

THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN IN THE BLACK LIBERATION STRUGGLE

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When a woman approaches and/or reaches her thirth year, she begins to analyse her past experiences, take a more realistic view of life, and most importantly, she begins to plan what her life will look like over the next few years. It's like a new revelation when she recognizes the importance of being in control of her life, able to make her own decisions, and being able to say "NO". Taking control of your own life is somewhat a difficult thing to accomplish especially when we often times as women allow others to have complete charge of our comings and goings, our decision making, our thinking processes and so many other things of importance in our lives. Perhaps the one thing that is common to many women/sisters is our inability to say No to someone we care about without feeling guilty about it.

Since there are lots of expectations placed upon us by all segements of society, particularly our men, one common expectation that is usually honour by many women is that of engaging in lovemaking just because someone asks you to do it. Having experience this very same type thing in my own life, I felt I could share these concerns with other sisters. The question here is not so much the whys of it all, but what can be done to begin to address these expectations and what our responses need be if, in fact, we are serious about the "Role of the African Women in the <sup>Black</sup> Liberation Struggle". One thing is sure, that regardless of the attitudes, expectations, and stigma attached to the roles of women in this society, we as sisters should definitely have some input in the decisions that are made affecting our lives. In restropect, I remember having very good feelings about this brother that I was seeing regularly. Our relationship was intended to be a friendly, social and fun like interaction, however my actions made the difference. He had asked me several times to get down with him and I was a little hesistant, especially since I was concerned about what other people would think. At any rate, we did make love and for a long time I questioned myself as to why. Oh, I thought of a lot of excuses like: I must have really wanted to anyway but was trying to be hard to get; or I did it because he asked me to; or because I didn't want to hurt his feelings ; or it's okay because all my other friends are doing it; or nobody will know but us; or it's okay because no one will be hurt...etc...The list grew long and I began to feel very guilty about it, especially since I thought someone in my family would learn about this affair.

All of us can somewhat identify with that , since we have been trained so thoroughly to , not get involved in sex unless we are married. Later, though, the real reason for my actions came to me : simply, I didn't have the guts to say NO. Had I been steadfast in my decision making at that time, neither one of us would have been hurt by that experience. How to say NO! What does it mean to refuse a person you like, what does it mean to say no to someone you like? Well, the person could think that you were being selfish, or it's a possibility that you would not be friends anymore, or worst yet, the person could get angry and not speak to you anymore and what's more, the person could talk about you like a dog. I have known situations where sisters have refused and still their name was in the mud. However, we could go on and on to list other possibilities, but one thing is for sure, we don't want any of these things to happen. Sisters are always trying to please someone at the expense of not pleasing ourselves. Because we are taught to give in, reach out, never question, and to accept everyone, we often times end up at the short end of a relationship in which we usually take the blame, and in many cases much of what happens has to do with our inability to say NO. Yes, I do believe that it was my fault that the brother became more attached to me and assumed that I wanted to make love. It was on me because I did not regard myself or the brother enough to say no. As I later learned that had I kept our relationship on a "brother-sister level" we would have had an even fuller more communal like relationship. I learned that when we allow the physical attraction to outweigh the spiritual attraction, that we as sisters can cause confusion and mislead a relationship. Our physical involvement led the brother to believe that I felt closer to him and that I was his woman on that basis. That, of, course, meant that he had some say over my comings and goings, over my relationships with other people and he felt that I had made a commitment to him. This is very common thing especially for sisters and brothers because we all take the physical thing more seriously that we truly realize. So many people have been killed over the very thing that I just described and will continue unless we as sisters begin to reaccess the nature of our physical, mental and spiritual relationships with our brothers. And, unless we are able to assume the full responsibility and/or consequences for our actions, there will be, not liberation struggle, just a

*Consequences*

continuation of relationship struggles. Understanding the core foundation of any nation is it's people, then we must also understand what that simply means.

At the base of developing growing and healthy <sup>nations</sup>, sisters and brothers must have even tighter relationships with each other. These relationships must be based on mutual trust, sister-brother hood, and least of all on our physical attractions to one another. The Black Liberation Struggle has no room for <sup>negative</sup> type of activities particularly since we have clearly seen the negative consequences that it has brought forth. So many relationships break up because either the sister or brother has decided to involve themselves in an outside physical relationship. So many sisters and brothers have been hospitalized because the emotional stress and strain involved in accepting this happening is overwhelming. The state hospitals are filled with our people who just could nor bear the pain. So many of our sisters and brothers have been murdered because our partner could not deal with the fact that their love one had chosen another person to get down with. <sup>The prisons are filled with our sisters and brothers.</sup> So many of our sisters and brothers are learning to hate each other, not trust each other and are refusing to establish relationships because of the fear that the same thing will happen again. When will we stop it? When will we focus our energies on builing families for our nation instead of having a good time with our best friend's woman or man. When will we realize that this is exactly the plan of the man? See, the man knows that it takes two to tango. He knows that as long as we get involved in the physical attractions that that will keep our brothers and sisters fighting amongst ourselves, and he will never have to lift a finger to do anything to us...we will do it to ourselves. <sup>Joseph</sup> How can we call each other sister and brother when we go around sleeping with our sister and brother. What can be done about this age old problem? How can we struggle when we are so busy making love and fighting about it?

First we must begin to relate to each other truly as sisters and brothers. After all, you do not sleep with your sister or brother outside of the defined relationship that you have established with another sister or brother. By this I mean that if you have said that John is your man, then you disciplined yourself such that you do not sleep outside with other brothers... you do not tempt other brothers with the way in which you dress... and you make it clear that you are

My aunt use to say that the devil gets a ~~great~~ Kick out of separating a mother and daughter, a father and his son, a sister and brother. I used to hear her say that.

his women. Sisters can bring about the necessary change for our Role in Black Liberation Struggle is indeed the most important...because we have the ultimate controls....If we don't say yes, nothing would happen; unless of course we were raped or something like that. In other words when we begin to respect ourselves as more than a body but a human with a mind and spirit, you will be amazed at the difference in the behavior of our brothers towards us. Brothers will then be forced to check out their attitudes and behaviour and will begin to put the energy expended on, <sup>developing multiple relationships</sup> into the struggle. Now some brothers might not like what is being said here, but remember this is a woman's perspective and many of these ideas come out of my own experiences as a woman. Many of the sisters may not like what is being said, but do remember that I am too a woman with some good and bad experiences in my past. I am not ashamed of some of the things that I have done, but one thing is for sure I do not intend to continue to make the same mistakes. I learned the hard way that we don't always get what we want, but we can at least make our goals those which are realistic and attainable. I mean that if we see a brother that we want and that brother is already taken, then we must say no to our primitive attractions and focus a goal that is okay for us to pursue, AND TRULY BECOME HIS SISTER, NOT LOVER!

Another thing that can be done is that if a brother wants more than one woman, we as sisters must be sure that he is able to assume the responsibility of that extra relationship. The pressure involved in maintaining one relationship is indeed great, but imagine what it is like to have two or three relationships. We can help our brothers by not allowing them to involve themselves with us by dealing with our responsibility to the building of the nation, the training to the children and the importance of being truthful with everyone involved. Insist that you have an opportunity to speak with the other sisters involved so that the two or three of you can decide exactly what role you intend to play in this communal family. Because that is exactly what is being asked for... a communal family.. If every one knows about everyone and the roles are clear about the family, the children and the nation, then more power to the <sup>developing</sup> relationships. But if this is not the case and the brother is unable to provide some type of leadership, honesty, and truth in the relationship with all the sisters involved, then he should be dealt with. He cannot afford to have this type of pressure on

on him, the children cannot afford to have this type of pressure on them and ~~We~~ cannot afford to have this type of pressure on ~~us~~ because it will interfere with ~~our~~ ability to perform those things necessary to the survival of the total family. Survival of the family should be the first focus for us as sister in our struggle for liberation. Sisters, ~~We~~ can bring about change, ~~We~~ can truly become the developers and builders of the nation and more importantly, ~~We~~ will grow stronger in ~~our~~ will to say NO to those things that are detrimental to our development of the African baby, man and woman, sister and brother, family and community and the nation .

WE must remember that until we are able to say NO to these things that are dangerous to our well being and the destruction of our families, we will never come from under the power and influences of the Man. Until we as sisters become self determined in our effort to fulfill our goals, then we will be a lost nation, our children will be ruined and our men will continue to be kicked in the but by white supremacy. We must never forget that it was the whole thing of sex that got us where we are today . The way the white <sup>Man</sup> used sex and physical bodies to degrade us, subdue us and involve us in his negative behavior is indeed a serious crime against humanity. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO CONTINUE TO DISRESPECT OURSELVES, OUR MEN AND OUR CHILDREN by doing what the man had prescribed for us to do. We must be accountable and make each other accountable to our struggle. WE MUST SAY NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN IN THE BLACK LIBERATION STRUGGLE IS TO SAY NO TO THE ONGOING INJUSTICES THAT WE PERPETUATE AGAINST OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS.