



“Between The Lines” **Anthony Asadullah Samad**

50 Solutions To “The Black Dilemma” **(Part II in a Five Part Series)**

Central to solving any problems in the collective black community is correcting the mental and physical state of Black America. The figurative state of Black America is reflective of literal state of Black America’s health and mindset, both of which that causes us to think and act in ways that are counter-productive, at best, or destructive to the notion of unity in our communities. It is time for us to admit the black people, in their current condition, are every bit as sick, physically and mentality, as the forces that created our societal circumstances.

If you want to lay it at the feet of “the White Man,” then so be it. He certainly has done (and continues to do) his share. But I’m not so sure we can blame the white man for all our problems anymore. For instance, the white man doesn’t make us over-eat to the point that obesity has become a pandemic in the black community. With the average black man 20 pounds overweight and the average dress of a black women being a size 22, can we really say the white man is making us eat much of the “slave foods” (truly a vestige of slavery when we ate the scraps from the master’s table) that have now become the “delicacies” we call “Soul Food? Does the white man make us kill ourselves in the streets of America to the tune of close to 100,000 over the last 20 years? Does the white man make us sell dope to our people, or leave our women, or beat our seniors, and I can go on and on.... The argument could be made that racial circumstance makes us “do what we have to do to survive” or make us so “frustrated” that we turn on ourselves. The response to that, of course, would be, “Isn’t that part of the plan? Genocide is genocide, whether it’s orchestrated or self-inflicted. The point is the black “mindset” must be adjusted for us to fight that fight, and our health must become our wealth to the point of where we value it more than the things we kill ourselves over. That being said, some of our solutions must address our health status. Here goes;

Solution 11: Admit that most black people need some kind of counseling to exorcise themselves from the demons that centuries of racial hate (white on black and black on black) has produced. Black America has serious self-esteem problems that, even when we succeed, cause many of us to hate each other and separate from the condition of the masses of our people. We can’t run from each other, and help each other at the same time. Nor can we ignore the condition of the masses. Nor can we wash the black off. None of us can escape the condition of the least of us.

Solution 12: Stop hatin’ on each other. Jealousy keeps us suspicious of each other, and envy is the mother of murder. Self-hate is environment under which our enemy operates, and confuses us to who our real enemy is. As long as black people are hatin’ and killing on each other, we cannot see the enemy from without due to the confusion caused by the enemy within.

Solution 13: It is time for black men and black women to call a truce. All black men are not triflin’ and all black women are not mean and evil. The dysfunction of the family that now has the new “black family” being 59% single female-headed households stems from the dysfunction of the black male-female relationship. The black community has lost its balance because the black family has lost its balance. We have to restore the black family unit where both men and women are present. Black relationships don’t have to be traditional to be balanced, but every household must be covered. Whether they are men-women, gay-lesbian, man-sharing, women-sharing, whatever they are, black men and women cannot raise a community

distrusting/fighting each other.

Solution 14: We must become a community that raises our children again. We can't leave it to just the child's parent. When we see children do wrong, the community must correct them in the absence of their parents. Parents must give permission for the community to correct their child. And when their parents don't know right from wrong, the community must embrace the fatherless and motherless child. "It takes a village to raise a child" must become more than a saying.

Solution 15: We must restore a position of prestige to our seniors where they can pass the best of our history to us, and help guide us through this storm. No race can survive without tapping into the wisdom of its elders. Young men for war, old men for guidance. Young men don't get to be old without guidance. Our community mothers must teach our young ladies how to be women—not hoes, not b*tches, not rumpshakers, not shooters—women. We need the guidance of our elders.

Solution 16: We must change our dietary habits to extend our lives. How can we say we're no longer slaves, but continue to eat slave foods that put African Americans at the top of every major health affliction; heart disease, hypertension/strokes, diabetes and certain cancers. The common denominator is our obesity. Blacks must eat less, and eat right to eliminate race health disparities. Then we must exercise regularly. Good health is the first step to black recovery.

Solution 17: We must eliminate stress from our lives. Stress complicates our poor health status. Stress relief comes in many forms, from prayer to meditation, to exercise to soothing music. We must find our quiet space where mind, body and spirit can come together and guide us in a constructive manner. Stress is the silent killer amongst us and makes us intolerant of each other.

Solution 18: Find a way to make a difference. Not just by writing a check, or having your job buy a table to the local black organization chicken dinner. Give time, money and resources to, at least, one activity or organization that is really making a difference. We can feed a child for a day, or teach a child to fish where they can feed themselves for life. The state of our communities are what they are because not enough of us do our part. If we spend as much time helping people as we spend fighting for positions of recognition in our social organizations, all our problems would be solved. It's time to end tokenism. Each one, reach one, teach one, then save one. That's what we used to do. If all of us just saved one...we could save them all. It's better to be heard in private than to be seen in public.

Solution 19: Stop making excuses for why we can't do anything "as a people." Because past efforts failed, doesn't mean future efforts can't succeed. Nobody is going to save Black America, but Black America. If we don't believe we can do it, nobody else will. Let's "just do it."

Solution 20: Let's start listening to each other, and accept valid criticisms. Black people are too damn sensitive. Sometimes, criticisms aren't valid, but letting people express themselves (sometimes) serves as a bridge to better communication. We need to check each other sometimes, but we don't need to always be checkin' people and we don't always have to be right. Let's develop a sophistication to our interface that allows us to disagree agreeably, and move ahead.

These solutions were meant to help us deal better with each other. The third ten will focus on our politics and our spirituality. Hold on to your hat—I feel a hellava holy roller comin' on.