

Social mobility

When white Americans tell the Negro to lift himself by his own bootstraps, they don't look at the legacy of slavery and segregation.

I believe we ought to do all we can, and seek to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps, but it's a cruel gesture to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps.

And many Negroes, by the thousands and millions, have been left bootless as a result of all these years of oppression and as a result of a society that deliberately made his color a stigma and something worthless and degrading.

Martin Luther King, Jr.