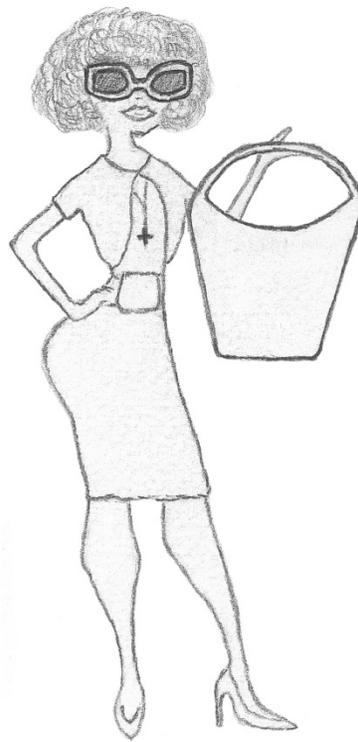


Dear Ms. Educated Black Woman



Dexter R. Conner

Upon realizing that my baby daughter would one day read this, I re-examined every word. To the most beautiful girl on earth – Daddy loves you.

1 | Dear Ms Educated Black Woman

Preface

I began having serious thoughts pertaining to the dynamics of Black romantic relationships in college upon traveling to Atlanta and conversing for hours with Spelman College's exceptional Black women. It was like the television show *A Different World*. While my reason for routinely making the two hour trip from my college was to convince a particular one of these women that she was to be my wife, it became clear that a unique dynamic was on the horizon. Many of the educated Black women I encountered had confidence in their academic and professional journey, but lacked clarity on whether enough educated Black men with at least an ounce of swagger shared their dream of creating a formidable family. It was a fair question then, and remains a growing dilemma affecting educated Black women today.

Since that time I have consistently spoken with Brothers, Sisters, family members, friends, and others about the challenges facing Black relationships. Those conversations have inspired me to share my humble thoughts for anyone willing to indulge me. As you read beyond the passion of my words, hopefully sincerity and love will be visible, along with a creative spirit that you find interesting enough to continue the exposé. Expect to see the tremendous influences of film & television, hip-hop, fiction, non-fiction, humor, politics, scholarship, and of course God as significant portions of my writings. All of these play a vital role in how Black relationships have taken shape. I will italicize significant titles within these genres at times to emphasize them as materials worthy of consideration for your repertoire. With that said, you may read a few tangents, but there is usually a method to my madness.

This book is composed of short-letters and short-stories. The format came about because I often jot down my personal reflections here and there. My thoughts were not necessarily meant for mass production, but here we are. I am an equal opportunity writer. You will find that some sections are speaking to Black men; and I do hope that you will pass these letters on to a few. Because at the end of the day it is about us, Black women and Black men, taking a deeper look at how we can do better together.

Dear Ms. Educated Black Woman is focused on a specific group of single women who endure unique challenges in the area of romance. Please keep in mind that educated Black women are not exclusively Black women with formal training. Included are all Black women that possess an unforgiving progressiveness toward their best life. You know who you are. And while some boy-meets-girl challenges transcend culture and economics, additional challenges face this demographic. So let us get to the real on what is going on.

Dexter R. Conner

Los Angeles, California
February, 2014

[E-Mail Correspondence]

Dear Dexter,

I am a 33-year-old Black woman from Asheville, NC. I'm 5'6", a shapely size 10, with an MBA. I attended an HBCU and now work in the corporate arena making a six-figure salary. I relocated to Atlanta for my job nine months ago and bought a condo in the mid-town area. I'm very disappointed with the fact that I've not met a nice eligible Black man to date. It seems that the guys I meet are players, gay, intimidated, married, or just unwilling to be in a monogamous relationship for any length of time. It is beginning to affect my self-esteem and I find myself depressed about the whole situation. My dream is simple—I want a nice man, preferably with a college degree, and definitely a decent job. It would be nice if he is fairly handsome too and a few inches taller than me. But I'm willing to compromise a bit if he's really nice. I'm a member of a mega-church here in town but it seems that the church men are no different. At times, I just want some attention from a male figure. I realize that sounds pitiful, but increasingly, I find myself needing validation from men. My father was in and out of my life growing up, so I think there is some anger that I have toward him too. I'm hoping you can offer some perspective on how I can feel whole again. I did read Steve Harvey's book but need something just a bit more specific to my situation. Thanks for any insight you can provide.

Sincerely,

Dawn

[E-Mail Correspondence]

Hi Dawn,

Thanks for reaching out. You are not alone. Many educated Black women express similar feelings. There is no quick answer or automatic remedy. But there are immediate ways you can gain strength and perspective on your current state. First of all, I am happy that you found a good church home. Renew your spirit of goodwill and confidence by reading the bible consistently and through prayer. Also, understand that feelings change and perspectives evolve. So don't do anything irrational due to temporary dissatisfaction. You know, like falling for a scrub because you are lonely. I look forward to helping you over the next few months to move your life forward. Your first assignment is to read my book. It is very inexpensive as an e-book so just download it. It is sure to broaden your perspective. After you complete it, e-mail me back. Tell me what you have learned and how it makes you feel. It is short, so read it this week so you can e-mail me back soon. You've got a bright future with exciting places to go and great men to meet!

Sincerely as we go,

Dexter R. Conner
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To be young, gifted, and Black
Relationship Dynamics for Educated Black Women

Hello to young, gifted, and educated Black women reading this letter. You are probably living the good life or something close to it. It may include a French titled bachelorette pad, a Chanel handbag, and an occupation well worth feeling proud. You may even be climbing the corporate ladder in Jimmy Choo stilettos. Kudos! I'm definitely impressed. But your achievements do not exempt you from possibly being unlucky in love. In fact, you may be a significant contributor to your romantic relationship challenges with Black men. Do not misunderstand me; I am not going to let Black men off the hook. But this particular letter will focus on you, the educated Black woman, as the star attraction. We often hear about the disappointment in Black men regarding their inability to commit or for their selection when it is made. And sure, some things are funky about Black men's approach to relationships. But please allow me to save those thoughts for another letter. For now, let's just peel back your onion.

Educated Black women honor the holy trinity, have made the grades, and are careful not to indulge premarital improprieties. Right? Your resumé is tight. But you feel disappointed, maybe even pissed-off at the selection of Black men, their credentials, manners, and choices pertaining to love and marriage. This dilemma plagues more than just Black women (Asian men have similar challenges). But I do believe that Black women are ostracized enough to explore new rules of engagement.

On the dating scene, many educated Black women are frustrated in dealing with the less polished Black male population. These Brothers balk at the non-traditional roles taking shape within new age relationships. Not as a conscious vice per say, but as a subconscious conditioning. Black people are usually traditional. And Black men are chicken-hearted about committing to serious relationships if they believe themselves to have monetary instability. Another antagonist is that there are a vast number of beautiful, available women. It becomes difficult for Black men to see value in settling down when there is such an open dating scene. It is understandable that these challenges can be discouraging to discerning educated Black women. But although looks can be deceiving, faith in God's ideals that sustain you for suitable companionship cannot. Remember, you are only looking for one good man to connect with; and he is looking for you. Only in God's timing can you find one another. Jesus Christ is an on-time God. Operate within God's purpose for your life. He will provide peace within and clarity to your interactions with men. Believe it and be prepared to receive it. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight* (Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV).

Stormy Weather

The lack of legitimate male suitors often creates stress for single women. But there is no need for educated Black women to feel that way. Men that are unwilling to romance you are a blessing in disguise. Many men will allow egotistical and underdeveloped elements of their being to steer them away from women cultivated beyond their comfort zone. Educated Black women should be thankful

for that. Life is short. There is no time to waste. Relationships with these men would create more problems than solutions toward your best life. Educated Black women are treasured by men cultivated beyond traditions of sexism. Black men that understand their own plight, career path, sexuality, and responsibilities are not just sitting on every street corner. But rest assured that they are scurrying around preparing for educated Black women. Are you paying close attention? These men come in various and sometimes unexpected forms. They may be wearing glasses with political contacts, have financial figures making cents, are legally blind offering vision for the future, and off shades of brown talking Black. Usually the man for you is much closer than you think. He may have even shown you interest. You may not have considered him for companionship due to trivial reasons. Be careful to not overlook a high character man that is really vying for your attention. That man is likely to show you a high level of value within a relationship.

Educated Black women must use the same meticulous eye offered on Louis Vuitton pursues in distinguishing a quality man from a fake. It is important to choose relationships wisely and not out of desperation. We will come back to that later. Beware of buying the tickets without seeing that game, going on dates without leaving the house, or opening your heart if he is not a cardiologist. Just kidding! All I am saying is, *let us not be weary in well doing: for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up* (Galatians 6:9 NIV). Never question God's well intentions for you in romance. He is your heavenly father. All fathers want the very best for their daughters. Trust in him. Those duds that are wearing sunglasses but are shady, have money but are still broke, tall but are short sighted, think they are

big time but are small minded, and talk loud but are saying nothing can leave that smell of onion on you so foul that other men will not dare approach. Discernment is the key to unlocking life's blessings.

Pairless souls wander the earth in search of a companion. They search in places that are empty and pointless. The best place to look is right in front of you. Love is an intriguing thing. But searching for it will get you nowhere. Let it come to you. If you are patient enough and keep an open mind and heart, then love shall appear before you in its simplest form: another soul. (Anonymous)

Educated Black women have specific relationship challenges even among the Black population. Their battle cry can vary due to the diversity of the Black experience. Many educated Black women do have a huge breath of steam to exhale about relationships, while others are just blowing smoke. But, let me be clear. Some educated Black women are happily married, earning a six-figure salary, and enjoying a nice family and home due to existing definitions. These women have been able to ascend within the current atmosphere. It could be because they have had advantages, worked hard, or are particularly blessed. Each situation is different (all are blessed). For instance, I know a very light-complexioned Black woman that has family ties to opportunities within academic and professional societies. These affiliations positioned her for easy access to academic and monetary achievement. In the dating arena she grapples moreso with the quality of applications from Black men that are pursuing Black women, versus none at all. She also seems to get a serious interracial pursuer from time to time. Her situation is just one story. And her story is not the norm. But it does showcase how

the diversity of Black culture provides different experiences. The masses of the educated Black women I encounter have families that more recently gained opportunities at academic achievement. These educated Black women now rise within corporate sectors enjoying financial freedoms and titles never experienced in their families. The plights of educated Black women will always be unique to their existence. Is it likely that these women will respect their diversity by uniting to strengthen one another? I hope so. I will stay tuned to how things are going by watching reality television shows like *Housewives of Atlanta*, *Mary Mary*, *Married to Medicine*, *The Braxtons*, and *Love & Hip-Hop*.

The Game

Relationships are Competitive

An irony of the dating game is that the code that bonds women on national women's issues is lost when tending to matters of the heart. Relationship politics are tenacious. They are quite similar to the power politics of men. Self centered agendas take precedent. Some women plot, scheme, and compete tremendously for available and committed men. Society teaches women that the pickens are slim. Therefore rules of morality in engaging companionship are now out the window. It can feel like survival of the fittest. Women like Fantasia, LeAnn Rimes, Rielle Hunter, Angelina Jolie, or the Tiger Woods mistresses continuously up the ante on what is possible within the game. Especially as book deals, spot lights, and other financial platforms are awarded to these women. As the relationship game becomes more competitive, cosmetic enhancements are greatly tinkered with to gain attention from men. Black women spend 80% above the national

average on cosmetics. The inner-self is sure to hemorrhage from every outward adjustment that does not attract a man. Even if it does, silicone compositions sag while spiritual connections endure. Psychological baggage and fear of karma from fake relationship tactics often creates insecure, devious, and complex women. Connections based on deception affects the ability to have a true relationship. The truth pertaining to who you are is the strongest foundation to attract a comparable man and build a sustainable relationship with him. Gain confidence in your god-given qualities and the sincere person you have worked to become. God rewards a mind aligned with positive thoughts. ...*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed* (John 20:29 NIV). Believe in God. Believe in yourself. Believe that you are worthy of a positive relationship. Gradually you will become strengthened with positive and sustainable relationship qualities, and the ability to recognize those traits in others.

Educated Black women should always strive to be at their very best. Do not abandon the positive direction in which the Holy Spirit leads, in an attempt to appease an unsatisfactory man. Do not act out of desperation. If you do, you will quickly become unsatisfied. Because the authentic connection that comforts the soul will be absent. You will always be discontent within a relationship where there is no authentic connection. An authentic connection means being equally yoked in some basic ways. Here are a few basics. The man should be a Christian, should love you, want to provide for you, and be family minded.

It pays for educated Black women to look their best by having those legs cocoa buttered down to the high-heels. But we must acknowledge some deeper challenges facing

the psyche of some Black women. I will mention a few examples. Many Black women gloat about being a descendent of Native Americans or another ethnicity. It is true that most African Americans are multi-racial (It is almost a given that you are not 100% Mandinka like Kunta Kinte). But it is often said with pride, or offered as a status symbol beyond simply claiming to be Black. What is interesting is that Native Americans and others usually have no interest in claiming them as relatives. It is a sad acknowledgment of a mental state when Black people walk around always trying to clarify their genealogy in this way. Another example is how Chris Rock's copycat film *Good Hair* caused the film *My Nappy Roots* to have a really bad hair day. Not only did *Good Hair* reconfigure the substance of the real hair story, it attracted millions of Black women while *My Nappy Roots* has been reduced to short viewings in "kitchens" across the country.

Society's laws of attraction are learned and eventually ingrained within all people. How the laws of attraction are defined among Black people is essential to the value placed on each other in relationships. Many Black women have struggled with how to outwit God in creating what they believe to be a beautiful new reality of themselves. In defining laws of attraction, Black women increasingly defer to hair extensions, hair textures, or physical features that contradict their God given beauty. People's inner values are not usually kept there. Black men value beauty by how it is defined by Black women. Educated Black mothers have the first opportunity to influence Black boys. That means that educated Black women are setting the standard for what future educated Black men value. We can all look around and see what that standard has been thus far.

Educated Black women must showcase self love and self value if they plan to attract it into their lives.

Waiting to Exhale

Relationship Pressures Can Spiral Out Of Control

Years after college, single educated Black women begin losing their confidence in the dream of having an educated Black husband. Especially among educated Black women that have never experienced a good romantic relationship with an educated Black man. Educated Black women also begin to worry about their biological clocks, and the ability to have children. Relationship challenges become even more complex since proximity to new educated Black men becomes the issue. The routine of life makes it difficult to meet new quality men. Some educated Black women become jealous of those other women that easily meet Black men. Not the women that did not pursue traditional education or careers. An education and career is not nearly as relevant as companionship and family to most women as they get older. But rather groupie women that undercut what educated Black mother's teach as respectable relationship tactics with men. These groupies are ruthless, exist as sexual misfits, and often possess the latest artificial body enhancement. Their ability to attract the high rollers can be infuriating to educated Black women. Not only because the dream is for men to value an educated woman over his carnal desires, but because reality is that the dream is usually within a fantasy world. (Remember, these men are not for you. You need one that values an educated Black woman. Stay focused!) It may even be resented that she has a kid, his kid. Educated Black women usually desire children too and have no desire to share their man with an uncouth baby-momma. It may appear that the

groupie has the good life, while an educated Black woman's life mirrors the television show *Being Mary Jane*. But groupies are not in healthy relationships with these men. They are also not building a life that ever attracts the type of love and fulfillment to be happy. An educated Black woman must know that groupies are never the competition. So stop rolling your eyes at these skanks. They are who they have chosen to be. And how these women are valued by men is in line with their lack of standards. They actually help by weeding out men that are not ready for a serious relationship with an educated Black woman. You need a man that is ready for a wife and that places value on what a virtuous Black woman brings to the table.

Some educated Black women do find a single educated Black man, while others refuse to compromise for what they feel is a lesser man. The relentless power of loneliness makes some educated Black women decide to settle for Mr. Right Now instead of Mr. Right. Mr. Right Now may already have a lady or simply be unacceptable. But low self-esteem and mental numbers games are used to justify the involvement. The hope is that her prodding will zap him into shape and creates a fulfilling relationship. Deeply rooted is the feeling that if she is chosen for marriage, even by this clown, it lifts a dreaded societal pressure. Maybe it does. Next may be a kid and voila, what a beautiful family! Whether the relationship works is of concern, but the desperate actions thus far have shown that a healthy relationship has fallen as the priority. There becomes a twisted solace in the statistics of most relationships ending in divorce. She knows her relationship is not built on sustainable qualities. But the truth is that she has misused her time and true emotions by being with this man. The

relationship will not work. Even if the two individuals stay together in title, there will be no genuine connection. Let me explain why.

Expectations are always greater in marriage than when dating. An educated Black woman will resent Mr. Right Now's inability to represent what she feels her husband should be. She expects him to be educated, strong, loyal, caring, funny, and able to vacillate between the executive board room and the neighborhood. His shortcomings may be reality. But her continuously telling him of his inability to measure up will be devastating to the relationship. He may leave since there are available women that he believes would treat him well. Or, he may consider staying if there is a child involved. Either way, her emotional state will attribute his lack of abilities for their relationship woes. Usually this educated Black woman is comforted by single Sisters that tell her that she is the latest victim of the inadequacies of a Black man (Be careful of always talking to single people about your relationship problems). That is not necessarily true. Educated Black women must make strong choices from the start if they want to have a fruitful relationship. That includes prioritizing education, work, and dating choices with long term goals in mind. That long term vision helps keep a reasonable standard when considering a man worth spending valuable time. Educated Black women that deal with men that are obvious duds are setting themselves up for major life problems. Do not be that woman. You will regret it.

Remember, this educated Black woman made a decision to deal with a man that is unable to lead her. This could actually make her not so educated after all. The decision is a huge problem since God placed man as leader of the

family. How can a woman follow the leadership of a man she ultimately does not respect in that role? She cannot! But this educated Black woman decided to settle for this man. That secret is kept just beyond the wishing well in her consciousness. She wishes that he would turn into more. But each day she wakes up to the same dud. Married and with a child, the societal pressure is gone. She made it. The road to premonition will begin as this man proves in marriage to be exactly what he presented in dating. All close friends know of the relationship mismatch. Not just from the obvious discrepancies when seeing them together, but from the concerns she expresses in moments of truthful emotion. But everyone is an adult, at least age wise. Opinions on the matter from even close friends are careful, and sometimes silent. Reality is that this educated Black woman's relationship desires moved from being a God-centered pursuit to self-centered ambition.

Even mothers of educated Black women often push unreasonably for their daughters to get a husband. The mothers want grandkids like their friends and usually believe that their daughter's life will not be fulfilled without marriage on the resumé. Often mothers make the mistake of encouraging their daughters to accept a wedding ring regardless of some serious red flag's that may be apparent. This can be where much of the direct pressure is felt by educated Black women to get married. Daughters sometimes conform to the pressure by jumping into senseless marriages. There is no parachute that opens to save the relationship's swift spiral downward. The only saving grace for many educated Black women is that their formal education will continue to provide means to support themselves once the relationship fiasco is complete. But

they also may be stuck paying alimony to their ex-husbands.

This may not be his dream either. I am speaking about the man in all of this. He might be working through apprehensions of his own. The thought of this may seem silly to his educated Black wife. Her feelings primarily will be based on her bank account versus his, which she keeps separate. She may feel that she has upgraded his life. That could be true, financially. But even financial matters serve as a tremendous obstacle in the relationship. The relationship now mirrors society in grappling with what it means for women to bring home the bacon, instead of cooking it. Black relationships also like to include Biblical perspectives, though they are not followed with any more regularity than other relationships. Without a Godly influence, relationship challenges cannot be resolved. They can be bandaged for a time, but the problems will eventually resurface. Usually it is in a more devastating manner than if the situation had been nipped in the bud from the beginning. It is very important for educated Black women to connect in a genuine relationship with a God-fearing man. Not only to minimize the number of obstacles within the relationship, but to have the highest form of authority available to regulate the multitude of challenges that will occur.

This man's American dream played it vice versa. He was making the big dough (money) in the relationship and therefore running the show. That may be her dream too. For that reason, her emotion on their reality places her as driven, focused, and capable while him as not so much. She is reminded of Brothers who are "on her level" in *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *Black Enterprise* magazine. Or this

educated Black woman marvels when watching Black professional athletes. Athletes meet her monetary, glamorous, and fantasy physical dimensions. Not to mention imagining the ego boost of having been chosen by a man who has his choice of women. She views her actual man as a compromise. But she often forgets that he is the one she settled for. Perspective that her man offers pertaining to Black women having it a bit easier in Corporate America than Black men is heard by her as an excuse. It could be partly an excuse coming from him. But again, she should have assessed his potential in the dating process. He envisioned his wife to have different attributes too. She was to look more like the video vixens he grew up seeing in hip-hop videos. Or with physical qualities similar to the women those athletes marveled at are able to marry. But, he is also responsible for his shortcomings in relation to his pipe dream. And like Walter Lee Younger in the answer to *What happens to a Dream Deferred* (Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*), he is plagued with insecurity, inadequacy, and a woman who's taught to respect men that are much of what he is not. He too settled, instead of developing himself emotionally, educationally, and spiritually in a manner that would help him identify and strengthen a positive romantic relationship. It is hard to clean-up marriages that begin as one big mess. The best solution is to keep your hands clean from the jump. Do not get caught up in a relationship that you know is not a Godsend.

Many of the handsome Black men with swagger educated Black women want as an option are starring on the documentary television show *America's Hardest Prisons*. If released, they are facing tremendous odds of not getting sustainable employment and going back to prison. The

formally educated Black men, instead of marrying out of college, chose going to graduate school and now believe themselves a prize. They are correct. It is interesting because many were geeks that could not get a date a few years prior. But their focus on education has turned the tables. These men are now in good careers. It is finally their time to shine. Some become cocky and hold off on any relationship commitment. Others are ready to begin a family. These are men that educated Black women should get to know. I am not suggesting just any man with an advanced degree. Make sure you are attracted to him and that he is Godly. But these men have demonstrated that they possess some ambition. It is also ideal if the man is a referral from a mutual contact that can vouch for his character. But do not let that hold you back from gradually getting to know a gentleman with good credentials. Also educated Black women should consider blue-collar Brothers that are handling their business. Be open. Because left in society are some good men that are in committed marriages. Stay away. There are married men that are not committed to their relationship. Stay away. Also, there are momma's boys. The momma's boys are usually spoiled and underdeveloped victims of the absence of strong fathers. These men want women to do everything for them. Stay Away. And every since The Oprah Winfrey Show's 2004 episode titled *A Secret World of Sex: Living on the 'Down Low'* aired, underground homosexual Brothers remain polarized in Black women's consciousness (E. Lynn Harris must be acknowledged for making this phenomenon mainstream with his book *Invisible Life*). Stay away. You cannot make a gay man straight. All of this adds to perceptions regarding the unavailability of Black men for relationships. It is true that there are not as many educated Black men as Black women would like

available. But you only need one good man. An educated Black woman should focus on her own preparation toward a happy relationship. That is what is in your control. That is done by staying positive about life and love, and continuously bettering yourself. ...*faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead* (James 2:17). Spring into action, and have faith that God will too.

Please purchase a full copy of the book from
www.amazon.com