

“I KNEW I WAS A MAN WHEN...”



**THE ESSENTIAL
ELEMENTS OF
MANHOOD.**

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THE PROBLEM

- The prevailing narrative regarding African-American males is distorted and skewed to the negative and pathological.
- Most studies, discussions, depictions - “media” concerning African-American males tend to focus on various pathologies and identifying factors associated with various deficiencies, disparities, over representations and gaps (e.g. fatherlessness, incarceration rate, achievement gap, etc.)

WHY?!

THE STUDY

“I KNEW I WAS A MAN WHEN...”

is phenomenological study and used semi-structured interviews to record first person narratives of African-American men reflecting upon their transition into manhood. African-American men volunteered to reflect upon, “When did you know you had become a man?”

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Three themes emerged

- Weight of responsibility
- All but four (38/42) identified a man as a person who primarily taught him about how to be a man
- No regrets, or “Yes, but...”

WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY

“What was the experience or thing that happen when you realized or felt, for sure, you had become a man?”

- Every respondent talked about a moment where they felt the need or challenge to be responsible.
- The burden of membership
- Active participation in the maintenance and development of the group

While each participant provided a unique narrative on their transition into manhood, every narrative centered around the idea owning responsibility.

SIGNIFICANT MAN

“Who were the people (or person) that taught you how to be a man?”

- Every participant except four (38/42) identified men; often a particular man (i.e. father, coach, pastor, big brother, uncle, or older peer) who served as a sage.
- The significance of this male figure was that he was available “at the time of question.”

Meaningful (Tangible) connections to men ...

Relationships build on the acquisition of specific knowledge or skill.

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NO REGRETS

“Any regrets: Are there things you did to prove your manhood, you wish you hadn’t done?”

- Every man expressed an understanding that their current status was the result of learning from one's mistakes. Moreover, he would not be the man who he is today if he had not faced adversity, messed up, and then learn from the situation
- “Nah, nah. No regret, no regrets ... My story is my story.”

Creating “Authentic Narratives” through reflection and truth-telling.

Implications & Strategies

The burden of membership

- Active participation in the maintenance and development of the group

Meaningful (Tangible) connections to men

- Relationship build on the acquisition of specific knowledge or skill

Creating “Authentic Narratives” through reflection and truth-telling.

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KEY ELEMENTS TO DEVELOPING MANHOOD

Thank you!

Resources:

<http://Afrocentric.Info/1stPerson>

or <http://Afrocentric.Info/EIAAM>



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