



Prejudices are always already there. You're never going to wipe them clean. If the criteria of progress is eradicating all prejudice, eradicating all racism, homophobia, antisemitism, and so forth, then we all may just give up and go to the crack house, because it's just not going to happen. That's not the point. We can be better, much better.

I mean, with [Samuel] Beckett here, you know, you try again, fail again, fail better. And we know, we have examples of persons who are better. But we say to the pessimist, don't just start with failure. Fail better. See the effort goes on. Agency is still at work. Intention is still at work. Possibility of progress. No paradise, progress still at work. So we need pessimists around. Don't get me wrong. I think pessimists are always quite useful. The problem is that they cannot constitute the last word. They're the brook of fire through which we all must pass, but they can't be the conclusion. Our conclusion must be actions, not a proposition, it's action, which is a praxis, a way of life that recognizes the pessimist challenge, but also recognizes that for the sake of our own precious children of all colors, we can attempt to be better.

*Cornel West*

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