

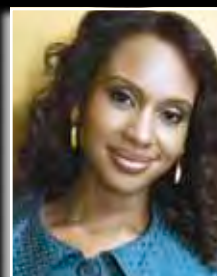
O B E S I T Y :

WHY ARE WE GETTING TOO BIG FOR OUR BRITCHES?



Wendy Williams, The "Wendy Williams Show" Interview - pg. 7

Born in Asbury Park, New Jersey on July 18, 1964, Wendy Joan Williams burst onto the TV landscape in July 2009 with the launch of her own nationally-syndicated talk show. Dubbed a "breakthrough in daytime" by The New York Times, "The Wendy Williams Show" is now in its third season and airs in 52 countries around the world.



Kim Anthony, Vaulting Over the "Unfavorable Odds!" - pg. 9

Kim Hamilton Anthony is a former US National Gymnastics team member. She became the first African-American woman to receive a scholarship to compete for U.C.L.A.'s gymnastics team. There, she became a four-time national champion, six-time All-American, and a U.C.L.A. Hall of Fame inductee.

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As we enter the holiday season, many Americans will be faced with the task of being able to find gainful employment, provide for their families and keep a roof over their heads. The current state of the economy has made it difficult for businesses to remain profitable, let alone keep their doors open for business. Although it may be hard to believe, it has been said that more millionaires are created in an environment such as the current one that we are in. Times such as these require critical thinking and innovative approaches to provide those types of products and services that savvy people will spend what few dollars they have available on. I have personally witnessed businesses that have folded, only to have the business owners rebound and reinvent themselves and once again have thriving businesses. You see, when life gives you lemons, you must be able to find a way to make lemonade out of the lemons. You have to realize that in order to fulfill your God-given purpose in life, you must understand that sometimes a setback is a setup for a comeback, and that you're not finished when you lose, but you're finished when you quit.

Recently, movie mogul, Tyler Perry, caught some flack for casting Kim Kardashian in a role in one of his upcoming movies. The flack was more for Perry making a reference to Kardashian being a role model for young people. We live in a society where our young people look to movie stars, athletes and entertainers, to name a few, for role models. When I look back at my life, my role model was my mother who taught me more

about values, character and the importance of having a good name. These things have remained with me throughout my life and have enabled me to try and pass the same characteristics on to my children. This is my opinion in how "true" legacies are created and passed on. I can understand how some people might want to emulate others that they see and perceive to be successful. In my opinion, if young people need to look for role models outside of their own home, then something is seriously wrong.

In the City of Springfield, plans were announced recently by County Market to construct a new supermarket in the Enos Park area, which also includes the Springfield Medical District. This is the second announcement in as many months of a new grocer locating in the Springfield area. It should be noted that over ten years ago, Cub Foods, which was owned by the same owners of County Market, constructed a brand new grocery store on the far east end of Springfield. That store was closed some time ago, for reasons unknown to me. If I had to guess a reason, I would have to say it was because of its ability to be profitable. This seems to be the age-old story of businesses that open and later shutter their doors on the East Side of Springfield. My question would be, "Why are these businesses closing?" Recently, I overheard a conversation where an individual was complaining that the Arabs and the Asians had all of the profitable businesses in the black community in Springfield. My answer to his comment, had I have made one, would have been: "Whose fault is that?" Especially when close to 100 percent of their business is black people. In my opinion, we really have no right to complain when others come into a community and take the risks, when we won't do it ourselves, for any number of reasons. I could really get on a roll on this subject, but out of respect for the readers, I will leave it at that.

This year marks the sixth year of the existence of the Capital City Courier. This paper was started with the idea of writing stories that were of importance to the black community that weren't being talked about in any forms of media. I still credit Joyce Jackson, who now resides in Oklahoma, who served as the first editor of the newspaper, for helping to get this paper started. Over the years, I

have had opportunities to interview scores of interesting people. Also, I am thankful to Sharon Whalen of the Illinois Times, who took the time to sit down with Joyce and me to share and answer any questions that we had concerning starting this paper. Sharon, the time you spent with us helping us to get started will always be remembered and appreciated. Recently, I had an opportunity to do the same thing that Sharon did for me by offering advice to a friend of mine named Doug Brady, who recently launched his own newspaper called The Standard. One thing that I have always said is that I never want to be the smartest person in the room. This is evidenced by the skilled writers that have taken the time to be a part of the Capital City Courier and to contribute insightful articles over the years. Thank you, Kim Gordon, Kim Connor, Carmen Crockett, Kam Williams, Lyle Johnson, Sarnia Cotton, Nancy Collins and my wife, Sherry Pittman, as well as the scores of other writers that have contributed content to this paper over the years. Additionally, I would also like to thank Upward Bound Media, Norman Calmese for his diligence and Rudy

Davenport for his contributions to the newspaper. The efforts of you all will never be forgotten. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to make each issue of the Capital City Courier better than the previous issue, and to continue to provide relevant information, not only to our black readers, but to all others as well.

This month's cover story, written by Kim Gordon, is titled "Obesity: Why Are We Getting Too Big For Our Britches?" Also in this month's edition are stories titled "Invisible Wounds: The Effects of Military Life on Families," written by Kim Connor, an interview with talk show host Wendy Williams, written by Kam Williams, and an interview with former U.C.L.A. gymnastic champion Kim Anthony, written by yours truly.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

Michael Pittman

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IN THE NEWS

Invisible Wounds — the Effects of Military Life on Families

by Kimberly D. Conner



When we tuck the kids in bed and go to sleep at night, how many of us are thinking of the servicemen and women that are sacrificing their lives for our protection? While we wish for their safe return, some won't come home, and of those that do, many are not the same. Of those that do come home from the war, a high number return with invisible scars, the subtle wounds that you can't see.

There was a time when the benefits outweighed the risks in terms of enlisting in the military, prior to, that is, the war in the Iraq. Enlistees' could have their college tuitions paid for, had access to health insurance, and were guaranteed a regular check; it's not as appealing as it once was, however. Considering the high number of casualties, higher than in any other war to date, many young women and men are rethinking their decision to sign up. But today's economy has a few still willing to take the risk for the pay and benefits.

What happens though when a soldier receives orders that carry them overseas for extended periods of time? Who takes care of their home, its upkeep, while they are away? Who cares for the single parent's child while he or she is away? Who cares for their pets? Who pays their bills or takes care of other business matters in their absence? How do families adjust to having one parent in the household when they are accustomed to having two? Moving around from place to place, how do families and children cope? It requires tremendous sacrifice.

Military life can be hard on families, especially difficult, when it involves long-term separation. Imagine how hard it would be to be

apart from your spouse, your significant other, for a period of a year or more. It's unnatural. In some cases, they began to look to others to fill the void, and infidelity creeps in. Lack of physical contact and communication barriers can be problematic for military families. The inability to talk by phone or via the internet forces soldiers and families to rely on letters.

The military can be especially hard on children, forced at times, to move around, from place to place. It has been said that some suffer academically, as well as socially, as a result. I would imagine it would fill a child with insecurity to have to bounce around, not knowing when and if a parent will be deployed. I'd imagine it would be difficult for them to form friendships and to bond with others, constantly changing schools. I believe every child needs to have a sense of stability to thrive. This can be hard to achieve in military families, especially when the father is suddenly deployed. It shifts the dynamics entirely. One military wife talks about what it feels like for her husband to be gone extended periods of time. She states, "I feel like a single mom. I have to do it all."

According to researchers, children that go through deployment experience the same effects as children that go through divorce. Over a million children and their families know firsthand what it's like to go through deployment. There is a misconception that once the soldier comes home and is reunited with their families that everything will be perfect, often that is not the case.

Besides the stress of being away from home and loved ones, do we ever stop to consider the stress soldiers might be under resulting from combat itself? What about the challenges that await them when they come home? The stress got to one

soldier, buckling under the pressure, he snapped. The family of John Needham maintains that he was never the same after coming home from the war in Iraq. His brother asserts that his brother lost his mind during the war. Needham sought medical treatment for severe mental health problems while still in the war. Haunted by his experiences there, he suffered nightmares. He was hospitalized several times, medicated for pain, as well as psychological problems, and eventually diagnosed with PTSD and TBI. Just when he felt that he was getting the help he needed at a key facility, the military decided to ship him to another facility, against his will, a place, according to him, lacking the services that he so desperately needed. He was bounced around. From there, he spiraled out of control, becoming violent and aggressive. According to his family and friends, John Needham was a typical boy growing up, but after the war, was looked upon as "crazy". It was hard for family members to come to terms with the fact that John was not the same person. The son and brother that they knew and loved before Iraq, was gone forever.

The decorated officer received a Purple Heart, an Army Commendation Medal, resulting from a combat injury. But, just two months after he was discharged from the military for "unspecified reasons", he was charged with a brutal murder. Officers found Needham naked and belligerent when they arrived at his door, responding to a 911 call. The blood throughout the condo told a dramatic story. It began with a spat involving another woman. During the course of the argument Needham brutally beat his girlfriend, Jacquelyn Villagomez, to death, with his fists. Attractive and smart, she had a promising future. While Needham's brother had hoped that his

illness would never lead to murder, he wasn't all that surprised to learn that his brother had committed the heinous crime, "the mental state he's been in since Iraq, nothing would surprise me", he commented.

Instances like these aren't limited to John Needham, sadly. There have been numerous cases across the country involving ex-military soldiers, charged with murder, after serving in the war. There were 12 such cases out of Needham's squadron alone, grabbing the attention of national authorities. Two years after the murder, Needham himself, lost his will to live, committing suicide, while out on bond, at the age of 26. He never received the help that he needed, but was he simply broken beyond repair?

Suicide is not all that uncommon in the military. According to statistics, military suicides are on the rise since the war in Iraq began. Many veterans report that they feel hopeless upon their return home, finding themselves out of work, riddled with issues. The Veteran's Administration estimates that close to 20 veterans per day commit suicide. It's impossible to ignore the telltale signs of a massive problem, and its impact on soldiers and their families.

Many of our soldiers are coming home with less than obvious signs of trauma. A high percentage of them are being diagnosed with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) resulting from their experiences in the war. A lot of that has to do with what these soldiers are being exposed to in combat. And they carry these scars. My father was drafted and sent to Vietnam to serve this country at the age of 18, and to this day, nearly fifty years later, he rarely discusses his experiences there.

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Invisible Wounds — the Effects of Military Life on Families

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Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a medical condition characterized by traumatic events including military combat, physical abuse, or a serious injury that manifests into an anxiety disorder, resulting from horror, a threat to one's life or the life of someone else. Experts say that PTSD alters the brain, making it difficult for individuals to carry out normal routines and activities. Just as many veterans are being diagnosed with another disorder, TBI, or Traumatic Brain Injury. Symptoms include flashbacks. Some experience fear. Others have "triggers" that subsequently take them back to the traumatic incident, like hearing a car backfire, they suddenly find themselves back in the war zone, or so they think, in that moment. It's hard to escape the memories many had hoped to leave behind. It is not uncommon for individuals with PTSD to feel "numb". Others reportedly have a hard time sleeping, may be angry or

irritable, jittery, or on edge. Some have trouble concentrating. Others become abusive, depending on the severity. Many are unable to relate to others or to express their feelings. These symptoms can linger on for years, impacting relationships. According to a substance abuse counselor, as a result, a significant portion of vets, resort to drugs and alcohol, as mechanisms to cope.

Many returning soldiers acknowledge that they have relational issues, but don't know where to begin. Some tend to isolate themselves because they feel that no one understands them or relates to their experiences. The family of a local man sent off to war at the age of nineteen reports that their loved one was a different man when he came home. They arranged a welcome home party for him, but he subsequently retreated to his bedroom; he wanted very little contact with the outside world after coming home from the war,

becoming quiet and reserved.

PTSD carries its own stigma, making it hard for some soldiers to ask for help. Family members are often the first to recognize that there is a problem. Some soldiers are reluctant to get help for fear of being labeled, understandably so.

Families and advocates believe that more should be done for returning soldiers and their families, asking for the development of more mental-health programs and services to get them back on track. While advances in technology bring more soldiers home, more are coming home with issues. We are now looking at ways to address the long-term consequences of war as well as the need for adequate services, upon their return. One soldier states that he found very little outreach and support services available to him when he came home from Iraq. He, too, believes that more should be done to educate the community about

the effects of war on soldiers and families, as well as what to expect upon a soldier's return. Doctors are looking for more effective ways to diagnose and treat PTSD and TBI.

The Veteran's Administration offers services for veterans. Available services includes marital and family counseling, suicide prevention, treatment for PTSD, depression, substance abuse, mental health, homelessness, as well as educational services and work programs. Please visit www.vba.va.gov for more information about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Everyone has or knows someone that is serving in the military, in the war in Iraq. Help is available if you see signs of trouble. Don't be afraid to reach out.

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INTERVIEW WITH KAM WILLIAMS

Wendy Williams “The Wendy Williams Show”



Born in Asbury Park, New Jersey on July 18, 1964, Wendy Joan Williams burst onto the TV landscape in July 2009 with the launch of her own nationally-syndicated talk show. Dubbed a “breakthrough in daytime” by The New York Times, “The Wendy Williams Show” is now in its third season and airs in 52 countries around the world.

“The Wendy Williams Show” is a reflection of its host; with its vibrant colors and upbeat soundtrack matching Williams’ own personality and energetic sense of humor. And the show’s focus on entertainment reflects her passion for pop culture.

By design, whenever she interviews celebrity guests, it’s from the perspective of a fan, as she asks the questions that her audience wants to hear. A lover of classic television, Williams’ style is inspired by her childhood idols like Dinah Shore and Merv Griffin.

Prior to making the transition to daytime television, Wendy built a devoted audience over the course of an enormously-successful 23-year run in radio. “The Wendy Williams Experience” was a top-rated, nationally-syndicated show which reached over 12 million people daily. In November of 2009, she was inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame—one of only a handful of women to enjoy the honor.

Wendy recently competed on Season 12 of ABC’s smash hit “Dancing with The Stars.” Her other television credits include serving as host of Game Show Network’s original series “Love Triangle” and as a featured guest on ABC’s “One Life to Live” and Lifetime’s “Drop Dead Diva.”

She is also the author of the New York Times best seller *The Wendy*

Williams Experience, as well as several novels including *Ritz Harper Goes to Hollywood*. Plus, she presently contributes a weekly celebrity hot topics column to the weekly entertainment magazine “Life & Style.”

A child of a teacher and a college professor, Williams earned a Bachelor’s degree in Communications with a minor in Journalism at Northeastern University, and she remains a very vocal education advocate. She credits the start of her career with the decision to take an internship at a radio station on St. Croix, Virgin Islands immediately following her graduation from college.

Wendy resides in Northern New Jersey with her husband, Kevin, and their 11 year-old son, Kevin, Jr. Here, she talks about her life and career.

Kam Williams: Hi Wendy, How you doin’?

Wendy Williams: [Laughs] How you doin’, Kam? You doing good?

KW: I’m awwwwllright! Ann-Marie Nacchio, a loyal fan of yours from Philly, told me to start the interview with “How you doin’?” because that would probably help relax you.

WW: And it did! That’s the official greeting of the show.

KW: How did being raised by two educators shape you?

WW: I know firsthand that educators are the most over-worked and underpaid people around. It influenced me in that it was always about family first,

and education was right next to that. There was never any question about whether I was going to college. And it was important to my parents that I get my degree in 4 years, because “Money doesn’t grow on trees.” [LOL] I will support my son in whatever he wants to do professionally, but he will go to college, too. My husband and I are in concert on that.

KW: How hard is it juggling your career and being a mom?

WW: It’s not easy. He’s in the 6th grade.

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman says: First of all, how YOU doin’?

I have been a fan since the days of radio and I love your Jersey Girl approach to life! You have been on radio, TV, film and authored books. Which gives you the biggest thrill?

WW: TV. It’s the best, although radio was my first love.

KW: You were certainly no stranger to controversy when you had the radio show. Do you think that might have been because you were the first African-American host to push the envelope in terms of gossip?

WW: Well, there were definitely elements of my rise in radio that had to do with my being black. But going back as far as Walter Winchell,

Army Archerd and Hedda Hopper, legendary wags would grab a radio microphone and talk about what Errol Flynn and other stars were up to.

KW: Bernadette would also like to know, what is your favorite charity?

WW: Big Brothers/Big Sisters because I love helping out kids. Anything with kids.

KW: Alan Gray asks: Have you had any guests who just weren’t very talkative? What do you do to try to get them to talk, and have there been any occasions where you couldn’t?

WW: No. Believe it or not, there are interesting elements in everyone. So, if I can’t talk to everybody for at least 7 to 10 minutes, then I’m in the wrong profession.

KW: Children’s book author Irene Smalls asks: Do you enjoy being a shock jockette and who are some of the celebrities you most enjoyed interviewing?

WW: That’s so funny! I enjoyed being what I was in radio, which some thought of as a shock jock



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Wendy Williams, The “Wendy Williams Show” Interview

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although, to this day, I still can't figure out what I've done that's so shocking. [LOL] As to my favorite interviews, I loved having my mother and father on. I also enjoyed talking to Elmo, who's a puppet. I found T.I.'s trying to be extra-cool very endearing. Tyra Banks was not the diva I expected her to be. I looooooved talking to her. And Simon Cowell is a really nice guy. Yeah! He's my fave, and he's handsome.

KW: Irene also asks: What achievement are you most proud of, and what mountain do you still want to conquer?
WW: I'm most proud of our son, having suffered several miscarriages before having him. As for the next mountain, it takes so much to maintain what's already going on that I don't have time to think about it. But I want some more seasons of the TV show, I'd like to write another book, and eventually, I'd like to retire and take vacations with my husband like my mom and dad do.

KW: Professor/author/documentary filmmaker Hisani Dubose says: I would like to know, what was involved in making the transition from radio, where you aren't seen, to TV, where visibility is so important?
WW: Lipstick, foundation, a strip of lashes, and developing the ability to edit what I would normally say. I was always able to finish a thought on radio, because I had 4 hours. A one-hour TV show is only 44 minutes of programming.

KW: Film director Kevin Williams asks: What was the biggest challenge you faced in making the move from radio to TV?
WW: Finding the fine line between satisfying a daytime TV audience and an afternoon radio audience. That involved editing down my delivery to under an hour. I've been blessed to have great producers and a great staff to achieve that. I have a small team but they're very efficient.

KW: Jessica Kelly says: I love your wigs Wendy, but I want to hear more about your eye make-up. It's soooooo hot!
WW: [Laughs] Merrell Hollis has been doing my makeup since the beginning of the show. I just close my eyes

and let him do his thing. He's a genius!

KW: Aleesha Houston asks: What's the last gift you purchased for yourself?
WW: A wig! [Giggles] I'm picking it up on Monday.

KW: Judyth Piazza asks: If you could change one thing about the entertainment industry, what would it be?
WW: More Wendy! [Roars]

KW: Teresa Emerson says: “How you doin’ Wendy!” Who would you love to interview that you think may be afraid to come on your show; given your reputation for hard questions?
WW: I will take that as a rhetorical question.

KW: Lowery Gibson asks: What's the real Wendy like, minus the wigs, makeup and “How you doin’?” Given that you had a breast endowment, do you recommend this cosmetic surgery?
WW: The real Wendy is a plain, regular girl with good skin. I do have hair, if he's wondering about that. I have lots of witnesses to that. [Chuckles] And I'm a homebody. When I get off the phone with you, Kam, I'm going to the grocery store, because our power was out for 4 days. As for breast augmentation, I do recommend it for women over 30 who have a couple of extra dollars. But it's not for a nutty schoolgirl who might just be doing it for a guy.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?
WW: I have no answer. That's a question I would really have to think about.

KW: The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?
WW: Yes.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?
WW: Yeaahhhhhh!

KW: The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?
WW: A minute ago. I laugh all the time, loudly, with my mouth wide open, and all the way up to the tip of my wig. And I love just as hard. I only hope that people feel the passion when they watch my talk show. It comes from

my soul. Kam, I can't even describe to you what it feels like when I come through those double doors at 10 AM each morning. Sometimes, the emotions overwhelm me, and I start to cry.

KW: I heard that you've cried several times on the show.
WW: Please, are you making fun of me? [Laughs] I couldn't tell you how often I've cried. Wendy Watchers know when it happens. And it could happen over anything. I could have something sad going on in my life... I could have my period... Women are emotional. At least I know I am.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?
WW: Oh brother, here you go. If you must know, my son was reading to me from a children's book called “Mouse-trap.” The last one I read myself was “Satan's Sisters,” Star Jones' novel about a fictitious talk show.

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What was the last song you listened to?
WW: “Headlines” by Drake.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?
WW: Mexican food is my absolute, #1 favorite food. But all the cutting and dicing is very time-consuming. I do like to cook a few times a week, but it's not always that intricate with the shells and the cheese, etcetera.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?
WW: Doing the show. That 10 AM feeling when the doors open up. Forget about it! Also, my son coming home with a respectable grade on something that I know he's worked hard on. And good health excites me, too.

KW: The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?
WW: I love Norma Kamali. I'm wearing Norma Kamali right now as I write my grocery list while I'm speaking to you. I'm multi-tasking.

KW: Dante Lee, author of “Black Business Secrets,” asks: “What was the best business decision you ever made, and what was the worst?”
WW: I can't narrow either one down to just one thing. I've rolled the dice

and had both success and failure. I can tell you that right now we're on a roll with the talk show. Everything is good with the TV show.

KW: Were you disappointed about your quick departure from Dancing with the Stars this season?
WW: I was relieved! I'm not a dancer, and it was very time-consuming. But I met great people, and it was flattering to be asked to be on. You don't understand how demanding that show is until you're on the inside. That is real work. Real work!

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?
WW: Beauty! I'm sitting here looking in the mirror right now pushing my wig up. Wow! I look really good to be going to the grocery store. I see beauty today. Tomorrow, it might be something different. [LOL]

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?
WW: For my groceries to just appear in the kitchen, so I can do what I love to do, which is turn on the TV and have myself a snack while watching the 5 O'clock News.

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?
WW: Believe it or not, it had to be about 1969. We were living in Asbury Park and I remember turning the TV channel back to Sesame Street from Divorce Court when I heard my mother's heels clicking on the steps as she came down the stairs. I liked both shows.

KW: The Melissa Harris-Perry question: How did your first big heartbreak impact who you are as a person?
WW: It made me stronger, although I never experienced any devastating teenage angst. I wasn't that type of girl. I was more nomadic in my younger years.

KW: Thanks again for the time, Wendy, and best of luck with the show.
WW: Thank you, Kam.

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KIM ANTHONY:

Vaulting Over the “Unfavorable Odds!”

by Michael Pittman

Kim Hamilton Anthony is a former US National Gymnastics team member. She became the first African-American woman to receive a scholarship to compete for U.C.L.A.’s gymnastics team. There, she became a four-time national champion, six-time All-American, and a U.C.L.A. Hall of Fame inductee.

Kim travels the country speaking to audiences ranging from at-risk youth and the incarcerated to professional athletes and executives. She is also a freelance television host and reporter and author of the book “Unfavorable Odds.” Kim resides in Dayton, Ohio with her husband, Cowin, and two sons.

CCC: Can you tell us where you were born and raised?

KA: *I was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia in a poor area of town. My mother got pregnant as a teenager. She was encouraged to end the pregnancy so I wouldn't be a poor soul born into a desperate situation. She was attempting to abort me by doing self-induced abortion, but it didn't work. Finally, she decided that she didn't want to lose her child, but that she wanted to keep me. She had been hit by a car when she was five years old and her pelvic bone got crushed, so when it came time to deliver me, she ran into complications and they thought that only one of us would survive. My mother told the doctor to do everything they could to save her baby, so she risked her life for me. But out of nowhere, this doctor came in and said that he could save us both, and he did. I survived that birth. My mother and father wound up getting married after I was born. He served in the military and he experienced some very difficult things there, so when he came back to the states, he was often unemployed and often getting high on drugs. I had this vision in my mother's eyes of her caring for me and loving me because she said that she loved me and provided for me. Because my father disappeared for weeks*

at a time, I had this feeling that I was not loved, at least not enough for him to hang around. He would disappear on Thanksgiving and Christmas, so when we come to this time of the year, it is difficult and it gets hard for me, because I remember those days and weeks that he wasn't there for me. But one of the things that he taught me when I was about six or seven years old was how to roll joints. Because I could do that, I felt that I had finally found this sense of value in his eyes. I did everything I could to try to make him happy because he was my daddy. I wanted him to love me. We grew weed in the house like house plants, so I was around it all the time. We would be driving around in the car, and I would be in the back seat rolling joints for him, making him proud. I remember being at a party that he had and I was the only child sitting in a smoked-filled room. On the coffee table were the drugs of choice, and I sat there rolling joints, making my daddy proud. I equated my ability to handle drugs to having a sense of value in his eyes. When I was 13 years old, I remember having that mind set so much that when I found out that the drug dealer that lived next door to us knew how to make crack cocaine, which was the latest drug on the street, I went over there specifically to learn how to do it. I watched this drug dealer step-by-step, and I learned how to make crack cocaine. This was in the early '80's. I felt that if I learned how to make crack, my daddy would be proud of me. That's what I was feeling at the time. Even though I was in that type of environment, I had this dream of becoming a world-class athlete. I wanted to become a gymnast. For a little black girl back in the '70's, this was a crazy dream. People would tell me that I was wasting my time because gymnastics was for white girls. When I started training as a gymnast, some of my coaches told me I didn't have what it takes to make it as a gymnast. In spite of that, I worked hard and found myself being very successful in that sport.

CCC: How old were you when you first became interested in gymnastics?

KA: *I remember watching the 1976 Olympics and Nadia Comaneci was in it*

and she was going for a perfect 10. So, I would have been about 8 years old. I started off flipping around sidewalks, which were brick because we lived in the City. There was no grass; there was dirt and bricks. I remember flipping around in my grandmother's living room knocking stuff over. They would kick me out of the house and say, "Take that outside!" All I had was concrete and bricks, so I started teaching myself how to do different skills. Finally, my mom got scared and thought I was going to hurt myself playing on the hard surfaces, so she signed me up for recreational classes at the Richmond Olympiad. That was a private gymnastics club that a little girl from our school used to go to. I remember going to that class and seeing all the mats and the bars. I was in heaven. I said, if I could do all this stuff on a brick sidewalk, who knows what I could do with all of these soft mats and springs and all that stuff? I got in trouble in that class because when I was supposed to be swinging on the low bar, I was up on the high bar swinging around. I was just doing my own thing. The coach called me over at the end of practice and I just knew that he was going to tell me to never come back. But instead he asked me where I had taken gymnastics before, and I hadn't. I had never had any formal training in gymnastics by anyone other than myself. He asked me to show him what I could do. So I showed him side aeriels, front cartwheels and stuff like that that I had taught myself on the sidewalk. He invited me to join the team right away. That's how I got started.

CCC: I read in your bio that you were the first black female to be recruited by U.C.L.A. as a gymnast. Can you elaborate on that?

KA: *To be honest, Mike, I didn't realize that they didn't have any other black people there. When I was growing up, it was rare for me to see another black gymnast. I was at a very high level. I was an elite gymnast traveling all around the world representing the United States, but there was no one who came before me that I could look up to that was African American. So, I just had to imagine myself in that place. You know how you*

have role models that are athletes? I didn't have another African American that I could emulate, so I had to dream on my own. I went to U.C.L.A. in 1986 and became their first African American gymnast. I also became their first N.C.A.A. champion on their gymnastics team. I didn't learn that until recently.

CCC: Did you ever try out for the Olympics?

KA: *I did in 1984. I didn't make it. It was my first year at the elite level, which is the Olympic level and I hadn't proven myself yet. What they did is take the first eight gymnasts to the Olympics and then the second eight they took to South Africa. I ended up on the second team and went to South Africa instead, which was a life-changing experience. When I look back on it, I think it was better that I went to South Africa because I really didn't understand how privileged I was as a black American as opposed to being a black South African. Even though we were poor and there were eviction notices on our door just about every month and I couldn't do everything that I wanted to do because of the lack of funds, I had freedom to be a gymnast and to represent my country. But in South Africa, in the heart of apartheid, I saw people fighting in Soweto, and all these things that were going on; I really got to see how privileged I was as an African American.*

CCC: When did you graduate from college?

KA: 1990.

CCC: Is that when your gymnastic career ended?

KA: *My career ended in my senior year of college. I had a career-ending injury. It was a month or two into the season. I injured a ligament in my foot and ended up being in a cast for six months. It wiped out my season. You know what Mike, God is so amazing. During my senior year, I was in great shape, I had won three N.C.A.A. titles and was working to win a fourth one. I had been doing my vaults really high, but I was kicking out of my landing. My body would be*

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Kim Anthony: Vaulting Over the “Unfavorable Odds!”

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perfectly straight and I would land and get whiplash. My head would whip back. So my neck was hurting, and I would get shooting pains through my head when I would walk around campus that would stop me dead in my tracks. So, I was in a lot of pain, and I had x-rays done. I didn't find out until after my career-ending injury. My coach pulled me aside after the x-rays and told me the doctors had reviewed them along with my M.R.I. of my neck and said that my neck was straight up and down, and if I continued landing my vaults the way I was landing that I could possibly break my neck or become paralyzed or even die. Had it not been for that career-ending injury with the foot, it is possible that I could have done more landings like that and it would have been far worse, so I just count that as a blessing from God. For about ten years, I was mad. Because that was not the way I wanted to end my career. I wanted to end it competing all the way through. I didn't want to fall short. When I was being inducted into the U.C.L.A. Hall of Fame, after I said my induction speech, that whole scene of my coach telling me I could have broken my neck or died, it just came to my mind that is was the grace of God protecting me from serious injury or death. My bitterness went away after that. I would ask God, “I should have been able to defend that title one more time. Why wasn't I able to do that?” God said to me that “I have more for you to do and I want your life to end with gymnastics because I have more for you to do.”

CCC: I understand that you have written a book. Can you tell us about it?

KA: The book is called “Unfavorable Odds” and I really wrote it as a gift to people in my audience. I speak to people in different places and for the past ten years I have been sharing my story of how God has brought me out of hopelessness to the glorious hope that only Christ can give. As I would speak and share my story, I would have women and men come up to me and talk to me about it and ask me “Where can I get your book? I really want to know more of the story.” I didn't have anything to give them. I told my husband that people keep asking me for a book and I don't have anything to give them. He encouraged me to write one. He stayed on me for a long time, Mike, to write one. Everyday he would say, “Kim are you writing?” I would say, “Nope.” It took me ten years to actually finish the book. It's about my life story. As I was writing, a lot of memories came up. There were things that came up that I wanted to suppress and didn't want

to relive. Sometimes when those things came up, I would stop writing because I didn't want to talk about those things in my life. With the encouragement of my husband, I began to move through that. As I was writing the book, God would allow the pain to surface and then He would heal the pain. For a long time, I didn't realize how much pain I had in my life. I wouldn't feel happy. I would feel depressed and I did not know why I was depressed. But as God began to show me the things that had happened in my life and helped me to recognize those things that happened in my childhood and in my youth still had an effect on me as an adult, I began to come to a place of healing. So, it was ten years of Kim Anthony's healing. I am not the same person I was when I started writing this book. I am completely a different person as a result of the healing that has taken place. One of the chapters in my book is called “Seven Steps from Pain to Purpose.” I wrote these because I wanted my book to not just be a story model and for people to walk away and say, “That was an interesting story.” I wanted them to walk away with tools they could use in their own lives. I wanted them to be able to use the book as a tool to help others. I asked the Lord to show me the things that He allowed me to go through to get from a place of pain to a place of purpose. So, I came up with those seven steps and put them in the back of my book. It literally can be used as a Bible study or a personal study. I describe the steps, and I also have a challenge for each person for each step. There are questions that people can ask themselves. I actually had a publisher ask me to turn the seven steps into a book, so I'm working on that proposal right now. I'm excited about it. I've gotten letters from people in Europe and South Africa, all over, with people telling me that they have been using the book to change their lives.

CCC: If there was one thing in your life that you could change and do differently, what would it be?

KA: Well, obviously if I had the power to, it's that I would have come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ when I was younger. I didn't become a Christian until my sophomore year in college. The way that happened was that after my freshman year at U.C.L.A., I had been hanging out with some friends, and it was one o'clock in the morning and we were going to a fast food restaurant, and there were some words exchanged between a group of people that I was with and another group in

the parking lot. I didn't know what was said. When I walked up to the restaurant door, I heard this screaming and hollering, and when I turned around, there was a guy standing there with a gun pointed at my forehead. All of my life, I worked to gain approval from people. I thought my worth and my value were based on how I could handle drugs for my father. Then, when I became an athlete, my value was based on how well I performed in gymnastics. So, when I was standing there with an angry young man that said he was going to kill me, it didn't matter how I grew up, it didn't matter that I had won my first N.C.A.A. title. Everything that I looked to give me worth was worth absolutely nothing. That next year, when I went back to U.C.L.A., I meet a young man, who is now my husband, and we have been married for almost 20 years now. He shared with me the gospel that I could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, so my life began to change. My life began to change and my gymnastic career began to change. I had so much more as a Christian athlete as I did as an athlete who was basing my whole life's worth on a sport. In a long way, that is what I would change. I would have come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ sooner.

CCC: What is your husband's name?

KA: His name is Corwin. He played football for U.C.L.A. and later played briefly for the L.A. Rams and the New York Jets.

CCC: What in your opinion is a good role model?

KA: I believe a good role model is someone with character and integrity. Someone who is not necessarily a perfect person, but someone who lives their life with positive values and who can have a positive impact on others around them. I don't believe that there is anyone who is perfect. Someone who uses their gifts to positively impact the world. In my opinion, that was Christ. My husband and I are on staff at Athlete's In Action, and we're Christian ministers ministering to athletes. My husband is the Pro Director of Athlete's In Action. He oversees the pro ministry. One of the things we talk about is that we want kids and people looking up to role models, and to find their role model looking up to Christ.

CCC: Do you have any children?

KA: I have two boys ages 14 and 15. Both of my sons are athletic. My 14-year-old plays football and

my 15-year-old plays basketball, but he also does 3D animation and he shoots short films. He is very creative on the computer. He wants to start his own production studio.

CCC: So many children in urban areas and the ghetto have no way out. What advice do you give to them when speaking to them on how to make it out?

KA: I have found that when I speak in those types of environments, there are a lot of people that are not dreaming anymore. They have been crushed because of the people around them. You know how when you are young, you have dreams, and I believe that even when we are young, that God had those dreams in our minds. We may talk about those dreams to others, and they would say that you can't do that. Then we lose it. We then say that, “Yeah, I probably can't do that.” The advice I give to them is dream again. Start dreaming about what you want to do and how you want to impact the world. Not everybody is going to have the same purpose, the same talent or the same gift. I ask them to think about what they love doing, and to think about what may come easy to them but is not easy to someone else. I say that, “Some of you guys are going to have something to do that makes no sense to nobody else in your neighborhood. They are going to look at you like you are crazy. But that's okay. If that is a God-given dream, then that is where you are going to be successful and find fulfillment and joy and peace. That is where you are going to have the biggest impact on this world.” I like to help them think about the things they like and to help them dream again and to believe that they can actually achieve that.

CCC: I see that you served as the Chaplain for the Miami Dolphins wives. What did that entail?

KA: What I would do is that I worked alongside my husband for ten years. I would spend time with the players' wives and the coaches' wives. We would do Bible studies for the players' wives on one day and the coaches' wives on the other. My husband and I would do couples' studies with the players and their wives during the evenings, sometimes on Monday night if there wasn't a Monday night game. Basically, we would do discipleship, we helped them to grow in their walk with God, we encouraged them in the call that God would have on their lives. With the wives, I would spend time encouraging them because

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they have a really tough life. They have to be so strong. They work in an area where their husbands are in such high demand and there are so many people clamoring for their husbands, whether it be autographs, pictures or conversation, and a lot of time, the wives would be pushed back in a corner because of other people focusing on their husbands. You can imagine how that affects someone's self esteem and confidence. Until I worked with them, I had to help them understand that as God is moving their husbands from team to team, he is also moving you with them, and just as God has a plan for your husband for that particular team, he also has a plan for you in a specific area. Whether it be in the community, your children's school or your husband's foundation or for something that God has put in your heart to do. I try to encourage them that God has a plan for their lives, too. You have women who have college degrees and masters' degrees who have to give up their careers in order to be with their husbands. That's a side that most people don't understand, because I know a lot of people may portray these football wives as girls who are money-hungry and all of these things, and sure, that is out there as well, but you have some intelligent women who have given up jobs and opportunities to further their

education so that they can be by their husbands side on those respective teams. We are there for the midnight calls. We are there to help them in parenting their children and things like that. It's almost like being a pastor for a team.

CCC: What would you like to accomplish in the next five years?

KA: I don't know how I will do it or how God will enable me to do it, but I would love to have a constant ministry of encouragement into the lives of anyone who wants encouragement. I love speaking around the country. One of the things that I have a passion for is young people and helping them to dream and to know that God put them here for a purpose and that they are not an accident. Even though some parents may treat them like an accident or tell them they are an accident, because that happened to me when I was younger. I just want to have a positive impact on as many people as God will allow me to have a positive impact on. I think it will be through speaking and writing. I would love for it to be through the media. I've done some work on the television in terms of hosting and reporting and things like that, and if God would chose to give me that gift that would be wonderful. I can't tell you exactly how that would work, Mike, but I know it would have to be in

the area of encouraging others to find and fulfill their purpose.

CCC: How is your relationship with your father?

KA: My relationship with him is not as close as I would like it to be. Before I released this book, I was coming down to the finishing pages and was getting ready to send it to a publisher. It was in January. I remember having a quiet time, and God strongly placed it on my heart that he would not allow this book to go forward until I reconciled with my father. I was just like, “What?” Over the years I had been trying to get in contact with him, but he had not returned any of my calls. So, my question to God was that I was

trying to reach out to him and he wasn't returning my calls. How am I supposed to reconcile with him when I can't even track him down. Since I didn't know what else to do to reach out to him, I just waited and prayed for several months. In August my father's brother called me and he said he had just found my number and we picked up as if it was just yesterday when we had talked. He shared with me that he loved me and that he was proud of me. I was just blown away. When you don't hear from people and when you don't have that relationship, you start to wonder, “Do they really love me and care for me?” He affirmed to me that he did. Then I connected with my other uncles and they said the same thing. Then I thought that if my uncles loved me, then maybe my dad did, too. I wasn't really sure he loved me because of how he would disappear and some of the things that happened in our home. I finally got up the nerve to call him. I remember writing down everything I had to say to him on paper, because I didn't want to mess it up. As I called the number that my uncle had given me, I remember a machine came on, so I had planned on reading the notes that I had written down in front of me. All of the words went out the window. I stumbled and stammered through the whole message. I basically told him that I was going to Richmond, and that I wanted to meet with him if I could because I wanted to talk to him about some things. I said, “I understand if you don't want to meet with me, that's fine. If you do, then just call me and let me know.” He called me back immediately later that night and left a message saying he wanted to see me. That next evening, I sat down with him and shared how much pain I had been in and the things that he had done to me and my mother as a child and how it affected me as an adult. I laid it all out. I told him this is what happened and this is how it affects me now. He listened and for the first time he apologized to me. He said he didn't blame it on anything or anyone else. He said he didn't understand why he did it, but that he was sorry. We held each other and we cried together. I felt like a weight lifted. I told him that “I don't need any explanation as to why you did it; I just want you to know that I forgive you and that I want you to be a part of my life and my children's life.” God had brought me to a place, and it was only God, Mike; I can't take any credit for this. But I said to him that even if I could go back in time and I had the opportunity to pick out who my father would be, it would still be him. That's God. We

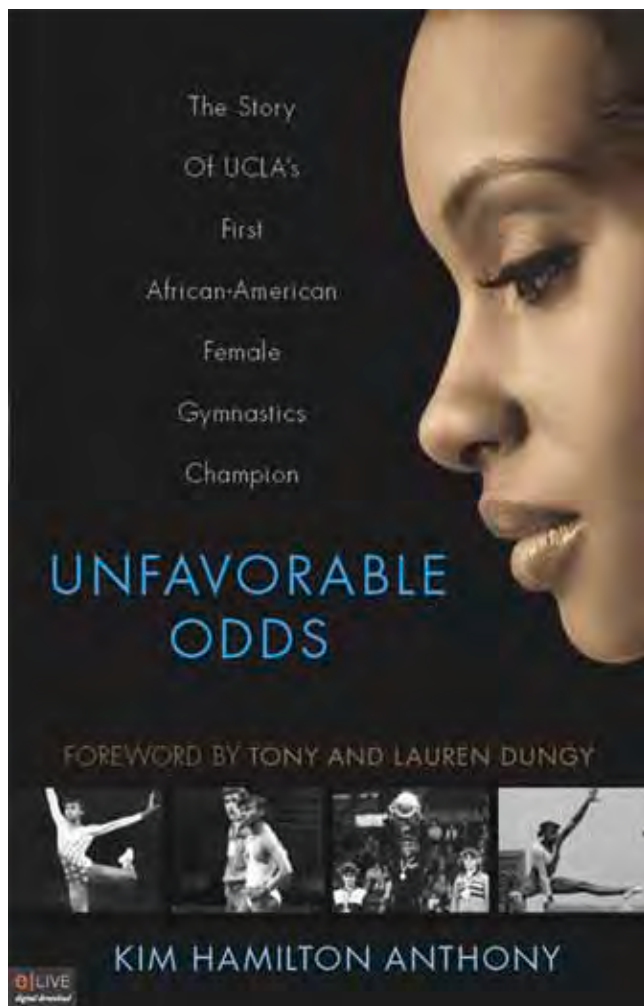
reconciled that night and we stayed in contact for a little bit. We haven't been in contact as much as I would like to be, because he is still doing his thing. But I know that we are cool, we are good. Sometimes, it gets hard when I want to talk to him and I can't reach him. Sometimes, my heart goes back to thinking, “What if he stops loving me? Why is he not calling me back?” Then I realize that I have done what God wanted me to do, and that is to forgive him. So all I have to do is trust in Him.

CCC: Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

KA: My mother and I have remained close throughout everything. My reconciliation with my father also opened the door for her and my father to be reconciled as well. She has remarried now and lives in Peoria, Illinois. She is like my best friend. She is married to a godly man that treats her like a queen. She is doing really well.

CCC: Kim, thank you for your time. I really enjoyed talking to you.

KA: Thank you, Mike, for the interview.





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THE WINNING TEAM

No More BOREDOM!

by Aeneas & Tracy Williams



HE SAID:

One of the keys to a successful and exciting marriage is to refuse to allow “boredom” to take root in our relationships. It is so easy to get caught up in the day to day routine of work, family, and the chores of daily life. Especially for men, there are so many temptations in society to capture our attention. Men are designed with some very specific characteristics. For instance, most men long for respect in their marriages, are attracted and stimulated by sight, and are very sexual creatures.

If a wife is finding creative ways to show respect to her husband, she will have no problem getting him to come home excited to see her. Men like to be appreciated and valued for who they are in their relationships and families. I love coming home to my wife meeting me at the door with a kiss, and my children running to tell me about their day. This makes me feel like I am the “king” of my castle. Everything may not be perfect, but at least I know that the people closest to me love and support me. I am convinced that if a woman begins to cherish her husband and make him feel appreciated, she could get things from him that probably aren’t even in the budget! That’s how powerful R-E-S-P-E-C-T is as Aretha Franklin sang, “find out what it means to me!”

Men are also visual creatures that are stimulated by what they see. This is why it is important for wives to take care of themselves and always be mindful of what their husbands like. I like it when my wife changes up the wardrobe a little bit to keep me guessing, especially if she didn’t buy anything new! Husbands don’t expect their wives to look like the woman in the magazine, but he does expect her to work with what God gave her.

Men, we too have a responsibil-

ity to keep the fire burning in our marriages by staying in shape and taking care of ourselves. We too can get in a boring routine of coming home from work and sitting in front of the television, catching up on sports. Our wives need to see us trying something different to keep boredom out of our relationships.

Years ago, one of my coaches with the Arizona Cardinals told me about how he and his wife have a date night every Friday where they go out and spend time alone. As a result, my wife and I started doing date night sixteen years ago and we still enjoy it and look forward to it every Friday. So, husbands hire a babysitter and take your wife out!

SHE SAID:

You are right Honey, we love our date nights! In marriage, it is so important to take time away. So often, we as women get caught up with our daily routines and children’s activities that we can begin to take our husbands for granted. Every Friday night, my husband and I spend time catching up on our relationship. We often do dinner and a movie, but we encourage couples to do anything that allows them to focus on each other. In the past, we have even taken dance lessons! Aeneas and I have even spent time asking each other how we could improve as a husband or wife. In these conversations we both get to zero in on those areas in our marriage that are being overlooked. You can’t fix what you don’t know is broken!

Date nights have also become a part of our children’s lives. They love to see us get dressed up to go out; even our daughters get in on giving their opinions on our outfits! This time spent away, reminds us of who we are as a couple. Date night is one intentional way of keeping the fire alive in your marriage, while showing your children that marriage is fun!

Ladies, we are the thermostat of our homes and our marriages. We set the temperature for our households. If we get in the mode of the boring, monotonous doldrums of life, so will our husbands and children. On the other hand, if we keep the atmosphere lively, encouraging and exciting, our home will be “the place to be.” The idea here is to get off the carousel of monotony, and stir some things up in your home life. To set a mellow atmosphere before my husband comes home, I put the radio on throughout the house, while I finish dinner and the kids set the table. There are so many ways we can make our homes the happening place for our husbands to want to run home to. Even if you work outside the home, with a little extra planning you can create an exciting, and inviting

atmosphere for your husband. For example, while treating him, you can treat yourself to a bubble bath for two.

As women we know there are a lot of temptations out there that our husbands have to face. We have to keep the fire alive in our sex lives. As a wife, you have the power to make him feel cherished like no one else on earth. Marriage is for life and to keep our husband’s desire for us, we have to be willing to keep the sexual flames burning in the bedroom. Our husbands do expect us to put some thought into our love lives. We can be creative and romantic and make our husbands long to be with us. Just as simple as changing the place of your lovemaking or the time of day can be stimulating and exciting to your husband. Communicating with your husband on his desires in the bedroom would be a great place to start in stirring the fire in your marriage. The ideas are endless. We just have to set our minds to keep boredom away, and use the element of surprise to keep the embers of our marital relationships burning!



COVER STORY

by Kim Gordon



OBESITY: WHY ARE WE GETTING TOO BIG FOR OUR BRITCHES?

In 1972, two Eastern Airlines flight attendants filed a discrimination lawsuit against the airline charging that the weight and grooming regulations caused their working conditions to be unreasonably stressful. Both women left their jobs due to constant harassment about their weight, which was expected to stay below 132 lbs. for a 5'9" woman. In 1974, a 27-year-old flight attendant, who was 5'7" and 139 lbs., was fired by Western Airlines for being 4 pounds over their required weight of 135 lbs. Thirty-seven years and numerous lawsuits later, most U.S. airlines have loosened the tight, anorexic hold they once had on young women who desired to fly the friendly skies. In fact, their height and weight restrictions are currently more for safety reasons. Flight attendants must be tall enough to reach the overhead safety equipment, and thin enough to buckle into those tiny jump seats as well as fit through the narrow plane aisles and emergency exit windows. But it's not just the world travelers who face such discrimination. In May 2010, a waitress at a Michigan Hooters restaurant was told during an annual evaluation that she was overweight and at risk

of losing her job. She was 5'8" and 132 lbs., yet the restaurant management provided her with a free gym membership and 30 days to lose the weight or she would be fired. When she filed a lawsuit, the company responded by saying it was their right to uphold the "Hooters girl standard" that is similar to "the standard used by the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders and the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes." In 2009, a model for the Ralph Lauren ads was informed that her contract was terminated because she was "too heavy" and couldn't fit into their clothes anymore. She was 5'9" and tipping the scales at 120 lbs.

Really. You know if the supermodels are catching it for a few imagined pounds, just think what it must be like out there for the rest of us. Football players, both school-aged and professional, have come under scrutiny in recent years as more of them, in their efforts to "bulk up," are becoming obese. With 300 lbs. being almost the norm for many football players, they are susceptible to weight-related health problems, including several recent deaths due to heat exhaustion. In 2007, a Louisiana drug treatment center for women fired one of their employees. They

were concerned that her weight, which exceeded 400 lbs., would prevent her from being able to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation in case of an emergency. And in September 2011, a Texas man filed a lawsuit against his former employer, BAE Systems, alleging that he was wrongfully terminated after 16 years on the job. The man, whose weight was over 600 lbs., was fired by the defense contractor because of his weight, even though he was able to perform his job. In both of these cases, the individuals were morbidly obese, yet the Americans with Disabilities Act doesn't specifically address morbid obesity as a disability entitled to protection. The decisions in both of those lawsuits could decide for the future just how far an employer has to go to provide "reasonable accommodations" and whether or not an employee can be terminated.

Seriously, has discrimination against the obese become the last nasty little chunk of prejudice that we just don't see because we're too busy laughing at "Your mama's so fat..." jokes and shaking our heads at the latest tabloid cover that shows which of our star-studded celebrities have "let themselves go" and which

ones made the mistake of wearing a too-revealing swimsuit that displayed their cellulite for all the world to see? And, do I even need to mention the cruel things that children routinely say to and about their overweight peers? Still, the most sensitive souls among us, who won't tolerate a racist or sexist joke or remark being uttered in their presence, will laugh hysterically at the latest 300+ lb. comedian talking about how it sucks to be fat. We line up to see the newest movie that pokes fun at the obese as actors don fat suits to get quick and easy laughs, whether it's Martin Lawrence in the "Big Momma" movies, Eddie Murphy in "Norbit," Adam Sandler in "Click," or Mike Meyers as Fat Bastard in "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me." While some movies, such as "Shallow Hal" and even Eddie Murphy's "The Nutty Professor" do approach the subject of obesity with tact and a "Look beyond the external!" approach, too many times the overweight are the recipients of the most insensitive remarks, being portrayed in the movies as the comedic sidekick at best and the pathetic loser at worst. They are almost never shown as the object of romantic

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desire unless they make that “magical transformation” and lose the weight. And, for some reason, people feel they have the right to approach an overweight person and tell them they need to lose weight, or that they “would be so attractive” if they just dropped a few pounds. It’s not helpful at all, still there are some people who think it’s an acceptable thing to do.

But can we classify obesity as a disability, one that requires that we adjust our attitudes as well as our material objects to accommodate a larger crowd? Hospitals and other businesses have increased the size of their doors, using either wall-to-wall sliding panels or extra-wide revolving doors. Hospitals and clinics are using the kind of platform scales that can weigh patients who are in a wheelchair as well as those who are larger than what the typical scale will measure. Elevators, escalators, those moving sidewalks in airports, and shopping cart scooters in grocery stores all transport people whose mobility is limited by weight-related

causes. While they are a wonderful bit of technology, the body’s joints, for example, were not designed to support weights of 300 lbs. and more. Cartilage, the delicate cushion between the bones, becomes compressed and eventually gets ground away entirely, especially in the knees, resulting in the very painful “bone-against-bone” action that necessitates knee replacement surgery. And while obesity itself might not be considered a full-fledged disability, it is often the contributing factor in any number of disabling and deadly diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, osteoarthritis, and sleep apnea. Obstructive sleep apnea occurs when the air passage-way collapses during sleep, causing the person to stop breathing for awhile. This lack of oxygen to the brain brings the person out of a deep, restful sleep, and several episodes a night leaves him or her exhausted the next day. The most common symptom is loud and chronic snoring, as the body is gasping for air. Also,

morning headaches, falling asleep during the day, and high blood pressure can result from sleep apnea. It can be diagnosed by participating in a sleep study, and it is usually treated by the use of a CPAP machine that forces air into the lungs and allows the person to rest fully during sleep.

Right now in this country, 32% of all men and 34% of all women are obese. That’s one-third of both sexes! And what about our children? Approximately 17% of all children in the U.S. aged 2 - 19 are obese. And obese children suffer from the same weight-related health problems... diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea...as adults. There seems to be a direct correlation to income, with one out of seven low-income, preschool-aged children being obese. The highest rate of childhood obesity in the country is in the state of Mississippi, which also has the highest percentage of its population living in poverty. Clearly we have a problem. So, where do we point the finger?

In our super-sized society, where airbrushed models are constantly presented as the ideal image, how do we NOT become neurotic? We’re pulled in two different directions, being told to buy bigger and spend more on the latest delectable delicacy, and then we’re punished when we pack on the pounds. The majority of T.V. commercials and ads are either showing us something that is “sinfully rich and creamy” or asking “Where’s the beef?” Sandwiches now consist of half a cow sitting on an entire loaf of bread that people have to unhinge their jaws like the Alien monster in order to fit it into their mouths. Portions in every restaurant have more than doubled over the years so that the American consumer won’t “feel hungry an hour later” or look at the plate and say, “Is that it?” Sugared drinks and snacks are available everywhere we go. At every turn, we’re encouraged to “indulge ourselves,” to have a healthy appetite, and to “put some meat on our bones,” yet we’re told we’re to blame for our own expanding waistlines. And, the truth be told, once we’ve become aware of the everyday temptations and how this culture embraces gluttony, we do have no one to blame but

ourselves. In America, it’s simply too easy to put on the weight and extremely difficult to take it back off...even as we, in our desperation, embrace the latest fad diets and the newest (still-dangerous!) surgeries to keep us from being able to eat.

So, let’s start off with some basics. A calorie is a unit of energy contained in the foods that your body burns for fuel. If you were to do nothing more strenuous than breathe, your body would still require calories. That’s why we get hungry...hunger is not bad; it’s your body’s way of telling you to throw another log on the fire or the engine is about to grind to a halt. And just so long as that log isn’t a chocolate-covered one loaded with sugar, saturated fats, and high fructose corn syrup, you’ll do just fine. But, let’s say you throw two logs on the fire instead of one. That’s one too many, and your body has to decide what to do with the extra log. That’s where the fat cells come in. Fat cells store the excess calories until they are needed. The problem is that most of the time, we don’t need them. In fact, we continue to take in more calories than we need, and our bodies graciously accommodate all of those excess calories by creating even more fat cells to store them! Another chain in the loop is when we don’t actually need all of that energy because we aren’t running a marathon today. In fact, we aren’t doing anything today besides sitting on the couch, or sitting at our desks, or sitting in our cars. And sitting just doesn’t require that much energy. Where do those excess calories go? Straight to the fat cells.

Now, we all differ as to the amount of energy our bodies require, but let’s say we only need about 1200 calories a day to keep the body engine running and moving. So, while sitting there, we decide to eat a candy bar, say, an Oh Henry! bar, that at 330 calories has as many calories as a Chargrilled Chicken Sandwich from Chick-fil-A. We’ve already consumed 1/4th of our daily allowance of calories. Heaven help us if we actually decide to eat some real food that day! Therefore, the trick to weight loss is to consume fewer calories than



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you need each day, so that everything gets burned, and our bodies will even dip into our fat cell stores and burn some of them off as well.

Of course, nothing is as easy as that. You see, your body has this wonderful little mechanism left over from the days when we were being chased by dinosaurs and had to hold up in a cave for a winter or two. When you eat too few calories, your body goes into starvation mode. In other words, it believes you are hiding out in a cave and have no access to that thing in your home called a refrigerator. And, no matter how many times you tell it, “We’re not starving. Honestly, we just went to the store yesterday!” your body thinks you are a liar, and it will hold onto those fat cells the same way an insect will cling to your windshield, even when you’re going 60 mph. (How do they do that?) Yes, your body will even burn up and destroy your muscles before it will touch a single one of those precious fat cells. And so, you have to trick your body. You have to sneak up on it...no, actually it just involves eating when you are hungry, but eating foods that are low in calories and better for your body, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. And the second part of the equation is to move your body so that it burns off even more of those calories than usual. Find something you enjoy doing, and do it. Whether it’s walking, jogging, swimming, jumping rope, dancing, zumba, following an exercise DVD, or even bellydancing, just get up and move. Because, the very simple solution to losing weight is: Eat less, move more.

But, naturally that’s all easier said than done. We are still a nation of folks who are getting bigger by the minute and more frustrated by the hour. Bookstores are filled with books promising quick and easy weight-loss, delicious fat-free/carb-free/guilt-free recipes, and “new” scientific discoveries about why we are gaining so much weight and can’t seem to get it off. (We eat too much and move too little!) And, believe me, I’m not writing this looking down from my ivory tower. I’m writing this from my couch with a box of my favorite crackers sitting next to me, as I’m thinking about starting my

exercise program tomorrow...again. You see, it’s easy to start, but hard to keep it up. And, in my life, I’ve tried my fair share of the fad diets, from the cabbage soup diet to the grapefruit diet. In fact, as I look at my shelves, I see the titles I’ve bought over the years. There’s “The Adkins Diet Revolution” (extreme low carb, mostly protein; works quickly, but very boring after awhile), “The Okinawa Program” (based on the fact that people living in Okinawa are not obese), “Eat Right For Your Type” (based on the theory that certain foods are either beneficial or harmful for you according to your blood type, A, B, AB, or O), “The Acid-Alkaline Diet for Optimum Health” (balancing pH levels in the body), “The 4-Hour Body” (slow carb), “The Belly Fat Cure” (getting rid of sugar, i.e. carbs), and that’s just from my personal library! Through it all, I’ve discovered a few truths: I don’t live in Okinawa and would have a difficult time eating like Okinawans; my very favorite foods also happen to be bad for my blood type (go figure!); dieting without exercise is an exercise in futility; and carbs taste fantastic! The last two are very important. Carbs are not bad for us, but too much of a good thing is. That’s why, if you really want to lose weight, no matter what the experts say, you have to cut the carbs down. The problem is that it’s very easy to O.D. on carbs. They’re everywhere and in everything, unless you are cooking from scratch and you can control the amount of everything that goes into the dish.

So, exactly what is it we’re shooting for? Optimum health, not being overweight, and definitely not becoming obese. First of all, optimum health and freedom from disease are not the same thing. Take me, for example. The last time I went to the doctor, just a few months ago, I was given a clean bill of health. Everything is still in good working order, and I’ve managed to avoid the diabetes that runs rampant in my family. So far, so good. But, I still haven’t started that exercise program I keep talking about. In fact, I’m sinking deeper into couch potato-hood, and looking at the charts, I’m about one cookie away from being overweight.

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Overweight is defined as a BMI of 25 - 29. BMI is “body mass index,” which measures your percentage of body fat using your height and weight. It’s calculated by multiplying your weight in pounds by 703 and dividing the result by your height in inches squared (inches times inches). Or, you could go to one of several online calculators to figure it out for free. The best one I’ve seen is <http://home.fuse.net/clymer/bmi/> which also calculates your waist-to-height ratio. A BMI of 30 and greater is considered obese. So, once you know where you are, you can begin a healthy regimen of watching what you eat and slipping some form of exercise in there as well.

There are several devices out there designed to help you along the way. There are fat gauges and calipers that measure the percentage of fat you currently carry, digital scales that calculate your BMI, scales to measure portions of food, fat counters to determine the amount of fat and calories in foods, and online diet tools to keep you on the right track.

There is even a new device called the “Bite Counter” that you can wear on your wrist to count the number of times you take a bite. Similar to the way a pedometer works in counting your steps, the Bite Counter measures one specific movement: the rotation of your wrist each time you bring food to your mouth. It’s expected to be on the market in about a year, and will cost around \$100.

When it comes to exercise, there are any number of choices. For those who like the competitiveness and motivation of going to a gym, many gym memberships have become more affordable. Usually you have to sign a contract for a limited time, such as a year, and pay a monthly fee to join, although many of them have specials and discounts at various times throughout the year. But if the thought of exercising in front of people turns you off, you can always start your own home routine. Many department stores carry the

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same exercise equipment...treadmills, stationary bikes, and elliptical machines...that you would find in a gym, and some for a decent price. There are exercise tapes and DVD's galore, from fast-paced aerobic programs, such as the popular Zumba, to slower and more gentle stuff, like yoga, bellydancing, or Callanetics (my personal favorites!). And if you don't want to make the investment in a particular program, it's even possible to rent DVD's from your library for free. There are fitness channels on T.V. that feature different types of exercise programs as well. Walking and jogging can be done alone or with friends. The important thing is to move, preferably 30 - 60 minutes a day.

I can't stress enough the need for us to lose those extra pounds. While there are health dangers in becoming obsessed with weight to the point of being anorexic or bulimic, the more common problem is just the opposite. Visceral fat, which is the type of fat that accumulates around our midsection, is the most dangerous in that it

increases our risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer (especially colon and breast cancer), and premature death. It raises the blood pressure and alters good and bad cholesterol levels. Unfortunately, our stomachs are our body's favorite place to deposit fat, and it builds up around all of our internal organs, pressing against them and damaging them as well. In short, visceral fat is a bad boy and needs to be evicted right away! How can you tell if you have too much? Use a tape measure around your bare stomach right above your hip bone to find your measurement. A waist measurement of 35 inches or more for women and 40 inches or more for men is an unhealthy concentration of belly fat. Losing overall weight through diet and exercise is the only way to reduce the health risks. Spot exercises, such as sit-ups and crunches, have no effect whatsoever on visceral fat. (Wouldn't you know it?) You could have the tight abs of a bodybuilder, but if they're hidden underneath layers of

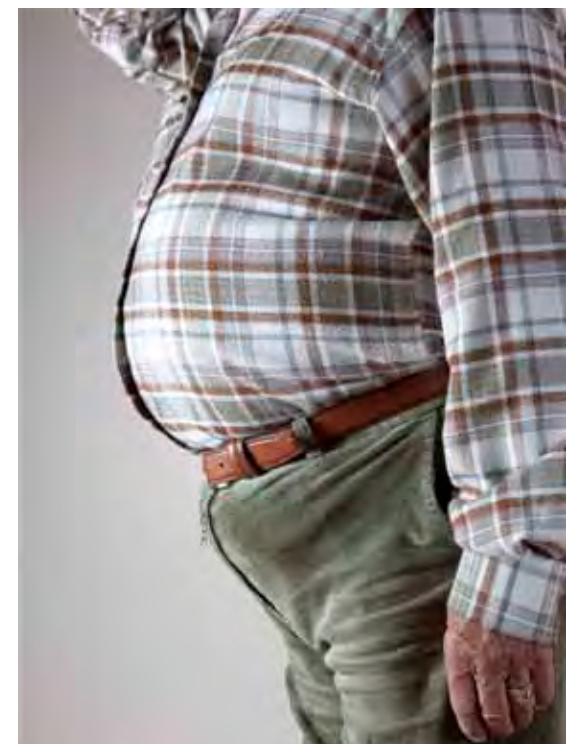
visceral fat, you'll never see them.

However, eating healthy is far more important than simply losing weight, and most medical experts recommend that you shoot for slow weight loss of a pound or two a week instead of the rapid loss promised by fad diets, which is actually just water weight that is gained right back when you come off the diet. You know the drill: cut back on the saturated fats found in red meats and dairy products such as cheese and butter; replace them with lean meats, such as fish and poultry; push the fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts and whole grains. And cut back on the processed foods. It's difficult, because we are a fast-paced society that doesn't have the time or the energy to cook nutritious meals every day. So, we opt for the quick and easy foods, the fast foods, the foods loaded with chemicals, preservatives, fats, and sugars. This is why we're growing as a nation, and not in a good way. This is also why so many organizations and companies have sprung up that are designed to help us eat right. Weight Watchers, NutriSystems, and Jenny Craig all provide us with the encouragement and information to help us make the right decisions as to what to put into our mouths. There are organizations that, for a price, will deliver home-cooked, nutritious meals to our doorstep.

Ultimately, it's our own choices that determine how long we will live and what the quality of that life will be. Do we want to spend the rest of our lives running from doctor to doctor, as different systems in our bodies break down one organ at a time? Visceral fat releases hormones that impair the body's ability to use insulin, causing diabetes. The excess glucose in the body caused by diabetes harms several different organs in the body, eventually causing kidney disease, retinal myopathy (which can lead to blindness), and impaired circulation (which can lead to blood poisoning, gangrene, and amputations). And so on, down the slide into bad health. Some dis-

eases just jump on us, no matter what we do...things like Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, or Bell's palsy. Some diseases are just waiting for us because of a family genetic history, like the tendency toward heart disease or diabetes. But others that could be prevented I believe should be prevented by taking care of the only body you've got...I mean, it's not like there's a spare one hanging in the closet. Even the family tendency toward diabetes could be averted by maintaining a healthy weight, and studies have shown that diabetes can even be reversed by shedding some of those extra pounds. That's always in the back of my mind, as I put the box of crackers away. I don't have to succumb to the disease that has affected so many members of my family. And as long as I can keep my weight down, I just might succeed in avoiding it.

So, once again, I'm renewing my vow to pull out the exercise tapes and start moving my body...today, not tomorrow! And even if I don't do it faithfully every day, at least I'll be doing something to improve my health. After all, every journey begins with a single step. Won't you join me on this journey to better health? And together we can beat this rising tide of obesity and the swelling of our belts. Let's start with that single step, and do this for ourselves and for our children!





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FITNESS

Five Ways to Fight Off Holiday Weight Gain

by Lyle Johnson CPT

The holiday season is here. The problem is the temptation to eat more than normal is here also.

We can't possibly say no to all that great food and drink. So I'm recommending five ways to fight off holiday weight gain.

These methods won't guarantee that you will maintain the same weight in January as they do now. But they may prevent the drastic weight gain and waistline spread that many people experience during this joyous time of year.

Don't stop exercising. For many, this is the busiest time of year. I know how difficult it can be to fit a regular workout routine into a full schedule.

Yet, without a consistent workout program, you may not have the energy to keep up with your responsibilities, and by working out now, you will have more energy later. You have to put exercise high on the list of priorities or it simply won't get done.

Eliminate parking lot frustration. Instead of spending your time searching for the closest parking space, when you're out shopping, park your car farther away. Not only do you save time and frustration in finding a parking spot, but you also will use more energy walking.

Work and play outside. The cooler weather often sends people indoors, where they tend to sit and eat more. You will burn more calories when you are out in the cold

because the body is expending more energy trying to warm up. So, rake the leaves or get out and play with children. When it snows, shovel off the driveway or build a snowman.

Eat before you go the party. Have your regularly scheduled snack such as a cup of soup, a handful of nuts or some yogurt before you leave for the party, when you avoid feeling hungry, you will eat less.

Drink in moderation. – Drinking too much has a damaging effect on your body and your fitness goals. Not only does it reduce the number of fat calories you burn, alcohol can increase your appetite. To give yourself the best chance to develop a sharp mind and body, do not drink and do not do illegal drugs

of any kind. But if you do decide to drink, do yourself and others a favor and don't drink and drive.

And finally, may God Bless your family this Holiday Season and may the meaning of the season be deeper, its friendships stronger and its hopes brighter.

Lyle Johnson is a certified personal trainer and owner of St. Louis based MVP Fitness; he gives workshops and runs MVP Boot Camp. He is also the author of Get Fit 4 Christ. Before engaging in any exercise program, consult with your doctor. The materials and comments discussed in this article are to be considered general information only and may not apply to your particular health situation. For more information, log onto www.getfit4christ.com or www.mvpfitness.net. He can be reached at lyle@mvpfitness.net or call 866.487.4MVP (4687).

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INSPIRATION

Your Hidden Treasure!

by Sherry Pittman



Treasure quickly drums up ideas and thoughts of mysterious, rare, and valuable things. One's thoughts may turn to valuable coins, expensive artwork, exquisite jewelry and or any number of other valuables we hold near and dear to our hearts. When we think of treasure hunts we envision a search involving hints, clues, secret words and passages. There is something about a great treasure hunt that keeps us on the edge of our seat. Will "it" be found after some major challenge, unknown obstacle or even an unexpected detour? Will the pursuer spend more energy or resources to discover the unimaginable prize possession?

Like found treasure, we can be ever so close to it but not know that it's only a button or switch away. Finding our own treasure may be like playing the childhood game where the closer the "searcher" gets to the desired object the more the "supporters" say "hot, hot, hot" or if further away, they say "cold, cold, cold". Sometimes we're right there and we simply walk away with a sense of frustration and perhaps fatigue as we continue to hunt for what was right within our reach.

Suggestions can be made to us in various ways. Sometimes we simply have a hunch. Other times we put together several parts of the puzzle on our own. While at other

times, we "accidentally", bump into the next step in the great discovery. On occasion, there may be something from our past, perhaps an experience in school, at play or at work that predisposes us to knowing just what we need to know at given moment. At times, a leap of faith, literally or symbolically, is needed to move forward in the next phase of obtaining the treasure. There may be old paths that must be traveled. Other paths may seem foreign and at the same time have something familiar about them as well.

We are all born instinctively knowing that something more is out there for us. We naturally want to gravitate towards whatever that desire. However, sometimes we may feel as if we are being endlessly challenged to the point that hope dwindles. In times like these we are most in need of the push, encouragement, help, etc., to keep going. It is during these times that it is most important to continue to walk or stand without wavering, for the forces and powers that are for us are indeed with us. In these moments, we are moved or purposely held back as the stage and its' actors are often changed before our eyes. If we are apprehensive, we may actually shut our eyes, while taking a deep breath, as the formation of the new is being manifested. Waiting in complete and confident trust, is faith at its' best.

It is during this moment that we feel we are hanging in the balances not knowing whether we will open our eyes to the darkest of dark or the brightest of day. Our darkest fears of loss can freeze us as well as standing in wide eyed triumph. But to discover the

treasure within we must be willing to face what is before us.

Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher once said, "One's own self is well hidden from one's own self; of all mines of treasure, one's own is the last to be dug up." It is while we are on this search for the great treasure within us that we are most challenged.

Each of us is born with treasure within. Like following a treasure map to find hidden treasure chests, we need only follow our personal road map to discover where and what our treasure is. Some find and tap into their treasure sooner than others. Others may take all of their life and, sadly, some never take the needed quiet time to hear and discover their own treasure map which is with them along.

But for those who are fortunate enough to quiet themselves to hear the Teacher, they get pass disbelief, ridicule, and self-doubt and are not disappointed but move on to the untold treasure waiting them at the end of their journey. Our Creator wants us to be lead and guided by Him. Ps. 46:10 Be still and know that I am God.

Things of great value are not thrown around to be easily trampled on. It's important to remember that though your treasure may be elusive and mysterious the price is well worth your unimaginable hidden wealth that is waiting your discovery!

Sherry Pittman is a monthly staff writer for the Capital City Courier Newspaper. In addition to public speaking, she hosts two television shows "Heart to Heart" and "House to House." She is a licensed real estate broker and holds a Bachelor of Science in Speech Communications. She can be reached for speaking engagements or comments and questions at spittman@ameritech.net or 217.528.2998.

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ASK SARNIA



Q. When a sister or friend starts going with the 'Ex' of the sister or friend, and then she (i.e., the first girlfriend) gets mad at either or both of them ...why is that? If the person (i.e., the first girlfriend) is no longer interested, which is why they broke up, why can't the sister or friend and the 'Ex' have a chance, especially if they have a lot in common and true feelings for each other? With the shortage of men, I think we need to get past this thing that if you go with my sister or friend you can't date me later.

A. In my opinion, the reason the 'first girlfriend' gets mad is because things about her relationship with the 'Ex' are not as simple as they appear or as simple as explained -- especially depending on who is doing the explaining, how long the relationship lasted and how long ago the relationship ended. The viewpoint of "what had happened" generally is different

for both people 'in' and once 'really out' of the relationship. Although the friend or sister and the 'Ex' may very well seem to be a perfect match, and it is unfortunate that they didn't meet first because things probably would have been different, the question of infidelity (a.k.a., cheating) will definitely haunt the original girlfriend and create trust and character issues within itself. Added to that could be lingering emotional hurts from the past which were never resolved when there are prior experiences with infidelity. Getting "mad" about two people being in a relationship is an emotion like being happy about being in a good relationship -- both conscious and unconscious feeling surface and sometimes anger towards one or both people involved is the result. As people are different, so will be each situation, however, if you are in the sister or friend side or the 'Ex' of this question, I believe that if you put yourself in the place of the original girlfriend you will at least come reasonably close to

answering the question(s) of "why."

Q. I work with a man that is extremely friendly and is always smiling ...and I do mean all-III-II-ways smiling. The situation is that he has buck teeth that are the color of spoiled lemons. I want to tell him to either quit smiling so much or brush his teeth. He creeps me out. I'm tempted to leave some teeth whitening strips at his work station but I won't, only because if I'm found out I could lose my job. I am accepting all recommendations that won't get me fired.

A. My recommendation is to remember or look up a children's story called, "Beauty and the Beast". In short, the story tells about a physically challenged man hoping for a very pretty girl to return his feelings (of affection). At first the girl was totally turned off because of how the man looked-- he "creeped her out". She could not get past his disfigurements. As she allowed the man to

spend time with her, she got to know him. After a while, she found out how 'friendly' and a lot of other 'nice' things this man was and his appearance seemed to change in that he was no longer so "creepy". If the truth be told, she still noticed his physical challenges but they were no longer an obstacle for him getting 'to' her. Although this is probably a situation where the man will never get 'to' you in such a personal way, if you allow yourself to get to know him, you may find out that he too has some good characteristics. Also, you may gain insight on the reason(s) for the discoloration of his teeth, which could be something out of his control such as a medical condition. At least then you would know that if he could he would change the situation ...and possibly is already using teeth whitening strips. Try your best to make lemonade out of those lemons;

Questions may be submitted to asksarnia@yahoo.com

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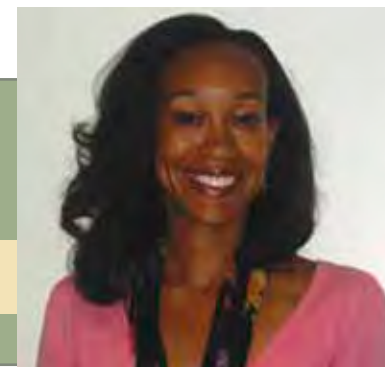


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THE SOUTH AFRICAN "COLOURED" EXPERIENCE:

What It Means to Us as African-Americans

by Jaclyn Peterson



As African-Americans, what images do our minds conjure when we hear the term "coloured"? For the elders in our community, bitter memories of living under Jim Crow laws probably come to mind, but for many of us in America, the term has become antiquated- particularly among our youth. In America the term "Colored", which defined us as a people during the pre-Civil rights era, initially evolved to "Afro-American" signaling our pride amidst the Black power movement of the 1960s and 70s. Most recently, our term of choice is African-American, having adopted the individualistic American way of linking our heritage- specifically unbeknownst to the vast majority of us due to the theft of our ancestors' identities during slavery- with our national identity. Thus, in America, the "Colored" race ceases to exist. However, over three centuries ago, roughly 8000 miles away at the southern tip of our Motherland, another "Coloured" race (whose spelling is telling of its part British heritage) emerged and continues on today. They have a story to tell- not much unlike our own, and understanding their story helps us to better understand ours.

Many of us know a little bit about the history and people of South Africa. We may be aware that it was primarily the British and Dutch who colonized the land in the 17th and 18th centuries. We may be vaguely familiar with some of the indigenous peoples, such as the Zulus, Xhosas, San and Khoi. Those of us who are old enough certainly remember the international sanctions against the nation's racist, White minority ruled apartheid regime during the 1980s and early 90s. As a people, we stood in solidarity alongside our Black South African brothers and sisters, and identified all too well with their

fight for political, social, and economic freedom from the injustices of decades of apartheid rule and the colonial era preceding it. We rallied to free Nelson Mandela from his 27-year political imprisonment for speaking out and calling for change. We cheered on our South African comrades and joined them- if only in spirit- in the common struggle against oppression. In the post-apartheid regime since 1994, we have celebrated the first Black presidents of the new and reformed South Africa, beginning with Mandela himself.

But in the process we have failed altogether to acknowledge another group of people present throughout this history. Our oversight has been neither malicious nor intentional- rather, the culprit is our lack of exposure. In fact, it is highly doubtful that I would even be writing about this topic today if not for the fact that my own mother is Coloured. The South African Coloured experience is an integral component of my personal heritage as an African-American woman, and I am convinced that understanding its implications is critical to all of us if we are to fully embrace our own multi-faceted identity as African-Americans, and excel as a people.

The creation of the South African Coloured race almost mirrors the evolution of the African-American race. The key distinction is that while our African ancestors were forcibly shipped across the Atlantic to America as slaves, it was the British and Dutch who sailed to South Africa. The British brought indentured servants from their various colonies such as India, Malaysia and China; but perhaps more important was whom they did not bring- wives. The ensuing, continual intermingling of cultures created a melting pot of people, who eventually constituted a distinct racial classification within South African apartheid society. The Coloured race

emerged as a stratus between the White and African races, and was afforded limited rights and privileges under apartheid accordingly. Apartheid, which means "apartness" in Afrikaans, one of the nation's official languages which evolved from Dutch, employed a "divide and conquer" strategy to systematically classify, separate and control the nation's non-Whites, who accounted for the overwhelming majority of the population. The history is clear, and we cannot deny that the injustices that Coloureds have endured are incomparable to over a century of absolute degradation and deplorable living conditions of native South Africans. However, South African Coloureds have been dealt a double-edged sword, having borne both the indignity of their allegedly inferior status to Whites and the scorn of their darker-skinned countrymen.

The South African Coloured experience is strikingly comparable to that of our own fellow African-Americans of mixed heritage. A legal system of classifying African-Americans according to features, such as the South African apartheid regime, has never existed in America. However, there's no denying that African-Americans whose features more closely match those of Whites tend to receive preferential treatment in American society, such as higher pay and promotion rates and greater acceptance into White social circles. But these "privileges" come at a price. Often the resulting hostility and rejection by other African-Americans contributes to a sort of identity crisis, leading our brothers and sisters of mixed heritage to feel that they don't belong in either society. Not surprisingly, when South African Coloureds emigrate to the U.S., they often confront a similar dilemma.

Despite their being distinguished from the native South Africans to whom we as African-Americans auto-

matically tend to relate, the Coloured race much more closely mirrors our own, particularly in recent years. You need only to look around you at the grocery store, parks, churches and schools to see that the number of biracial and multi-racial children in our community today is unprecedented. Happily, many of these children are the product of loving, interracial marriages; however, a staggering number are being raised by single White mothers or other White family members. For these children especially it is critical that in addition to a loving home life, they feel included and embraced by African-American society. The simple truth is that regardless of how these children may perceive themselves, America perceives them as African-American. As such, they will need to be prepared to face and equipped to surmount the challenges confronting our people, and they need our support.

Struggles amongst our own people reflected by the infamous "paper bag test", classifying "good" versus "nappy" hair, and accusations of not "being Black enough" to those of us who excel academically, dress respectably, and speak articulately, further aggravate the problem. The world at large is becoming increasingly heterogeneous, and the differences among us as a people are increasing in direct proportion. Rather than continue to engage in the self-defeating patterns of intra-racial jealousy, sabotage and exclusion, we must recognize our growing diversity as our strength. Just as with South African Coloureds, our variety reflects our beauty and depth. We must re-evaluate what it means to be African-American today and broaden our acceptance of each other. As we focus on uplifting and celebrating all of our brothers and sisters, we empower ourselves to bridge the gaps that divide us, and create a legacy of unity to pass onto our children.

OUR OPINION:

Hoogland Campaign a Worthy Cause



“THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE STATE-JOURNAL REGISTER ON NOVEMBER 13. WE AGREE WITH IT, WHICH IS WHY WE’RE PUBLISHING IT HERE.”

The effort to transform the former Masonic Temple on South Sixth Street into what is now the Hoogland Center for the Arts was nothing less than Herculean.

The same can be said of the facility’s effort to pay its bills in the eight years since it opened. Two years after mounting a successful fundraising effort aimed at keeping mortgage payments current going into 2010, the Hoogland again has started a campaign to keep up on its mortgage payments. The difference this time is the facility has

an opportunity to secure its financial well-being into perpetuity. It’s trying to raise \$1.2 million by year’s end to earn an anonymous donor’s pledge of \$1.3 million in matching funds. That would pay off the center’s \$2.5 million mortgage, which currently costs \$25,000 a month.

For more than a decade, this page has been a strong proponent of the project that became the Hoogland Center for the Arts. Despite the financial bumps, it has exceeded our expectations as a performing arts and cultural center. Success in the current fundraising campaign would carry benefits for generations of performers, artists and patrons for years to come.

It’s a worthwhile effort that deserves this community’s support.

From the initial purchase of the building in early 2001 to its

renovation into a modern arts facility to its formal dedication in 2003, the project faced and overcame financial and logistical obstacles. Converting a building constructed largely in 1909 into a state-of-the-art performing and visual arts center nearly a century later is no small task. It got done thanks to a mix of donor generosity, state grant funding and bonding (some \$2 million in economic development bonds from Sangamon County, purchased by Illinois National Bank).

For downtown Springfield and for performing arts groups from the Illinois Youth Symphony to Springfield Theatre Centre, there arguably has been no greater enhancement in the past decade (perhaps the past century) than the development of the Hoogland. Board president Tom Appleton is correct when he calls the

center “Springfield’s living room.”

Despite its value to downtown, funds from the downtown tax increment financing district can’t be used to make mortgage payments, Appleton notes. Raising rental fees for resident groups also is not an option, he says, because groups like the youth symphony and Springfield Ballet Company already operate on limited budgets. “If this was a commercial enterprise, they’re not even coming close to what they’d be paying,” Appleton said. “But this is not a commercial enterprise.” Indeed. Rents prohibitive to nonprofit groups would defeat the center’s very purpose.

Also, the use of economic development bonds means refinancing is not a viable option. The bonds automatically adjust to market interest rates, so there would be no interest savings, and spreading out the loan into the future could expose the center to higher interest rates down the road.

We don’t think the Hoogland is in danger of locking its doors any time soon. After all, no bank wants to own a building that only can be used as a public performing arts center. But donating to the current fundraising effort, we believe, is a sound investment in Springfield’s cultural future that would all but ensure its doors stay open for good.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

Contact Fred Jarosz, executive director, Hoogland Center for the Arts, 420 S. Sixth St. The phone number is 523-2787.



EDITORIAL

The College Bubble

by James Clingman

A quiet economic storm, or more likely a hurricane, has been brewing for several years now, and it's gaining more strength every day. After the Dot. Com bubble burst in the early 1990's, we were shocked. Then along came the housing bubble and folks started losing their primary assets: Their homes. Black people lost more than \$1 trillion in wealth when housing values dropped. Yes, it was the result of dishonesty and greed among borrowers and lenders alike, but the vast majority of us are suffering from it nevertheless. Well, it looks like the next bubble to burst will be the college bubble.

Currently college debt is nearly \$1 trillion, and has "outpaced credit card debt for the first time," according to a New York Times article written by Tamar Lewin (April 2011). Unlike credit card debt, however, college loan debt cannot be discharged by bankruptcy. Can you imagine current college students, twenty or thirty years from now, trying to pay off their college loans while at the same time trying to pay for their children's college education? Unless those parents write a best-selling book and end up in the White House, like the Obama's did after accumulating

an estimated \$120,000 in college debt, that will likely be the case.

College grads have an average of \$25,000 in debt when they begin looking for jobs that do not exist. Starting salaries for college grads continue to fall, with Liberal Arts degrees being the worst, dropping 8.9% between 2009 and 2010 to \$33,500. Who do you think has the most Liberal Arts degrees? Who do you think has the most need for college loans?

Black folks are at the bottom of most categories when it comes to employment, income, and wealth; college degrees are declining in value while tuitions are skyrocketing in price. This convergence of economic realities does not bode well for us when the college bubble bursts. So what do we do?

First of all, we must get more involved with our children's education at an early age. We have turned our youth over to someone else to educate, or babysit in some cases, and now we are paying dearly for their lack of information, inferior education,

and excessive dropout rates – not to mention their incarceration rates. Parents are the primary educators of their children – at least they should be. Instill in them the value of doing

their very best in school, from elementary through high school. It's too late to do that when, and if, they reach the 10th or 11th grade.

Second, we must start preparing them early for their SAT and ACT tests, not just those graduation tests

many are being taught. Rather than being taught how to learn, by using their critical thinking and analytical skills, our children are being taught how to pass a graduation test that, in many cases, only makes the school system look good and receive more funding. Meanwhile, the students are faced with entering college or the workforce ill-equipped to deal with the financial issues of today's dog-eat-dog world. ACT and SAT scores carry a lot of weight when it comes to scholarship awards and acceptance to various universities.

Finally, start searching for scholarships early, especially those offered in your local area. Become familiar with what is offered from various organizations and the criteria to which students must adhere to receive scholarships. Apply for as many that relate to your child's field of endeavor. There are many scholarships that are left untapped, especially by Black students who simply did not know about them or procrastinated and missed the deadlines. So get started now.

Of course, it's always best to start saving some money, no matter how little you have to put aside, because the college bubble will burst, tuition costs will continue to rise, jobs will continue to disappear, and Black folks, as far as we can see, will continue to lag behind when it comes to economic empowerment in this country.

As for jobs and business opportunities for our young people when they graduate from college, don't forget about the "BRIC" countries, Brazil, Russia, India, and China. I don't know about you, but I have recommended Brazil to my daughter, who is a freshman at Howard University. Portuguese, anyone?



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