Grew from Concrete.” If Booker T. Washington had not thought outside the box, we would not know the powerful works created by our own hands. Because Allen Iverson wasn’t afraid to step outside his box, he taught us his height is “a small thing to a giant.” Jay Z taught us it may be “A Hard Knock Life,” but you can get a “Picasso, Baby.” If Michael Jordan did not step outside the box after being cut from his high school team, he would have never become the greatest to ever play the game. If Nelson Mandela had not stepped outside the box, we would not know the honor in service and humanity to others. So come on people. We must help our youths’ light to shine. We cannot afford to place our limitations on them. The irony is, some of the same prejudices we condemn white people for are the same things we do to our own youth.

I read an article titled, “Are International Tests Worth Anything?” by Keith Baker. He stated, when it comes to creativity, the U.S. clobbers the world with more patents per million people than any other nation. Our kids can and will be part of that creativity if we give them the opportunity and not our backs.