

"A vital book for these times." —*Kirkus Reviews*

THIS IS THE FIRE

What I Say to My Friends About Racism

DON LEMON

Anchor of CNN TONIGHT

READING GROUP GUIDE

Discussion Questions for *This Is the Fire* by Don Lemon

1. James Baldwin wrote *The Fire Next Time* in 1963. Why does Don Lemon say *This IS the Fire*? How is Baldwin's metaphor of fire different from Lemon's? How are they similar?
2. At the beginning of the book, Don Lemon notes that we are in a very important moment in our nation's history, feeling "the death throes of White supremacy in concert with the birth pangs of racial renaissance." He goes on say, "it's time to have a point of view, not just an opinion." What do you think he means by this? What is the difference between a point of view and opinion? Why do you think he is stressing the difference?
3. Don Lemon talks about forgotten events and locations in Black history in Louisiana and Long Island. Can you find similarly forgotten settlements or points of conflict near you? Do you know if there were Black towns in your area in the past?
4. Don Lemon notes that for Black people (and people of color, in general) it can be hard to notice a small act of discrimination because White supremacy is the air we breathe. Did *This Is the Fire* help you recognize any less overt but still insidious race-based assumptions that are part of our society?
5. Reinvention is a cornerstone of the American experience. What does Lemon argue should exist in a reinvented America? What are your ideas for how America can and should reinvent itself?
6. Don Lemon says "It's time we outgrow our need for a celebrity messiah. We must step up and become the savior the world is waiting for." What are some things you think everyday people can contribute to the fight against racism that celebrities may not be able to?
7. In the book, Don Lemon notes four attributes to change: anger, solidarity, compassion, and vision. Do you think one is more important in contributing to long-lasting change than the others? Is there anything else you think contributes to change?
8. Do you talk to your friends about racism? If so, what are some of the most surprising things you've learned in your conversations? If not, why do you think that is?
9. Don Lemon says we did not get here by accident. What White supremacist structures are still currently in place preventing equity and equality for all Americans in this country?
10. Don Lemon says the fires "will never end until Black people reject their complacency and White people reject their privilege." Do you think we're at a turning point in history to end these "fires" that James Baldwin and Don Lemon are speaking of?
11. Don Lemon speaks of how he wishes *This Is the Fire* will be used as a springboard for each reader's call to purpose. Are there any actions you think you will take after reading this book?