

## **Reverend Al Sharpton on Rise Up!**

**There are so many causes to fight for and rise up against. How does one determine which cause to support? And, what's the end game?**

“Well when there are so many challenges and so many causes to fight for from civil rights and human rights for African Americans and Latinos and immigration in general and gender equality, people need to get in the fight at their level of identity and comfort; where you may be given your life experience, may be more inclined to fight in one area than another. As long as you keep your mind on the fact that it is feeding the whole need for change for everybody. So you may have your lane, but it's all one highway of equal protection under the law and for protecting equal opportunity for everyone regardless of who they are.”

**What responsibility does each individual have to make the change he/she aspires to obtain, a reality?**

“Everyone has a responsibility to fight and make the change possible because we are all living in the prerogatives of those that fought for us despite how hard it may seem and the challenges we've faced. It was more difficult for those before us and they fought and opened the door for a better life for us. Therefore, since we received, we owe. We owe it to continue that fight toward full realization of everyone's rights and protection under the law. And we owe, for our children and their children, to have a better life than we had because we had a better life than our parents and grandparents in the areas of having the freedom and the rights we need and desire protected that in some cases we take for granted.”

**Does the book offer direction on ways to rise up other than marching? Or, should we continue with this tried and true action?**

“The book talks a lot about marching but it also talks about other areas where you can be active: in your own homes you can start as an activist for change, in your social circles, in your church, in your bingo hall, in your fraternity. There's no one way to fight. The only thing you must do is Rise Up and fight. Everyone is not going to lead marches, everyone is not going to win a political office, everyone is not going to make the evening news but everyone can Rise Up in various ways and I outline it in the book. You have no excuse not to Rise Up and you don't have to do what others do, do it your way, but do it.”

**How can potential allies help with any civil cause?**

“Potential allies can help with a civil cause by having a clear goal that we're fighting for the general hold on society to be open and fair to everyone and protect everyone's rights which means we need to do it together and we need to see the common goal is stronger than our cultural, racial, and gendered differences. We can all be allied because the goal is the same. It's like a sports team you may play different positions and you may come from different

neighborhoods but you are both trying to win the same game, the game is human and civil rights.”

**What made you decide to choose this path of activism? Was it a particular incident like the George Floyd case?**

“What made me choose to fight was that when I was young I felt compelled growing up in the Black Church and hearing and seeing the racism in New York. I did not come out of the south. I felt that I was in the tradition of people like Dr. King and others that had chosen that path of ministry. And as I grew older things kept happening to reaffirm that commitment, from Howard Beach when I was much younger all the way to George Floyd and these days. And I talk about that and I met people along the way, freedom fighters, Activists with a capital A, and I share some of that. Even when I met and became well associated with Presidents and governors I never was tempted to get out of the roll of an activist because it fit me and it was what turned on my character, my person. I felt most complete when I was fulfilling my role as an activist. And that is what people must do is find their comfort zone as one that stands up, rises up, and answers the challenges of the day, where you lose yourself into a cause bigger than just you.”