

AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE :

LOVE, MARRIAGE, COMMITMENT LESSONS FROM THE TOWNSHIPS/RURAL AREAS. A TOWNSHIP/RURAL BLACK MAN'S perspective.

Before I start I would like to Thank the Heavens/Qamata, Holy ancestors/angels and the collective (elders, healers, wise old woman and man, young) who shared these lessons. Most importantly Thanks to Sisanda Mtwazi for his marriage inspired me to go and found out.

INTRODUCTION (setting the Scene)

South African FACT:

Women are the custodians of family history, values, family secrets, family wisdom, community values and culture. They are the pillars of most households, most black families are strong because woman are strong. Any household where the wife is not strong it collapses (it is rare that the father becomes the pillar of the household). Even, if the father is an alcoholic, abuser, absent father, disrespectful to all, rude, womanizer etc If the mother is sound, strong, a survivor, strong will, never give-up spirit. Most of the kids I have observed in the township and rural areas turn to observe and internalise those values.

In most township and rural homes the father is absent, nearly non-existent but the mother has managed to carry the flag high. Most black men seem to have a very weak will, give up easily, adopt defensive mechanisms that are destructive to family and community at large. We men turned to give up easily, another topic to be investigated further.

Studies done by SA Census, Unilever UCT Institute show that 60% of black kids are raised by single-mothers.

METHODOLOGY (how I gathered this knowledge?)

I went out to investigate and find out what do we need to know as black man in order to ensure that we break this cycle of children who grow up with no fathers or emotionally absent fathers, poor meaning in marriages.

I consulted elders, traditional healers, parents, traditionalists, and African writers. Asking them to share with me how our forefathers lived and understood marriage, love, and commitment.

These are lessons we should have been told at an earlier age, so that by the time we get married, discover love we improve not start from scratch. I so miss the days when our fathers, mothers, grannies had the time to share with us stories about life and in those stories there were symbols, characters which thought us a lot about being good citizens and how to find meaning in life. I cry out for the return of rites of passage and for incorporation of these learning's to the existing rites of passage.

AIM /VISION

- This is an attempt to restore black masculinity to its rightful place,
- Redefine it to suit the changing times without losing that, which gives us meaning (essence behind black masculinity).
- Guard against trying to copy western masculinity as it is without learning more about our own first and borrow, steal with pride that which is good from other races and cultures to build and replace/adapt/edit that which no longer works, outdated.

Most importantly:

This is a cry out for a new look on masculinity that reflects the changing times and restores its dignity and honour.

Intro to LESSONS

Most man in the townships/rural areas do not know what love is, many have never experience love. We grew up being told or seeing that to be a lover you have to be a 'player' – have more than 5 or even 8 girlfriends, most importantly have sex with them (the ultimate torture test- if you did not have sex with her then she is not your 'cherrie', and there is no love you are just playing). Woman too accepted this lie and gave in because it is / was the only WAY to show their undying love for their partner for life.

Most importantly we succumbed to society – township definition of love and we never expressed love the best way we know how, in our own unique way. We did everything that woman saw on TV, we became those fictitious characters (basically we lived a lie, fairytale) we bought them roses, took them to KFC, Big McDonalds, valentines cards, most of these we had no clue why we were doing them, what they meant.

We assumed that it is what they want but we never asked ourselves what does love mean to me/us, how can I love my partner? How can I make her happy – the best way I know how.

As man we need to start redefining our masculinity to start reflecting values that our forefathers praised caring, loving, supportive, empathy, leader. My masculinity in the township was shaped around things that are shallow – number of girlfriends you have, brand name, how well you play sport, alcohol, smoking, stealing, going to jail and learn the code (26, 28, 27), glorify thugs and people who do not move you forward, physical abusers (guys praising each other that "you were right to clap, or beat her up – she will respect you next time"). All these things demand that we sit down and re-evaluate and re-introduce new symbols on manhood or masculinity.

Hope you learn a few things and take these with you ..

Lesson 1

In the townships/rural areas most man are brought up in families where happiness, love does not exist. All you see is violence, abuse, drugs, alcoholism, rape, womanizing, not sleeping at home, and most of us we become or we internalize all these negative values. Many of us we start practicing them at an earlier age and we are applauded for having done so. It amazes me that most man in the townships become like the people they hate most (like their fathers, uncles, drug dealers, thieves, abusers, alcoholics, etc).

Most important task is to break the cycle (alcoholism, abuse, cheating, drugs, etc). I am a firm believer that one of the reasons we are born in these broken families is so that we can transcend from the places that hold us, break the cycle – bring peace to the next generation. So 'man' make man proud – if your family knows peace, there is a 90% chance that your kids, relatives will learn from that and follow you. For the heart is always longing for happiness, peace, and the truth. Man should learn to transcend from the places that hold them in bondage.

Lesson 2.

Let him express his love the best way he knows how. Do not expect him to become an actor in Generations, Bold, Days of our Lives- become a Rich Foster, Glen Majozi. Sooner or later he is going to fail, for he will be using another man's recipe or book and he will definitely run out of pages, for he will be using another man's script. Allow him to be him.

Lesson 3.

There is a traditional man crying out to be heard in every man (truly speaking I have not seen a sensitive man – if they do exist deep down there is another man crying out to be heard). Man want to feel like man, man want to wake up everyday and know that they are the head of the household. All that I am saying is that create a perception in Patiti's eyes and head that he is the man of the house.

Most black man that are seen or known or sensitive are either homosexuals or being politically correct – gender correct. They know what needs to be said and done, but the theory is not in line with what they believe in or practice. Women need to acknowledge the fact that black man movements are new and women have been on the femininity struggle longer than man have.

Sensitivity, empathy is needed to allow man to internalise some of these new found values which their forefathers or present elders never exhibited or refused to accept.

The younger woman can learn a lot from our mothers- 'true achievers in a marriage are the ones who do not care who get the credits. Our mothers are the pillars of most families but they never go around gloating about it.

Lesson 4

Any thought not translated into action treat it as if it never existed. Love is something u feel, but it only comes to life when you act on it (as they say action speaks louder than words). Also in love my friend actions are more important than what you say. Do not say ' I thought of calling u, taking you out, treat all these as null and void, non-event. Do not think and not DO. It is said that '*each of us in some measure incomplete, with some aspects of our humanity over-developed and others neglected... to some extent each of us marries to make up for his deficiencies*' so my friend help your partner by bringing your thoughts, feelings to life.

Lesson 5

Love

"Love is not attachment. When there is attachment there is no fear , and fear inevitably becomes authoritarian, possessive, oppressive, dominating" J Krishnamurti (This Light in oneself)

Please read Kahlil Gibran book – the Prophet on marriage – some few quotes:

" and let there be spaces in your togetherness"

"give your hearts, but not in each others keeping"

" fill each others cup , but drink not from one cup"

These statements are in line with the elders advise that it is very important to make sure that no one enters in that space that you have created. Man need to learn that: – your friends are your friends, we are your friend, she is your mother, they are your sisters – but we will never be your wife (we are not your wife), so man love your wife more than you love your mother, and friends.

For the two of you are one. Parents, friends take sides, and make sure whatever problems you have with your wife, try and solve them on your own- seek advise (I mean advise – not answers) only when necessary.

Lesson 6

Do not use marriage as a 'muti' (herb) to cure your weaknesses. If you are a player, womanizer, abuser, addict, etc you better make sure you try and stop all these bitter habits, before you get married. Marriage or commitment will not cure your illnesses – it will just make them worse. For in marriage or commitment you will feel trapped and whenever you feel that way you will go back to your weaknesses, this time only worse.

Lesson 7

Put your ancestors and the Creator upfront in your marriage. Make them your number one counselor, therapist, adviser, guru. They are the best – call unto them, thank them for they will reciprocate in kind.

Never forget to thank them – that is all they need a little THANK YOU everyday.

Lesson 8

Real marriage is what happens when you have bought the house, car, and the kids. When all these things are there – most people divorce, for now they have to concentrate on themselves, which for many couples it is the hardest thing to do. It really freaks them out when they have to deal with themselves, concentrate on each other. So man keep this in mind – the house, car, sometimes the kids, are just one part of the marriage, there is more to it than just these three variables.

The elders believe that marriage is a dependent variable – made up of multiple independent variables (trust, happiness, forgiveness, compromises, honesty, sadness, pain, hurt, kids, tangibles, and many more). Make sure you have a balanced marriage and all these variables are taken care of.

Lesson 9

Proper closures are important in every relationship. Do not bring old baggage to your new relationship, marriage. Make sure you have properly closed the doors – ex-girlfriends, hurts, family pain, and bad habits. If you do not have proper closures you will definitely lapsed/regress into your old ways.

Lesson 10

“Beka ingqondo yakho ku mfazi wakho” – your wife, family must occupy your head”. If you focus on your marriage and your wife – you will not go astray . but if your mind and your heart is not on your wife you will definitely forget her and see other people better than your wife.

Must never compare your wife to anyone (say ' akekho odlula umfazi wam), tell your self no one is more beautiful than my wife, no one cooks better , dresses better , do things better than my wife. Let your wife be the center. The moment you compare, then there is conflict, there is envy, there is the desire to achieve , to go beyond the other.

(Umkakho, umtshato wakho ungawufanisi nabanye abantu). Meditate on your marriage, wife. By meditation I mean to give 100% attention (when you talk to her, thinking about her, when you make love to her, when you applaud her). Attend completely to what you do with her, for her.

My wishes to all man:

May you find enough inner strength to determine your own worth by yourself, and not be dependent on anothers judgment of your accomplishments.

Iyanla talks about ' life is like breathing, it is only when you hold your breath it becomes difficult to live life/love, stay in a marriage'

May you breath in harmony, may you find a rhythm that is unique to your vows. And when you have done so I am sure you will live HAPPILY EVER AFTER..

With all the powers bestowed upon me: I wish you all well