

# COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

## *in Your Turn: How to Be an Adult* by Julie Lythcott-Haims



As a Black, biracial, queer person, I know that representation matters. As an author, I want to do my part to bring an anti-racist, decolonized, and inclusive approach to publishing.

Too many authors, editors, and publishers across every genre embed characters and narratives with un-named whiteness and other characteristics considered “the norm,” and only identify race and other characteristics when those identities deviate from this assumed norm. In non-fiction in particular, often a topic is investigated and elucidated from the perspective of white, middle-class, straight people without making such assumptions plain. Yet the human population is richly diverse and none of us want to feel ignored or othered on the page. We all yearn to be included.

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued so that they are able to participate as their full, authentic selves. This is the experience I want readers to have when they pore over my new book *Your Turn: How to Be an Adult*, a self-help book about adulthood which is a stage of life all humans pass through.

*Your Turn* demonstrates that it is both valuable and feasible to craft a text that imagines all readers. I’ve attempted to do so through my narrative choices. I’ve also incorporated perspectives of people whom in the aggregate reflect the rich diversity of our human community here in the United States. For example, in *Your Turn* you’ll find:

- people from across the gender spectrum
- people from a myriad of racial and ethnic backgrounds
- people from across the sexual orientation spectrum
- poor, working class, middle class, upper middle class, and wealthy people
- neurodivergent, neurodiverse, and neurotypical people
- minimally educated, moderately educated, and highly educated people
- immigrants and the children of immigrants
- single people and people with partners
- people with mental health challenges
- people with disabilities
- people with disease
- people with addictions and people raised by addicts
- people who were fostered or adopted as children
- people who have struggled with fertility

- people who have had interactions with law enforcement, including incarceration
- liberals and conservatives
- Christians, Jews, Muslims, atheists, and Hindus
- people who have served in the military
- critics of capitalism and beneficiaries of it
- elected officials
- people who are estranged from family and people who are close to family
- people from all over the U.S.
- dog owners, artists, actors, engineers, students, doctors, lawyers, teachers, directors, business people, entrepreneurs, professors, tech people, military consultants, public speakers, philanthropists, therapists, reality TV stars, non-profit founders and workers, educators, outside-the-box thinkers, marketers, dancers, mentors of first generation college students, financial consultants, writers, activists, consultants, Lyft drivers, designers, health and wellness practitioners, bankers, rock climbers, UPS drivers, eyeglass makers, athletic coaches, higher ed administrators, and parents
- and at least one vegan

By putting these people on the page with equal dignity, all are ‘normalized;’ none are outliers or ‘others.’ One such profile is of a Black male college student who was surrounded by police officers with guns drawn following a brawl at a fraternity party. Who he became following this incident speaks directly to our present moment. Its inclusion as one of many stories in the book illustrates that, unfortunately, this too is normal.

*Your Turn* demonstrates page after page after page that to do the work of ensuring that all lives in fact do matter, we must intentionally bring those who have been kept in the margins onto the center of the page. Some readers will overlook these details. But many readers are hungry for a book—and a way of writing and editing books—that truly sees all. If this speaks to you, please consider referencing this aspect of *Your Turn* in your social media posts by sharing your thoughts with the tag #yourturntoadult. Feel free to use one of these examples:

*In Your Turn, @jlythcotthaims shows us how writers can show up for racial justice. #yourturntoadult*

*By sharing stories in Your Turn, @jlythcotthaims shows us how to see people as their truest most authentic selves. #yourturntoadult*

*After reading Your Turn, I commit to following @jlythcotthaims’ lead to normalize and amplify the stories of marginalized people. #yourturntoadult*

Thank you for being a part of the effort to write, publish, and promote inclusive books.


 A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JULIE". The letters are connected and have a fluid, cursive-like quality.