

Got A Problem?

By Gwendolyn Baines

Dear Gwendolyn:

I have been talking to this lady on the Internet for about four to five months. I live in Boston and she lives in South Carolina. She knew I was coming down to visit her. She said that she would pick me up from the bus station after she gets off work — around 5:30 p.m. I waited and waited at the bus station, but she never showed up. So I took a cab to a hotel as I was very tired, but I tried my best as it was her birthday. I bought her a present before she said she would prefer cash. Also, she called me her big baby. To me she used words to play the game and I am not into games. She is 60 years old and I am 70 years old. After being at the hotel, I slept from Thursday evening until Friday afternoon. Then I went and purchased my ticket for home the next day. I told her what time I would be leaving. She never showed up. I took the present and gave it to charity and threw the birthday card in the recycle bin. I enjoyed my stay in South Carolina. While waiting for the bus, I wanted a paper. Your article was in it. You gave some man good advice. What can you tell me?

Andrew

Dear Andrew:

So sorry you are 70 years old and being mistreated. You would think a 60-year-old woman would not consider bringing hurt to any man's heart. But let me tell you this: At your age you should enjoy your senior years alone until you can find someone who is genuine and has passion. Just as you threw the birthday card into the recycle container, do the same with your thoughts of this woman. This Internet dating has more flaws than good. She may have gotten 'cold feet' and decided not to pursue the friendship/relationship. Or, she could have sent you a beautiful picture of someone else knowing that she was ugly — tore up from floor up. Andrew, what was this about her choice of a gift? She wanted money? Man, delete her information from your computer and consider your machine as having — a bad virus.

Dear Gwendolyn:

I have been married for three miserable years. We dated for eight years before moving in together and lived together four years before marriage. That all makes a total of 15 years involved. At first, our relationship was on and off and then on again. However, we were never off for more than three months each time. During the years of our courtship, I bought him three cars, paid his apartment rent, bought all his clothes and bought clothing for his mother, grandmother, and his three children by a high school sweetheart. I received my law degree at the age of 24 and secured a position with a top law firm. That is how I was able to support myself, my boyfriend and his clan. Gwendolyn, for the past two years he has treated me like a dog. What should I do?

Jeanette

Dear Jeanette:

When you state he treated you like a dog, you need to better clarify that. Most men treat their dogs nice — almost like royalty. Let me tell you this: In buying for your boyfriend and his clan, I do hope you didn't forget to buy for your parents if they are alive. Or, buy for your relatives and friends and just anyone who helped you along the way. To achieve your degree in law, somebody helped. If your situation does not change for better, I feel you need to consider divorce — might as well. When your husband breaks you financially, he will look for another banker. You knew it was wrong to spend money on this man. Do you have a bank savings account? I'm sure he does. He has your money in his account and believe me when I tell you, it's not a 'joint' account. Jeanette, think about it. Whenever you try to buy a man, it usually ends with being — a bad investment.

If you have a problem, write to her at: P. O. Box 10066, Raleigh, NC 27605-0066 (to receive a reply, send a self-addressed stamped envelope) or email her at: gwenbaines@hotmail.com

Blacks often lack financial plan

Special to Sentinel-Voice
(NNPA) — African-Americans are more optimistic about their financial future over the next year than the general population, but the majority of those responding acknowledge they don't have a financial game plan and many don't know where to start, according to a recent study.

A new survey of 1,200 participants commissioned by The Smiley Group and Nationwide Insurance shows 58 percent of African-Americans expect their household situation to be better a year from now, compared to only 30 percent of the general population sharing similar optimism.

While African-Americans say they think their financial situation will improve in the next year, most of those surveyed indicated they are not taking deliberate actions to better their financial circumstances:

- Less than half say they are proactive about their financial future
- Three in four say they do not have a written financial plan
- One in three say they don't know where to start when it comes to personal financial planning

African-Americans are more confident than their general population peers in their ability to make savings and investment decisions (52 percent vs. 43 percent), but are also more likely to indicate they are struggling with credit card debt (38 percent vs. 32 percent).

On saving for college, nearly half of all survey participants with children under 21 said they are very or extremely worried about being able to afford a college education for their children, while only about one in 20 of all survey participants say they actually have a college savings plan. Only three percent say saving for education is the most important goal.

"It's one thing to be positive, but it's another to be practical, proactive and prepared to weather this difficult economic climate," said Tavis Smiley. "This survey reveals the critical need for an honest assessment of our financial status so that we can be sure that we are taking the steps necessary to safeguard the future for ourselves, our families and the next generation."

The study also reports that nearly nine out of 10 African-

Americans acknowledge they do not have a professional financial advisor, because they don't think they need one or think they can't afford one.

Hungry for Information
African-Americans — even though most don't have a formal advisor or plan — responded they had a greater interest than the general population in obtaining financial planning information from seminars, a financial advisor, an insurance agent, family/friends or television.

"Nationwide shares Tavis Smiley's passion about empowering people with information and resources that can help them plan for a brighter future and protect what matters most to each household," said Candice Barnhardt, Nationwide's vice president for diversity and inclusion. "This study is encouraging because it says that, despite the economic downturn, there is a strong desire in many households to seek out advice and information to overcome the immediate financial challenges and plan for long-term dreams like college and retirement."

Can We Talk About Something Else?

African-Americans aren't alone in their tendency to avoid the topic of finances. Like the general population, they rank sex and not having enough money as the top two topics they are least comfortable discussing with family members, far outranking religion or politics.

African-American respondents admitted more frequently to taking some type of action to avoid conversations about finances (45 percent vs. 39 percent of the general population). Generally, of those who are willing to make this admission, actions taken to avoid the conversation included screening calls and cutting off a relationship.


Teachable Moment for a Generation

Of those who aren't actively avoiding the topic, African-Americans reported that they are talking to their children about financial matters. Three out of four parents with children under 21 say they have discussed saving money with their children, and three-fifths have done so

within the past month. One out of four have discussed saving money in the past six months. However, of those participants with children in school, eight out of 10 acknowledge they have not researched if their school teaches about saving money.

"Exposing our children and young adults to basic information about finances and personal financial planning will have a profound effect on how the next generation spends, saves and invests," said Barnhardt. "The current economic environment will leave a permanent impression on 17- to 25-year-olds. The Great Depression created a generation of risk-averse spendthrifts. The 80s and 90s created a generation of hungry consumers with a high tolerance for risk. The deep downturn we're now in will likely influence not only financial habits, but also the shape of public policy and the types of financial products the market offers."

"We've got to be a part of the national dialogue about how to get beyond this economic crisis," adds Smiley. (See Finance, Page 10)



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