# The Victim Mentality of Black Americans

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## It is Time for Black Americans to Cease Acting Like Victims- The Game Has Been Played Out

It is a cry of many Black Americans that ,"We have not yet reached the Promised Land." and "When will we reach our Promised Land." Guess what? This is the 21st century and those mantras are tired and worn out. We Black Americans must create our Promised Land through high intellectual and academic achievement in addition to a prodigious work ethic.

Sadly, many Black Americans believe that they need a savior to help them to achieve educational and socioeconomic parity. I heard that many Black Americans state that they voted for Barack Obama to be President of the United States solely because he is Black. A lot of Black Americans pinned all of their hopes and dreams on President Obama, praying and hoping that he would get them out of a hopelessly dire socioeconomic situation and into a more affluent lifestyle. Now many Black Americans are displeased with President Obama because they believed that he did not create for them the housing and jobs that he promised that he would create.

Many Black Americans contend that they are blameless for the educational and socioeconomic morass they are in. This belief and ideology are not only prevalent among lower socioeconomic classes of Black Americans but also among a few middle and upper middle socioeconomic classes of Black Americans. For example, one maternal cousin once removed, who has a Master's Degree in Psychology and is in a high-level administrative position, steadfastly maintain that "the man" is holding "us brother/sisters back".

Every Saturday morning in my area(Harlem) without fail, in a park opposite that of my apartment complex, there are a group of Black Americans led by the Reverend Al Sharpton shouting repeatedly, " No justice, no peace!" as if only doing this will obtain them quality education, housing, and job equality. Many Black Americans want to be rescued. It seems that they are waiting for a Great Savior to come to Earth and make everything copacetic.

Each time I go into the African-American section of Barnes & Nobles and any other book store, 75% of the books regarding the Black American cultural experience are about Black victimology and 25% of the books are about Black achievement, excellence, and self-empowerment. Many of the subjects pertaining to Black American culture on some Black-made DVDs and CDs stress Black victimology and how we are oppressed by the enemy. Seldom do I find any Black-made DVDs and CDs stressing Black education, achievement, empowerment and how to be socioeconomically successful. Finding a book on Black American culture that is not imbued with the victimization mentality is analogous to finding a needle in a haystack.

Yes, there are books by noted authors Thomas Sowell and Larry Elders, J.D.; the esteemed Dr. John WcWhorter who wrote two outstanding books addressing and confronting Black American Victimology, LOSING THE RACE and WINNING THE RACE; Ron Christie, J.D. , author of ACTING WHITE, THE CURIOUS HISTORY OF A RACIAL SLUR among several Black American authors who decide to address the truth about the Black American culture of victimology. Even Black American comedians are getting on the bandwagon of "poor, downtrodden me!" A seasoned veteran Black American comedian and writer is known to be very vitriolic towards Caucasians, incessantly blaming them for the oppression of Black people. This comedian always says that Black people do not have a chance in America, adding that successful Blacks are not true Blacks!

Yes, there is racism in America against all people of color(Blacks, Native Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Pacific peoples. That is a given. However, there are people of color who have attained immense academic and socioeconomic success in spite of American racism. They refuse to permit racism to deter them from achieving academic and socioeconomic success.

Many Black American parents, especially in the lower socioeconomic classes, inculcate their children to not to dream too big, not to have high goals, to generally be content with mediocrity and/or just getting by. Many Black American children in the school system deride Black American children who are smart as nerds and unpopular. Oftentimes these smart and intelligent Black American children are bullied by the less smart Black American children who believe that education and school is uncool and that the street life is cooler. These underachieving Black American students are the same students who glorify the hip hop and thug culture.

There is an underlying anti-intellectualism in the Black American community. I remembered in my elementary school, all of the honor students were derided by the less achieving students. I further recalled that when a teacher stated that I was a borderline genius, the classmate afterwards approached me, stating that I was a borderline nut.

I have heard Black American parents, who are seemingly well educated, assert that socialization is the most important thing in their children's lives. These parents placed intellectual and academic achievement second and third in their children's lives. There is one mother of two daughters, who was my mother's acquaintance, bragging about her oldest daughter's popularity in school although her daughter was a C student and deriding her youngest daughter, an A student, for being an egghead and a deadhead with no outside interests. This mother lamented that all her youngest daughter wanted to do was to study and read. The mother asserted that her daughter was "withdrawn". A renowned actress/singer also emphasized that her children knew how to socialize and make friends , never once did she mention their academic achievements.

Tom Burrell, Black American author of BRAINWASHED: CHALLENGING THE MYTH OF BLACK INFERIORITY asserted that Black American students are the worst students in the country. Many Black American leaders cited institutional racism and poor socioeconomic living conditions. According to the Education Trust, only a minute 12% of Black American fourth graders were reading at their grade level and beyond; however, an abysmal 61% of Black American fourth graders lacked rudimentary reading skills.

Now let us look at the racism factor. To reiterate, yes there is institutionalized racism in this society not only against Blacks but all people of color. However, studies authenticate that Black students in Caribbean and African families outachieve Black American students in the academic arena. A second study showed that middle and upper middle class Black American high school students had similar SAT scores to lower socioeconomic class Caucasians. Regarding socioeconomic class, it has been substantiated that Asians in poor neighborhoods are high academic achievers and score high on SAT tests. So the variables of race and socioeconomic classes are declared invalid. Now, what is the underlying factor which is a determinant of the academic underachievement of the Black American student?

Many Black students are told by their parents, relatives, and peers that they are performing well "as long as they pass the course." In the Black American student milieu, they are told that education is for nerds and to "stay real/Black" and "not to act white" i.e. being a high academic achiever. In the Black American student milieu, the high achieving Black American student is often stigmatized, ostracized, and/or worse by the lower achieving Black American student. In many Black American families, intellectualism and academic achievement is not highly prized.

A noted talk show host stated that during her childhood her mother would force her to go outside to play because she was reading too much. The same thing happened to me. During my summers spent with my maternal grandmother in Wellford, South Carolina, two of my maternal aunts tried to snatch books from me and trying to force me to play outside, stating that I was an abnormal child. While I was in high school, a third maternal aunt laughed at and derided me for reading a complex, linguistics book for pure pleasure. Those three maternal aunts have never read a book in their lives and detested reading. Their main passion was mindless gossip and reading trashy magazines.

Many people in the Black American culture value being "real" over intellectual acumen. As one famous comedian stated that many Black Americans value being "real", yes real stupid. Black Americans who adopt "the culture of stupidity" are only doing themselves a severe disservice. Many Black Americans view Black Americans who speak correct English as acting white. Some Black Americans consider Ebonics a certified language which it is not. I remember that one of the disciplines at my college was Black English. Yes, Black English! The majority of the students who studied this baseless and inane subject were Black American students from the lower socioeconomic classes who were given special admission to the college.

Many Black Americans have the culture of poverty mentality. They believe in living totally in the present and do not believe in planning for their future. I remember when I first started work after college, there were clerks who played the numbers and spent almost all of their paychecks on payday. By the beginning of the next week, they asked people to loan them money. This was beyond ridiculous. They spent money as if there was no tomorrow and they never financially planned for their futures. They constantly complained about making ends meet yet none of them wanted to pursue any further education and career advancement.

The vast majority of the clerks were Black Americans who either had a high school education or who did not finish high school. When I asked them,"Why don't you finish high school and/or start attending college?.", they just looked at me nonplussed and began laughing at me. They continued to be miserable regarding their educational, job, and socioeconomic situation; however, they elected to remain passive regarding their lifestyles.

They believed that they were not in charge of their destiny and accepted what life generally meted out to them. However, these were the same clerks who become vehemently jealous when another clerk of Black Trinidadian descent took several civil service tests, passed, and become a very highly placed administrator. This Black Trinidadian clerk also attended college at night, subsequently obtaining a Masters Degree in Human Services.

When I was a supervisor at another civil service agency, there was a Black American clerk who took several civil service tests and passed. The other clerks, also Black Americans, were envious of her and started to cause her grief. They sabotaged her work, often discarding it or placing it in another area. This caused her to be written up by the Head Supervisor who was Irish American. These clerks also lied on this ambitious clerk but nevertheless, she eventually obtained a higher job at another agency and is currently a top level administrator. Many Black Americans believe that they are victims deserving of nothing so much that they believe that every Black person should be in the same boat as they are. Any Black person who dares to succeed is viewed as a threat to Black American victimology collective consensus.

Many Black Americans are victims of passive breeding. This means that some Black American couples have more children than they can possibly care for psychological and emotionally, especially socioeconomically. There is a higher percentage of Black impoverished families with four or more children than the national average. Studies have confirmed that children born into large families receive less individualized care from their parents, receive worse nutrition, medical, and dental care, are not as exposed to cultural and intellectual activities, and receive less education than children born into small families. Studies further show that large families are more likely to be subsidized from outside sources than small families. One Black American woman whose husband has a menial job making in the very low five figures stated to a friend on the bus," So what if she could not afford to adequate care for her nine children. We are used to being poor and besides the government will take care of us."

The schools in many Black American communities are often of poor academic quality because many lower socioeconomic class Black American parents are passive regarding interfacing with teachers. In many Black American communities, especially lower socioeconomic ones, many parents believe that they are not responsible for their children's education, asserting that it is the teacher's job to educate and to teach them. One teacher friend reported to me that in many schools in the inner city, many Black American parents do not participate in PTA meetings and related academic meetings regarding how to improve their schools. He added that these parents seldom, if ever, help their children with their homework.

He related an example to me, " One first grader was a C- minus student. I wanted to have a meeting with the parents as the first grader was only able to read and write at a very rudimentary level." He added that the first grader's parents stated that they did not care and it was his job as a teacher to improve their child's grades, not them. Dr. Cosby was correct in stating that the Black American culture is a culture of victimology that has to stop if Black Americans want to academically and economically succeed.

1. Name two (2) problems that this author sees wrong with the current mentality of POC.

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1. Were you aware of these problems before reading this article? If you were, how did you find out? If this was news to you, what came as a surprise to you?

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1. This author uses elements of the past, present, *and* future to make their point. Write down an example of each from the reading.

Past: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Present:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Future: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How was the author’s point strengthened by using elements of past, present, and future in one article? How were they able to better communicate their opinions?

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