

## The African American Male School Adaptability Crisis: Its Source and Solution Planted in the African American Garden of Eden

**Joe L. Rempson**

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*Rempson powerfully advocates for applying the energy of the civil rights movement to the black family.*

In *The African American Male School Adaptability Crisis*, Joe L. Rempson describes African-American social problems, offers solutions based on self-reliance, and issues a rousing call to the African-American community, especially its men, to step up to the challenge.

Rempson suggests that black male students do not do well in school because they are not given positive core identities or the character traits necessary for success, both of which are formed in the home even before the child is born. He suggests that as it stands now, the African-American home, and by extension, its community environment, prepares its members to function well only in the ghetto, and disadvantages them for success in school and in the wider world. It fosters, he writes, "a negative core identity grounded in Victimology" that allows "three major demons" to flourish in the black community: fatherless families, IQ lag, and crime.

Standing firmly against attitudes of victimhood, Rempson states that African-Americans must take responsibility for their own behavior. He traces the development of "victimology" from its roots in slavery, and calls its existence today a mental and physical slavery that inhibits black men from assuming their manhood, with devastating results.

Rather than citing racism as the reason for the failure of blacks to thrive, he advocates for a system of "Self-Responsibility" in which, no matter the reasons for a problem in the black community, it is that community, and not white people, that must remedy it. "White people are no longer responsible for us," writes Rempson. "We are no longer in slavery. Nor otherwise under oppression. We are on our own, and must bear our own burdens."

Rempson powerfully advocates for recasting the civil rights movement and applying that same energy to address the breakdown of the black family. He outlines a program to help black male children build a strong identity based on their personhood, rather than on the "cool culture" of the street and the peer group, and calls black males to strong, responsible fatherhood. Rempson's book is surprising, with prose that can get fiery, and some may find the candor with which he approaches his topics offensive. The logic he applies to his concepts can also be hard to accept.

While the book is well researched and enhanced with footnotes, an ample listing of references, and a comprehensive index, its many errors in grammar, syntax, and punctuation are distracting, as are occasional errors in word usage and spelling. The historical photographs that have been included add much to the book's interest and the interior layout and design are pleasing, but the use of bold type is excessive.

Rempson's *The African American Male School Adaptability Crisis* advocates for self-responsibility in getting to the root of the difficulties of African-American males in succeeding in school and in life. Both disturbing and hopeful, the book affirms that, as other groups have "lived precariously on the edge and prevailed," not through "unceasing anger, demand, protest, and supplication," but through self-sacrifice and building strong foundations, the African-American

community can also succeed by learning to prize not victimhood, but real manhood; not anti-intellectualism, but academic striving and learning.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January 20, 2017)

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