



The Osiris Group

Having Life on Your Terms

Here in Massachusetts African Americans make up seven percent of the population but only own 2.3 percent of the businesses, likewise the average income for these Black own firms is \$162, 000.00 compared to \$ 448, 000.00 for non-minority firms. The average family net income for a Black household is a meager \$6,100.00 compared to \$67,000.00 white. Dr. Claude Anderson the writer of the novel PowerNomics wrote that in 1860 only 2 percent of African Americans were self –employed, the rest were in bondage. Let me put it this way, in 148 years African-American own businesses have only grown by .03 percent. The reason for this dismal reality goes much deeper than to simply point to White racism, although a factor, our problem is deeply rooted in our psyche.

To understand fully what is at the core reason for the race poor performance we must first examine what factors have gone into the psychological development of the Black psyche. The tenth edition of the Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines the word Psyche as; a. soul, self b: mind, so what altered the mind and self image of African- Americans. The historian Kenneth Stampp wrote a book entitle "This Peculiar Institution", in researching the impact slavery had on the transformation of the psyche of Africans people Mr. Stampp discover that the slave masters were trying to instill five deadly principles into the psyche of our ancestors. A. Strict discipline: Unconditional submission is the only footing upon which slavery should be placed. The slave must know that his master is to govern absolutely and he is to obey implicitly, that he is never, for a moment to exercise either his will or judgment in opposition to a positive order. B. the Master's felt that they had to implant in the bondsman a consciousness of personal inferiority. This sense of inferiority was deliberately extended to his past. The slave owners were convinced that in order to control the Negroes, the slaves had to feel that African ancestry tainted them, that their color was a badge of degradation. C. The third step in the training process was to awe the slaves with a sense of the master's enormous power. It was necessary, various owners said "to make them stand in fear". D. The fourth aspect was the attempt to persuade the bondsman to take an interest in the master's enterprise and to accept his standards of good conduct. Thus the master's criteria of what was good, true, and beautiful were to be accepted unquestioning by the slaves. E. The final step, according to Stampp documents was to impress upon the Negroes with their helplessness. Here, then, was the way to produce a perfect slave. Accustom him to rigid discipline, demand from him unconditional submission, impress upon him a sense of his innate inferiority, developed in a paralyzing fear of White men, train him to adopt the master's code of good behavior, and instill in him a sense of complete dependence.

Another lens to view what the Africans psyche has been subjected to is from a Cultural and Historical time line. If we use 1507 as our starting date when Africans were imported to James Town Virginia until 1865 when the civil war ended slavery that is a total of 358 years the worse violence known to mankind, but this nightmare did not end with the conclusion of the civil war. The psyche of Africans was further subjected to violence from 1865 until the signing of the civil rights laws in1965, that is another 100 years of being subjected to psychological and physical violence. The psyche of the descendants of the former slaves has only been free from violence and oppression from 1965 to 2008, or a total of 43 years. African-Americans have been in America for five hundred and one years, of that time 358 years were spent in slavery, 100 years were spent living under Jim Crow segregation, which is a total of 458 years our psyche has been subjected to extreme psychological, emotional and physical violence. As a percentage that is 91.47% or to round up 92.00% of our time we have been subjected to violence. Those 43 years represent only 8.58% of the time that our psyches have not been subject to violence. In this short period of time many Black are living life on their terms, but the work that needs to be done now is all psychological.