

Black Male Female Relationships

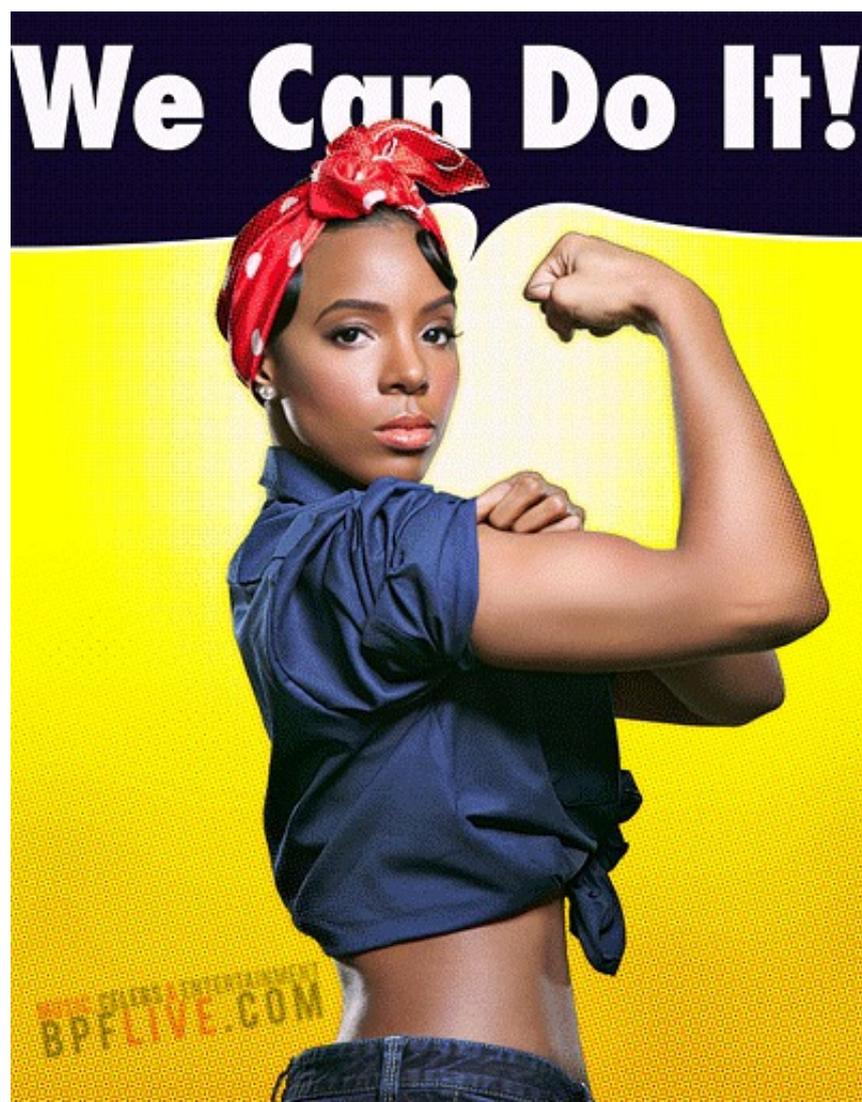
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Date : December 9, 2013



Independent Black Women



We've all heard of her; she's been crooned, immortalized and hyped since the beginning of the 1990's as the strong, self-sufficient black woman. She's appeared in film, literature and theater as the saving grace of the black family and the antidote to black male patriarchy. In the process, she's become the star of African American post-modern folklore; there aren't too many black families that don't claim her as one of their own. She is the independent black woman, and when it comes to black men, there are no shades of grey – you either love her or you don't!

So why are independent sistas feeling a 'lil hate' on the part of black men in an era where we've supposedly advanced far enough in gender relations to respect the progress of black women? Can black men really handle this new breed of sisterhood?



The attitudes of black men regarding strong, successful black women seem to run the whole gamut – from a grudging acceptance to applause to outright rejection. Such attitudes persist even in the face of statistics that show a widening gap between how black women and men are faring in the American economy and otherwise: more black women than men hold degrees; the unemployment rate for brothers is twice that of white men; and, in a recent poll conducted by Millennium Men of Color, only 18% of black male respondents described relationships between the black sexes as "good."

How do black men deal with a woman who's been raised to make it without him and how do black women – the ones who really want to love and be loved – reach out to men who feel this way?

Unfortunately, the line of demarcation is usually marked by economics. It is not sobering that black men and women tend to measure one another by economic means, as opposed to spiritual standards or by more common themes such as family values, work ethic and religious commitment.

There are plenty of brothers who honor and respect a woman who is at the top financially, professionally and spiritually. Sadly, though, there are far too many brothers who struggle with this reality. It's mainly because of how we have been socialized to see ourselves as providers. We've been stripped of that role in a sense, not because women insist on being breadwinners, but because, in most cases, they didn't have a choice! Unfortunately, brothers have occupied the bottom rung of the economic ladder when it comes to jobs. We tend to be the first fired and

the last hired; overall, American employers shy away from hiring black men.

As a result of this role reversal, too many brothers either suffer in silence or exhibit hostility toward their more successful counterparts. Let's face it brothers, our psyche has taken a beating due to this peculiar American experience. And so our reactions have more to do not with how much our women make, but rather how much we aren't making in comparison. As a result, we focus on what we don't want – to be judged by our wallets alone and whether we are financial equals. We then miss out on what we really want: a loving relationship in which our masculine identities and contributions are valued – what we bring to the table overall.

A single African American woman gives her view on being an independent woman.

Add to this the I-don't-need-a-man revolt that began in the 1990's and many brothers are feeling the blues when it comes to relationships with successful women.

What we need, brothers, is a new way of thinking. We should attempt to understand that black women, successful or not, are also entangled in a system that has yet to afford them full acceptance in the marketplace. Not only that, we must accept that – regardless of how we've been socialized – times have changed.

[Michael D'Amari](#) gives insight into why men are intimidated by independent women. The first and most obvious answer is that t...

Let's not be locked into dictates just because it's the way we were raised. Are you really going to toss and turn tonight because a woman offered to pay for dinner? Are you less a man because she makes more money than you? My answer: absolutely not!

[Black Male/Female Relationships](#)

Independent black women are here to stay! And, with the emergence in the last four years of Michelle Obama as the quintessential successful black woman, independent sisters are and will be a force for some time.

What do you think? Was this article on point or do you disagree? Comment below and chime in!

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