

i don't think i really explained why and how you get discouraged . as far as i know it happens to everyone. if you are working with the kids after a while ~~you~~ the insolence, the lying, the stealing, the disrespect, the destructiveness, begin to hurt you. how can they lie so effectively? white kids are brought up with such an overdose of conscience that they don't seem to be able to lie well. when they lie, you always can tell, and soon they learn that you can tell. but black kids lie so well, like europeanlike arabs. it doesn't help you any to realize that this is a cultural difference, and one of the conditions you may want to change. the fact is that if you are white, you have been taught to trust, to feel deceived when lied to, to feel personally betrayed. and you do. honesty may be a middle class virtue, but you react emotionally according to a middle class upbringing. you are hurt. and the adults. you adore them, you love to work with them, but you are disturbed when you realize why. what pleases you so much is their simplicity, the honest faith, the humility, all of which are inheritances of a century of servitude. you prefer the servility of the adults to the willfulness of the children. and yet you say you are here to rid the people of the social conditions which have bred this servility. you are one of the forces that is breeding the willful child, whom you cannot cope with. and what about the other adults, the ones who are not simple, nor humble, the leaders of the negro community. often you look at them and realize that you are preparing an organization that ~~will~~ most likely be taken over by the sons of bitches that you see before you. no, not all are sons of bitches, but there are enough, and they are the ones who already have some power. they are the black bastards that will take the place of the white bastards when the black man has the vote. and so you try to build an organization that can prevent this, to politically educate the people so that they can differentiate between ~~the~~ political and social platforms, so that they won't allow themselves to be sold out. but you know you can't work that fast. and you have all those examples of the unions, labor parties, minority groups before you. political power will come, but you know ~~you~~ that this time, no more than any time before will the people work very long for a good society. and the really fine people that you are working with, the people that are neither servile nor selfish, who love their own people and have a vision of a better society that is really fine-well, these people become a very important reason for your staying. they really do renew your strength, despite the fact that you know that they will be lost in the end too. some show the strain more than others.

for them you can be strong, but it is not really the same as being strong because you believe you will overcome. oh, you do believe that you will overcome. you have no doubt that negroes will get the vote soon, and that there will be an improvement of opportunity for negroes, and that they will be able to go most anywhere they want, and perhaps even live there, but that ceases to be the important question after a while. it is perhaps not fair. you have transferred your wishes for a good society and good community from america in general, or spain, or whatever, cuba perhaps, to the negroes in america, and they never asked for it. they asked for their rights, and they will get their rights. is it fair of you to demand that they take over your most abstract idealistic goals, your frustrated political dreams, you unrealistic conceptions of the true nature of man, and the true potential of society. and still, even when you know the dream of twenty years is lost, you cannot stand by with the reality of oppression, degradation, violence of this year. you are strongest when you are fighting the police, the white, but this is false strength. in the end you must stop fighting against and start fighting for, and that is the fight that is doomed.