



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

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

Believing that our children are our future raises an interesting question, What kind of future can we expect if our children aren't well taught? The second and third verses of the “Greatest Love of All” states that we “teach them well and let them lead the way,” and “show them all the beauty that they have inside.” The clouds that we see over our future, by and large, rests with the cloud we see over our youth. Very rarely do I ever re-write my column, but an event happened last week that influenced how the next ten solutions would be articulated. Los Angeles City Councilman, Martin Ludlow, arranged for 300 inner city middle and high school youth to see a private screening of Samuel L. Jackson's new movie, Coach Carter, a movie that addresses the issue of what responsibility we all have to teach our children, help them understand the true meaning of success and let them make choices that will lead them to better lives. Councilman Ludlow stated to me the night before that he believed not enough is being done on this gang violence tip because we, as a society, don't spend enough time showing our children how to make the right choices. I believe that is true, and thus a critical part of solving the “Black Dilemma” will be solving the twist many of our youth find themselves in because “we,” as a society, have taken away many of their choices—like after-school programs, college tutorial programs, and life training programs that teach them how to be good, responsible, “educated” human beings desirous of better lives than that of their parents. As the first American generation that has less than what their parents have, we must prepare our children how to reverse that trend—for if white children have less, black children will have much less and continue to be disproportionately impacted by their societal inequality. Billie Holiday once sang a song that said, “God blesses the child that has his own.” The solutions in this segment focuses on how we prepare the black child to have his or her own;

Solution 31: Stop telling our children, “they ain't sh\*t” or “will never be sh\*t” Their self-esteem and self-image must reflect the ability to achieve. If they don't believe they can achieve, their self-perceptions become self-fulfilling prophesies. If they are not achieving, tell them that they can do better, insist that they try to do better, then help them do better. Don't ostracize them.

Solution 32: Stop passing on the failures of one generation to another. Telling young men that “they ain't gonna be sh\*t because their daddy wasn't sh\*t” is nothing more than putting the frustrations of adults on their children. Black America will have to acknowledge that it possesses millions of frustrated adults who didn't fulfill their individual potential. Instead of thinking your children are no better than you, encourage your children to want more than you, and be better at it.

Solution 33: Teach our children how to give. Many of our children are too selfish because many of them only know how to receive. It has to be “all about them.” We can't raise a society of “takers” and “beggars.” All the laws and the scriptures tell us it is better to give than to receive. There's a reason for that. The law of the world is that those who give, receive ten fold. If future generations are to be blessed, we must teach them to be givers, not takers.

Solution 34: We must teach our children the true meaning of success. The last two generations of Blacks have sent the wrong message in that success is in things like homes, cars and jewelry. Success are not those things. Success can bring about those things. Success is self-

improvement and understanding the dignity in being educated and accomplished. The film Coach Carter, and actor Tiny Lister (who spoke after the film), points out that winning basketball games is a measure of success, an accomplishment. But in the larger scheme of things, it doesn't compare in terms of being educated and being able to change the quality of your life. Success is not a relative engagement, it's a definitive engagement. You can have "stuff" and still be poor and unaccomplished. That is essentially the state of Black America, poor and unaccomplished, with everybody driving BMWs, Benzs and Escalades. We must paint a different picture of success.

Solution 35: Teach our children that failure is an experience, not a finality. Help them learn that failure is the stairway to success, and not to get bogged down in failing. Real failure is in not trying to do better—not trying to succeed. When you stop trying, then you know you've failed.

Solution 36: Tell our children that we love them so they will stop seeking love in all the wrong places. Our children have been convinced that "the streets" love them more than their parents and their homes. The heinous things taking place in our communities stem from an absence of love in people who have no love—so they give no love—and they destroy. Gangs, prostitution, drugs, and pregnancy are all surrogates for young people looking for love or someone to love. Black people need to learn to love themselves again, and being loved is central to giving love.

Solution 37: Tell our children our stories of sacrifice so that they know struggle and can relate to struggle as a continuing battle to achieve equality in America. Because they have everything others have doesn't mean they're equal. Help our children understand why they are different and need to be "twice as good" as the other man to be equal in his eyes. Our parents taught us during segregation, but we forgot to pass it on—thus, the equality gap is widening and our children are paying for it. Black struggle in America is a continuing story to be told.

Solution 38: Help our children understand that education changes their life forever. Many think education is over-rated. They won't understand until they get in their thirties, becoming frustrated adults themselves that they should have taken advantage of what they could've learned. They can't talk what they don't know and can't go where they've never been, without education.

Solution 39: Teach our children that being rich is more than having money. Being rich is having a spiritual base (knowing God at an early age), always seeking understanding (answers to life's questions), and staying focused enough to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. When you are touching lives with the blessings God has given you, you know you're rich.

Solution 40: Teach our children to never stop dreaming for a better life. So many of the youth I encounter have, what I call, "dead eyes," that are life-less, without purpose, meaning they have given up on life and become resigned to their condition. For as long as you have dreams, you have life. Dreams never allow the gleam in one's eye to be extinguished. It's heart-breaking to see dead eyes in a young people. Tell our young to believe, and keep in their mind's eye, their dreams.

The last ten solutions deal with what is holding Black America down the most, the unwillingness on the part of "the Negro" to let a new generation of black thinkers and activists emerge.

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