

M2 The Need for Role Models in the Black Community

Having a role model, especially while being an African American is necessary.

by Malik Johnson (Old Dominion University), March 07, 2016

[...] The problem I see in today's community is the lack of role models in society. I asked my 10-year-old brother who does he look up to? He simply said he doesn't know.

The typical answers I receive from this question is either athletes or rappers. While having these types of people as role models is acceptable, it's hard to name role models in the black community that are not rappers or athletes, with the exception of Barack Obama. Barack Obama is a great person for young African American men to look up to because he has all the attributes of a successful person and can relate to many people growing up in these minority communities. In addition to having these types of role models, I believe that it is necessary for kids and adolescents to have a *hands-on* role model. [...] With the increase of single mother households, a lot of boys don't have the opportunity to have a masculine role model in the house, which can lead to several consequences. According to the U.S Census Bureau, in the African American community, 64 percent of kids live in father-absent homes. It has been proven that boys without father figures in their life try to raise themselves. This may be due to several reasons including the mother not being able to raise him, or with them being at a financial disadvantage.

With violence and drugs at almost every corner due to the lack of employment and equal educational opportunities, an overwhelming percentage of African Americans teenagers get involved in the street life. [...] Anthony King, a Detroit PTA President said in a meeting that this shift in households where households were father-absent occurred 30-40 years ago. [...] Research has shown that kids with father-figures or role models are more motivated about school and even get better grades while also raising the chances of college attendance. [...]

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/the-need-for-role-models-in-the-black-community>

Annotations: I.10 *hands-on* – to be present and active; **I.19** PTA – parent-teacher association

M3 Black Boys in Crisis: The Lack of Positive Role Models

by Matthew Lynch, December 06, 2016

In this series, appropriately titled "Black Boys in Crisis", I highlight the problems facing black boys in education today [...]. There are plenty of black men who positively impact the young men coming up in their communities. Some are *high-profile* while others are local businessmen, or even teachers. As a general statement, however, black boys have less people to look up to [...] than their white, and even other minority peers.

Consider these statistics: Less than half of black males graduate high school on time. In 2008, only 11 percent of black males in America had completed a bachelor's degree – and only half of the 4.6 million who had attended college had made it to graduation. Seventy-two percent of black children are raised in single-parent households and the national average is only 25 percent. Those single parents are more likely to be employed than the national average, but also more likely to live in poverty. Here's a humbling *stat on incarceration*: 61 percent of the U.S. prison population is black or Latino.

School is a second home to K – 12 students and black boys don't have many role models who look the way that they do. Black males make up just 2 percent of the K – 12 schoolteacher population. Less than 20 percent of U.S. teachers are not white even though minority students combined make up a majority of K – 12 students. [...] Black boys need to see adults like them who are high school graduates, have college degrees, are successful in the workplace, and who aren't incarcerated.

[...] It's important that those who have been successful breaking free of poverty or incarceration turn back around and inspire the next generation to do the same. An example of this in action happened on the first day of school 2015 when 100 men of color wearing suits greeted elementary students of color on their first day of school.

The message these men were trying to send was that if you did work hard and get good grades in school, you'll eventually find some *semblance* of the American dream in life. [...] It's why we so often hear the saying that one should "dress for success". This image contrasts against the statistics, which state that black male "students in grades K – 12 were nearly 2 1/2 times as likely to be suspended from school in 2000 as white students" and that most of the nearly 2.5 million people in prisons and jails "are people of color and people with low levels of educational attainment."

From pictures to videos, so many kids of color see men of color as *effigies* of what not to become. The criminal on the news is likely a man of color and so is the high school drop-out. [...]

<https://www.theedadvocate.org/black-boys-crisis-lack-positive-role-models/>

Annotations: **I.5** *high-profile* – to be in the limelight, *dt.* im Rampenlicht stehen; **I.13** *stat on incarceration* – statistics on people in prison; **I.14** *K–12* – *Am.* education from kindergarten to 12th grade; **I.24** *semblance* – *dt.* Erscheinungsbild; **I.29** *effigies* – *dt.* Bild[nis]