

AFTERWORD

Progressive teacher and author Richard Clay, begins the first chapter of his book, "Raised Wrong, Educated Worse," with a series of questions raised about Black boys:

*What is wrong with so many Black boys?
Who is raising them to be so disrespectful?
Why do they have such little regard for
school and the entire educational process?
Why are they so damn bad?"*

Brother Clay, throughout his book adequately provides readers with insightful answers to these questions. Clay frankly tells us through social process analysis, that troubled young Black boys are a product of being raised wrong and educated worse.

These troubled young Brothers ranging from adolescence to young adults; who are rudely bravao, talk loud with profanity, listen to rap music, wear sagging pants, carry guns, gang-bang, write graffiti, who use and sell drugs, have been abandoned.

From my perspective, there is a prevailing attitude in Black communities nationwide that troubled young Black males cannot be taught, developed, or saved. This disregard has only insulated their troubling behaviors, and has caused attitudinal inbreeding among them.

It is my contention that some of the obnoxious behavior exhibited by troubled young Black males is much deeper than uninhibited youthful expressions, oppositional conduct, and reactionary masculinity. It is a demand to be noticed, that they can no longer be overlooked. It is a way

of getting our attention, albeit negatively, their need to be recognized and helped.

The combination of a contemptuous and fearful attitude towards troubled young Black males has resulted in families, communities, churches, schools, human service agencies, and municipalities neglecting their psychosocial issues.

This disgust and phobia leads to stereotyping and the scapegoating of troubled young Black males, wrongfully blaming them for all the communities' woes; creating an *'us against them'* attitude.

With Black communities offering troubled young Black males with culturally irrelevant schooling, few employment opportunities, and social services; they feel slighted and alienated. Until our communities offer developmental resources for them, their frustrations and desperation will exhibit itself increasingly in forms of drugs, gangs, crimes, violence, murders, and prison sentences.

From experience, I know the self-defeating beliefs and behaviors of troubled young Black males can change for the better if they are challenged by genuine Black people who understand and care.

Since teachers are primary sources that make judgments about troubled young Black male students as learners, and about their potential to be successful in classrooms; and because many troubled Black boys come from dysfunctional homes and community environments, teachers may well be the only competent and caring adults with whom they have regular contact.

Because of a lack of empathy and culturally relevant support services to address troubled Black males' emotional and social needs, too many of them become

disconnected from middle schools and high schools. Too many educators lack the understanding of the clear and direct connection between troubled young Black males' culture and life circumstances, and their interest or ability to participate in any meaningful way in the school's instructional or other programs.

School administrators, counselors, social workers, security personnel, classroom teachers, and parents too, can't be expected to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of troubled young Black males if they are ignorant of Black youth hip-hop culture.

Most teachers are ignorant of these cultural influences; they are culturally incompetent and insensitive to the needs of troubled young Black males who are at-risk. As a quick fix, too many of these troubled boys are characterized by low expectations and receive prejudicial treatment; they are labeled with behavioral disorders, placed in special education classes, or suspended from school.

With a high school non-graduation rate of 60%, with the increase of juvenile offenses among troubled young Black males, many now being tried as adults; there is an urgency to use culturally specific innovative approaches to save these at-risk boys.

The crisis of troubled young Black males is an emergency!! We can no longer view them from a deficit perspective, instead of building on their strengths.

Twenty years ago, Jwanza Kunjufu wrote his classic book on troubled young Black males, "*Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys*," warning us then of the crisis Black boys faced in school and the Black community's educational intervention response had been woefully inadequate.

Hopefully, the Black community will respond adequately to Richard Clay's excellent book, "Raised Wrong, Educated Worse," which provides us with a culturally relevant perspective and prescriptions to increase our understanding of how to specifically and effectively teach and develop troubled young Black males.

Kenny Anderson, Author
"Targets of Oppression"
targetsofoppression@yahoo.com
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