



ASK DEANNA!
*Real People,
Real Advice*

Dear Deanna!

I learned that my husband has been cheating on me. I am currently trying to decide if I can forgive him and if we can salvage our 10-year marriage. He told me that he was very sorry for what he has done but I could have reduced the pain if I hadn't followed him to the hotel and caught him. He says all Black men cheat at some time and it's a man's DNA. He then pointed out our male friends that cheat and named a few celebrities. If things don't work out, is this what I have to look forward to in dealing with Black men?

Terribly Disappointed
Online Reader

Dear Disappointed:

Your husband is sorry indeed because he got busted with another woman and tried to flip the script and put the blame on you. All Black men don't cheat and infidelity has to do with lust, immaturity and being selfish. If he and his friends all have cheating in common, they're birds of a feather that shouldn't be married. Your husband has confirmed he's a cheater and he'll cheat again if you stay and accept it. Life is too short and if you find yourself in another relationship with a Black man, give him a fair chance with a clean slate and you won't be disappointed.

Dear Deanna!

I have the tendency to ruin every good relationship that I enter. I get to the point where I really like the guy a lot and then I start finding things that annoy me and eventually the relationship ends. I don't know why I do this, but as soon as things get serious I start to see all of his flaws, shortcomings and my pet peeves become stronger. I am single and I want to be in a committed relationship but I can't find a man good enough to be with. What do I do?

E. C. Smith
Washington, DC

Dear E.C. Smith:

You're single because you sabotage your relationships with nitpicky foolishness. You don't know how to handle a serious relationship and this should be communicated to the person you're dating. Once you communicate your fears there's a possibility you can work through these things together and you may find yourself with the love of your life. As for a man that's good enough, that's an excuse on your part and you need to get real with yourself and handle your issues first, before tossing stones that don't need to be tossed.

Dear Deanna!

I'm a 22-year-old student and I have a problem getting along with females. I don't want to boast, but I'm as good as it gets when it comes to friendship. I go out of my way and look for nothing in return. If a friend needs to talk, I'm there. Even if I disagree, I always come with a nonbiased approach. I continue to get disrespect from so called friends. With the start of the New Year I cut all ties with these friends. Why have I been treated this way all my life by family and friends? Is there something wrong with me?

Bewildered
Online Reader

Dear Bewildered:

There's something about you that is going to shine and the females you deal with don't like it. However, you play into this if you walk around having a pity party and expecting this treatment from people, so this is what you get. In other words, you allow it. In order to gain your respect, you need to put a few people in check by stopping them on the spot when they start to belittle you, ridicule you or put you down. There's nothing wrong with you and it's good you've dropped the excess baggage. Get on with your life, take control when being disrespected and keep it moving.

Write: Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Website: www.askdeanna.com.

'Dreamgirls' corrals nods

By Kam Williams
Special to Sentinel-Voice

How do you explain a movie getting the most Oscar nominations, yet it was overlooked when it comes to Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor and Best Actress?

That's precisely the quandary the Academy finds itself in after announcing that "Dreamgirls" landed eight nominations but none in any major categories.

Yes, Jennifer Hudson was nominated for Best Supporting Actress, but anybody

who saw the film knows that hers was really a lead role. Reached in London, Jennifer had this to say about the good news: "Thank you to the Academy! I am blown away by this honor. I feel like I have reached the impossible. This is proof that faith is powerful. Thank you!"

Eddie Murphy was nominated for Best Supporting Actor, but otherwise, "Dreamgirls" was only recognized for its art, costumes, music and sound.

Despite the apparent snub, the Academy must be cred-

ited for the overall ethnic diversity of its picks. A quarter of the acting nominations went to Blacks (Hudson, Murphy, Will Smith, Forest Whitaker and Djimon Hounsou), two went to Hispanics (Penelope Cruz and Adriana Barraza), and one went to an Asian (Rinko Kikuchi).

Plus, lots of other Latinos were nominated, including director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu ("Babel"), scriptwriters Guillermo Arriaga ("Babel") Guillermo del Toro ("Pan's Labyrinth"),

and Alfonso Cuaron ("Children of Men").

British actresses fared well, as usual, garnering three of the five Best Actress accolades (Kate Winslet, and Dames Helen Mirren and Judi Dench).

Conspicuously absent among the nominees was Jack Nicholson for another trademark, great performance in "The Departed."

The 79th Academy Awards will be broadcast live on Sunday, February 25, from the Kodak Theater in Hollywood.

Black women seek protection

By Marie Tessier
Special to Sentinel-Voice

(WOMENS E-NEWS) - Activists in the growing movement to support battered African-American women say they agree on what's needed to stem domestic violence: more services that are culturally informed and integrated into victims' communities to help them overcome barriers to seeking help.

"Color-blindness is not what you need if you're trying to serve diverse communities," said Oliver Williams, executive director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. "The trend is toward an increase in community-based, faith-based and grassroots services."

While the battered women's movement has long strived to serve all women, few projects can identify specific programs designed to reach out to diverse communities, Williams and others say. That can be a barrier to safety for Black women, who tend to reach out for help through informal networks in their communities, such as a church, rather than consulting a shelter or hotline, Williams and other scholars and activists say.

African-American women face a higher risk for experiencing domestic violence than other women, according to the most recent data from the Justice Department. In fact, they are more than twice as likely to die at the hands of a spouse or a boyfriend. They are also at greater risk of more severe violence, according to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and the Bureau of Justice Statistics in Washing-

ton, D.C.

"When you're talking about African-American women, you're talking about everything bad about family violence, and then some," said Tonya Lovelace, executive director of the Women of Color Network, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence based in Harrisburg, Pa. "The way that communities of color experience violence is affected by our history and by other issues."



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Executive Director of the Women of Color Network

Research on domestic violence and African-Americans is sparse, scholars and activists say. While some trends are generally accepted, it remains an open question how much race factors into higher rates of violence, scholars say. Much of the difference may simply reflect African-Americans' disproportionate representation in lower-income groups.

Some behaviors can be grouped by race, but differences can be deceiving, Williams said. "Black women are more likely to leave than other women, but they are also more likely to return," he said. "A lot of the reasons may speak more to poverty and a lack of resources, because a woman may just not have a different place to go."

That's why many domestic violence agencies are increasing efforts to work with a wider variety of service

providers in communities of color, advocates say.

Organizations such as Atlanta's Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute, Williams' Institute at the University of Minnesota and the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence's Women of Color Network in Harrisburg, Pa., are all engaged in training domestic violence groups and community service agencies in each others' work.

Much of the funding

Black county in the nation, has a high rate of intimate partner homicide. According to the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, 48 people, mostly women, died there between 2001 and 2006 as a result of domestic violence, second only to Baltimore County, which had 72 deaths.

One of the starkest realities for African-American women is their vulnerability to homicide. And the risk of violence is higher for women in bigger cities, according to the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Homicide is the second leading cause of death for Black women between the ages of 15 and 24, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Only young Black men have a higher homicide rate, and only Black men have a higher rate of intimate partner homicide than Black women, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Barriers to seeking help are believed to contribute to the higher rate of homicide for both women and men because violence has escalated to a greater degree before a woman can reach safety, scholars and activists generally agree. The homicide rate for Black men has dropped more than for Black women in recent decades, according to federal statistics.

All the factors that contribute to greater violence probably explain the higher intimate partner homicide rate of Black men, Lovelace says. "Black women get arrested more, we get convicted more, and we have had fewer places to go. The statistics don't account for self-defense."

Marie Tessier writes for Women's e-News.