

# EDUCATION

## EDUCATION TODAY

### How to deal with that "mean" teacher

By Teresa Thorne

The other day on the bus, a youngster was telling his parent that he was having problems in school because his teacher didn't like him. The mother said, "Well, we'll just talk to the principal about her. She can't do that to you!"

Wrong move. It's one thing to be a protective parent; it's another to allow your child to perpetuate the "mea no culpa" credo that permeates so much of our society. It's the "I'm not to blame — she is, or he is, or they are" mentality that has produced so many of our problems.

While there may well be

abusive teachers, the fact is, most teachers are there to teach. A student who doesn't come up to the mark, may feel that the teacher is being too tough with him or her, and assume it's because she doesn't like him or her. A bad teacher wouldn't bother to push the student to do better. A good teacher will go that extra step or more to try to reach the youngster and inspire him to work up to his potential. Years later, most of us will recall with gratitude the teacher who didn't give up on us.

A parent who encourages the student in an attitude of denial of responsibility is raising an adult

who will one day blame everyone but himself for his actions.

But maybe the child is telling the truth. What do you do?

I spoke with a guidance counselor who said that a parent should try to get the specifics of the child's complaint. Don't accept an overall, "she doesn't like me" statement. Pin the child down. When did he think the teacher started to dislike him? How does she show it? What does she say?

Then, make an appointment with the teacher. When you have your meeting, don't start by accusing her of making your child's life miserable. Instead,

tell her what he's told you, and ask her to comment. Chances are, you'll get a far different picture from the teacher than you did from your youngster. You will very likely leave the room feeling you have an ally in raising your child to be the best he can be, not an adversary.

Talk to your child about the meeting, and reassure him that the teacher seems to be tough, not because she doesn't like him, but rather, because she feels he's really bright and if he works a little harder, he will certainly do better in class. Make sure he understands that the teacher wants him to succeed.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### Astrology still popular with African-Americans

By Sandra West

New book: *Soul Vibrations: Astrology for African-Americans explores the history.*

Astrology has amused and guided the masses since before the star-driven Reagan administration, and solidly captured the fancy of African-Americans from the day Dionne Warwick and then-spouse posed with a copy of Linda Goodman's classic *Sun Signs*, on the cover of *Essence* magazine. Though the aforementioned examples are contemporary astrology is not. African astrologist from Imhotep in Egypt to the ancient Black Chaldeans, practiced the ancient art before the time of Christ by noting the relationship between events on earth and events in the skies. In one of the first astrology books ever written by black folk for black folk, George Davis and Gilda Matthews update the African relationship with astrology as well as African-American folklore and history.

Davis, a Rutgers University professor and Matthews, a social worker, began by using stories of eminent personalities and heroes — like Arians, Rev. Bernice King and musical poet Gil Scott Heron — to instruct classrooms of children about the ancient African art/science. Those Africans taught about attributes that the children could relate to, principles such as self-esteem and how sun signs determine how we think and act. The Arian personality, for example, for people born March 21 to April 20, is **bold**. Remember Heron's political statements in his 1970s classic "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised?" And, if you have ever heard Rev. Bernice speak you know that Dr. King's baby girl is not one to curb her tongue. "We have brothers and sisters with \$40 and \$50 hairstyles and a nickel's worth of brains," Davis reports King saying at a speaking engagement attended by brothers and sisters with those \$40 and \$50 hairstyles.

Sun sign astrology is often used to find a compatible mate, or just to find out how a person

really is. *Soul Vibrations* (Quill/Morrow, 1996) is thorough, in this area of personality reading, as well as fun and amazingly accurate.

Gemini (May 21 to June 20) is the sign of the communicator; intellectually quick but not necessarily scholarly, playful, talkative, someone who can lose friends as easily as he/she makes them. Song stylist Gladys Knight is a bubbly, bright Gemini. The late rap artist Tupac Shakur and James Weldon Johnson, a Harlem Renaissance writer, vibrate under this sign of Gemini.

Proud of their personal freedom, the Sagittarian (Nov. 22 to Dec. 20) is the sign of the traveler. Curious seekers of wisdom, "they may love everyone on Sunday and by Tuesday not care about anyone," Davis and Matthews note. Georgia artist Luther Vann was born under this sign in addition to electric guitar virtuoso Jimi Hendrix and Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black History."

James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, is ruled by the sun sign Taurus (April 21 to May 20). Down-to-earth but stubborn, Taureans love to hang onto their pillows long after everyone else in the house is awake and out to work. Kenneth A. Gibson, the black mayor of Newark, N.J. (and an industrious mayor of my home town, I should note) is another tenacious member of the Taurus clan as is Byron Allen, stand-up comedian and talk-show host.

The responsible, but not particularly stylish, Capricorn (Dec. 21 to Jan. 20) is considered the success sign of the zodiac. Grace Bumbry, classical singer, and Ben Johnson, Olympic track star, are two noted Capricorns. No one, I tell you, no one, is more miserable in failure than this sign. It is our greatest fear; I should know, for this is my sign.

For years, Goodman's *Sun Signs* was a "bible," if you will, for sun sign astrologists. It is still a masterful work, but the inclusion of African-American heroes and personalities, history and lore makes *Soul Vibrations*, for us, a "tight-as-a-glove" fit.

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