

PRESENTATION

A PAPER

SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS

"BLACK MALE/FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS"

by

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Spiritual dimensions are relegated to race only to the extent that God has been operative in their lives and especially they testify that he can play the decisive role in all inter personal relationships.

Religion is personal devotion to ultimate Being, who is believed to offer creative potentialities for human life through enlarging relationships.

Every meeting of person with person is an adventure pregnant with unknown potentialities. And every meeting is an interpersonal relationship that may increase or decline in value. To exploit another person is to meet him or her as It, and treating him or her as a thing to serve as means to ends, such a relationship declines in value. To reverence another person is to meet him as Thou with honest appreciation of him/her worth and dignity as a creative center of Valuing experience. Such a relationship has creative potentialities for mutual growth and discovery of what it means to be a person in a giving and receiving of value.

The experience of religion (or shall we say the spiritual dimension is a personal experience; its value is intelligible, understandable only to persons.

Personality is a unique center of individual life striving for goals through dynamic relationships.

Let us not be remise, not all these goals have ultimate or devine meaning. Many of them are sought for immediate satisfaction; when reached, it becomes a starting point for other goals.

Every age is a crisis, the crisis of How to Grow. In order for ones spiritual capacity be fortified and mature enough to win the battle of deteriorating relationships, which in part are the direct results of external socio-cultural, political or psychological forces, a conscious effort must be made to keep a healthy spiritual power operative in ones life.

One must come to grips with the fact that the spiritual possibility in his life and the overpowering influence it can and will have on the on-going tension of relationships.

Spiritual dimension possible describes the most potent resource at the disposal of one who seeks to negotiate and experience meaningful relationships with the opposite sex.

Black Americans, our historical motivation forced a wedge through the mean maze of slavery, segregation and dehumanization, has been our relentless claim "the competency of our souls, health of our spiritual life.

Our entire sense of being somebody has never been external in its origin. God gave us His reflection. He is Spirit. We are in essence spiritual. The duality of our nature embraces the flesh. Our minds becomes the seat of thought -- the God designed computer. But God has only promised to reside and influence that which is the pride of His creation, which our spirits, a living soul.

This then explains why Jesus, the Son of God made his position clear as to the Kingdom over which he would reign, the Kingdom of God is within you.

Therefore, one must always be knowledgeable of the actors who perform on the stage of their spiritual life and who play an indispensable role in developing one's real ability to cope with the ever changing tides of relationship.

Until these spiritual qualities become healthy, mature and nourished, the torrential storms of this frantic, survival of the fittest, neurotic society can rob any well-meaning person of experiencing a relationship of value.

Black male and female relationships will always remain under the pressure of undue tension as long as:

As long as the systematic demoralizing and debilitating fallout effect of discrimination in the workforce continues to freeze a disproportionate of our race from participating in the exercise of meaningful employment.

As long as blacks accept the myth perpetrated by social scientists that there is an inherent weakness and deterioration of the fabric of black society. This self hate is still a reality.

As long as blacks suffer constant stress from dichotomized thinking as they tend to sophisticated social survival skills in order to conform to a society which yields different results based on race and sex.

As long as blacks often feel they must be accepted in that mystique of whiteness which raises them to a lofty level of status with a halo effect -- yet this self induced elevation results in self-devaluation and self doubt. Criticism results which creates psychological disequilibrium. Far too many blacks seek to escape

this tension of this dilemma by acquiring a white mask and an attempt to blend into the prevailing order. This conflict of mind further exacerbates black male/female relationships.

As long as the rise of black woman, who are creating a beautiful and distinct identity and further augmenting their courage of strength by achieving goals historically relegated to white men and a few black men, are suffering the strain and stress which characterizes the socializing process and it may explain the alleged trend of black males declaring a disinterest in marrying strong and determined black women.

These are but a few of the present day pressures that generate tensions that appear to be affecting black male/female relationships.

Let us conclude by reiterating the premise that spiritual maturity is an asset which provides a frame of reference capable of empowering one to negotiate creatively an unwritten contract of lasting relationships.

One from the institutionalized church may recapture
the lines of an old hymn and say:

Something writhin that holdeth the reigns

Something within me, I cannot explain

Something within me that bannishes pain

All that I know is, there is Something within

James Weldon Johnson moved this spiritual dimension into
the social conflict and unashamedly left us a historical
frame of reference that has been our clarion for 200 years:

God of our weary years

God of our silent tears

Thou who hast brought us safe thus far

Thou who hast by thou Might

Led us into the light

Keep us foreved in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, Our God

Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the World,

Shadowed beneath Thy hand,

May we forever stand,

True to our God

True to our native land.
