

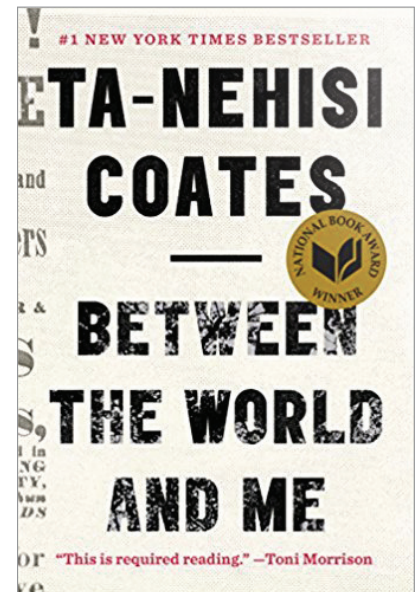


## SAMPLE RACIAL HEALING CIRCLE PROMPTS

The following sample prompts may be used to facilitate racial healing circles as part of your library's TRHT GSC series, [Deeper Than Our Skins: The Present is a Conversation with the Past](#). Prompts have been developed in consideration of each title on the reading list by Mike Wenger (senior consultant, W.K. Kellogg Foundation; adjunct faculty, The George Washington University), Dushaw Hockett (executive director, SPACES: Safe Places for the Advancement of Community and Equity), and Mee Moua (senior consultant, W.K. Kellogg Foundation; principal, Interdependent Group, LLC).

### Sample Prompts for *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

1. Ta-Nehisi talks a lot about The Mecca (Howard University). For him, it was a place of affirmation; a place where he felt that he truly belonged; a place where he could be his true self. Share a story about a place that once or still does serve as your Mecca. Why is this place important to you? And how did/does it make you feel?
2. Living without fear is another important theme in the book. Ta-Nehisi talks about the experiences in life that he may not have fully enjoyed or internalized because “one-third” of his brain was pre-occupied with fear. Share a story about a time in your life that you faced fear and overcame it. What’s one life lesson that the experience taught you?
3. Ta-Nehisi also talks about the concept of “being free.” He uses Malcolm X as an example, stating that Malcolm “spoke as though his body were his own.” Share a story about a time when you truly felt “free” (whatever the word means to you). Or, if you’ve never had this experience, describe in detail what it would look like/feel like for you to feel “free.”





4. Reflecting on his public school experience, Ta-Nehisi notes that “I was made for the library, not for the classroom.” He describes school as a “jail of other people’s interests,” and the library as “open, unending, free.” What has the library experience been like for you? What positive, interesting and/or memorable experiences have you had with libraries? If you don’t share Ta-Nehisi’s perspective on libraries, what’s at least one thing local libraries can do to make the experience a positive or transformative one for you?
5. Ta-Nehisi shares that his son’s grandmother once called and noted that the younger Coates was growing tall and would one day try to “test me.” He later viewed her comment as one of the many “generational chains”—fear of our own children—passed down within families. What’s one saying/story that you heard from a family member(s) growing up and that you have found useful, inspiring and/or liberating?
6. In talking about his early experience with racism, Ta-Nehisi describes it as a force “nameless and vast” that robbed him of things.
  - What does the term “racism” mean to you?
  - Share a story about the first time you either heard about, understood, observed and/or experienced racism.
  - From your perspective, what’s one thing that can be done either at the individual level or community level to address racism?
7. Ta-Nehisi views the practice of questioning as a “ritual.”
  - Growing up—or even now—what questions did/do you have about race and racism? Describe up to three.
  - Why were/are these questions important to you?
  - What’s one important or useful answer you’ve received in response to one of your questions?



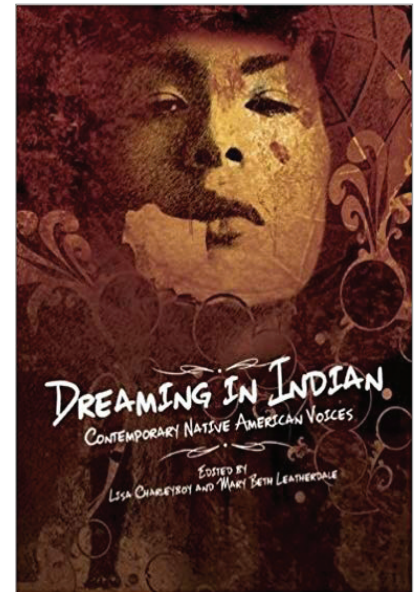
8. Imagine that you're writing a letter to future generations.
  - What would be the title of the letter?
  - Why this particular title? What's the story behind why you chose it?
  - What positive life lessons you would share in the letter? Describe at least three.
  
9. Ta-Nehisi talks about growing up in a house “where there was no room for softness.” He shares that he later learned that “love could be soft and understanding.” And that love was an “act of heroism.” Share a story about a time that you witnessed or experienced love as “an act of heroism.”





**Sample Prompts for *Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices*, edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale**

1. In Nicola Campbell’s *Lullabies* (pg. 14), she talks of “Listening carefully to grandmother voices, stories only heard in the quiet hours between Elders.” Share at least one story you heard from family, friends or community members when you were growing up that had a positive impact on you. How did this story make you feel?
2. In *Home Is Family* (pg. 21), Abigail Whiteye shares that “Home is not where I live but who I live with.”
  - Where is home for you (doesn’t have to be a physical or geographic place)?
  - Share a story about a time when you truly felt at home.
3. In *To Those Who Bullied Me* (pg. 22), Tanya Tagaq Gillis thanks those who tormented her “for teaching me resilience.” Share a story about a difficult experience you faced that, in the end and as a result of what you went through, made you a stronger or better human being.
4. In *Growing Up with Pocahontas* (pg. 42), Charlotte Logan offers that during her high school days, people would often say “. . . you look like Pocahontas.” Share one or more examples of movies or TV shows that *counter* negative stereotypes about your group (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.); that reinforce positive messages or images about your group. Describe the movie or TV show. How does watching it make you feel?



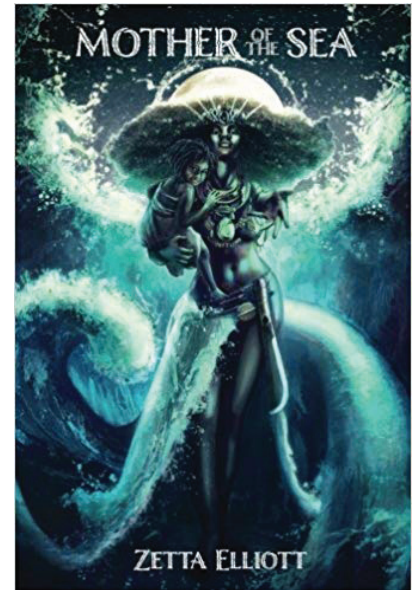


5. In *Why I Hunt* (pg. 70), JP Gladu shares that “Hunting is a reset button. When I’m working in my office in the city, it’s a reminder of where I come from and why I do the things I do.”
  - What rituals, habits or activities serve as a “reset” button for you—serving as a positive reminder of who you are and where you came from?
  - Why are these rituals, habits or activities important to you?
  
6. In *Music Is the Medicine* (pg. 74), Derek Miller notes that “Music has always been a great medicine for me . . .”
  - Share a story about a time that music felt like “medicine” to you. Specifically, share a story about a time that listening to music boosted your energy, inspired you. What was the title of the song?
  - Where does listening to music fall in your morning routine? At what point during the day do you listen to music?
  - What’s the title of your current “medicine” song?
  
7. In *Reunited* (pg. 96), Sharai Mustatia shares that “I never want to regret not saying everything I had to say to someone I love, ever again.”
  - Share a story about a person in your life (family member, friend, teacher, etc.) who impacted you (or continues to do so) in a positive way. What’s the person’s name? And share at least one example/story of how they’ve impacted your life.
  - If the person was in the room right now, what’s one thing you would say to them to let them know that they are appreciated?



### Sample Prompts for *Mother of the Sea* by Zetta Elliott

1. Share a story or an experience of a time when you decided to trust someone. What did they say or do that made you trust them and what did that trust allow you to be or to do?
2. Share an experience or a moment when you felt really angry and someone helped you through that anger. Talk about how that moment felt and what that person said or did that helped you to get past the anger.
3. Talk about a time when you felt really hungry and/or really thirsty and describe that first taste of the food that you ate and/or the beverage you drank. How did you feel when you finished eating or drinking it?
4. Share the name and talk about someone in your life who is your “guardian angel” or who is always with you when you feel scared, sad or alone. If he/she/they were in the room with you right now, what would you say to him/her/them?
5. If you could close your eyes right now and go to any place in the universe, describe where you would go, what would be there and who would be there with you?

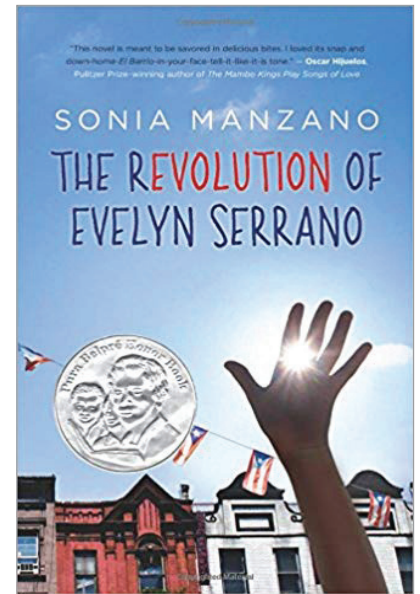






**Sample Prompts for *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano* by Sonia Manzano**

1. In describing the revolution taking place in El Barrio, Evelyn/Rosa talks about the “growing warmth in my heart.” Share a story about a time that you experienced or observed an injustice in your school, neighborhood or elsewhere and felt a “growing warmth” in your heart to do something about the situation. Describe the injustice. What did you do (or if you didn’t do anything at the time, what could you have done)? What was the outcome?
2. Evelyn/Rosa describes the uptown side of Broadway as the place she went in order to “disappear” and feel “anonymous.” Do you have a place that you go to when you want to escape? Describe the place and share why it’s important to you. What positive feelings/experiences does the place create for you?
3. The uptown side of Broadway was very different than El Barrio. Evelyn shares that “I knew when I was getting to my neighborhood because of the noise and because I could smell the garbage overflowing.” Share a story about a time that you noticed a difference between your neighborhood/community and that of others. How did/do you explain this difference? Reflecting on the organizing efforts of the Young Lords, what’s at least one action you would be willing to take to bring about greater equity between or among different communities?
4. Abuela grew to be an important figure in Evelyn/Rosa’s life. Share a story about a person in your life (family member, friend, teacher, etc.) who impacted you (or continues to do so) in a positive way. What’s the person’s name? And share at least one example/story of how they’ve impacted your life.





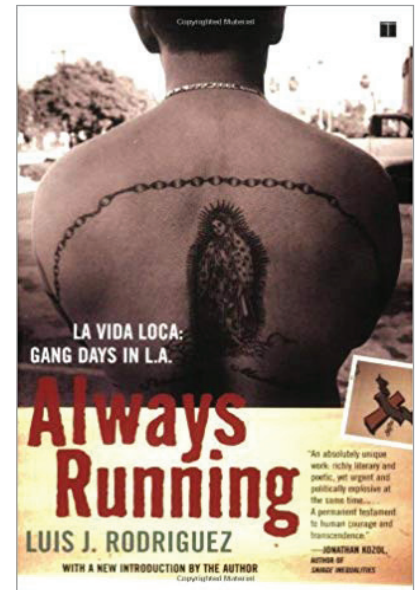
5. Throughout the book, Evelyn/Rosa makes numerous observations regarding skin complexion/pigmentation. Share a story about a time when you first noticed differences in skin complexion/pigmentation or that people were treated differently because of skin complexion/pigmentation. Reflecting on the organizing efforts of the Young Lords, what's at least one action you would be willing to take to address racial inequities or other ways that people are treated differently?
  
6. Evelyn/Rosa enjoyed hearing Abuela's stories about her days in Puerto Rico. She also enjoyed looking at her old news clippings and photos. Share a story that's been passed down in your family that you have found funny/interesting/useful. Bring a photo or other family object to the healing circle session. Share with the group why the object is important to you.





### Sample Prompts for *Always Running* by Luis J. Rodriguez

1. Tell a story about a time you wanted or needed to be heard and understood—and you were. What impact has this had on your life?
2. Tell a story about a situation that required you to take an unpopular stand—and you did and it worked out well. What were you able to accomplish? How did it make you feel? How has it affected your life?
3. What makes you feel respected or gives you a sense of belonging? How does this affect your behavior?
4. Describe an experience that caused you to feel that you had the power and capacity to thrive? How did this make you feel?
5. Tell a story about someone who “has your back.” How does this make you feel? How does it affect your behavior? Do you have someone else’s “back?” What would you do to protect this person?
6. Think about your high school. What changes would make or would have made you feel more positively about your school experience and more included in the life of the school?
7. What are your aspirations for the future? Luis—or “Louie”—was good at writing poetry and doing art. What talents or abilities do you feel you bring to the table that can help you achieve your aspirations? What help do you need to achieve your aspirations? From whom? When?





**Sample Prompts for *The Shadow Hero* by Gene Luen Yang, illustrated by Sonny Liew**

1. Share the name and ethnic background of one Asian American person in your life and describe how you met him/her/them.
2. Share a story about a time when you were made to do something good, kind or nice for another person. How did that make you feel and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Share an experience about a time when you stood up to someone you know for using a racial slur to talk about you or someone you know. How did that moment make you feel and how did the person respond when you stood up to them? Would you do the same if the person was a total stranger?
4. If you were to map out the people in your life right now by their gender, gender identity, race and/or ethnic background, who would be missing and why?
5. Imagine that you are a superhero. Describe your superhero costume, what would be your superhero symbol and what would be your superpower?

