AFRICAN-AMERICAN HEALTHY MARRIAGE INITIATIVE
HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY FAMILIES: CONNECTING
MARRIAGE RESEARCH TO PRACTICE CONFERENCE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2007
8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.
PLENARY #6
GRUMMAN AUDITORIUM
RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR BLACK WOMEN AND MEN

BY

DR. ATTY. PARIS M. FINNER-WILLIAMS

DETROIT, MICHIGAN
This provocative session will focus on married, cohabiting or “friends-with-benefits”. Research tells us that on virtually every indicator of well-being married African-Americans do better than those who are unmarried. But are all of the members of the family benefiting equally? Hear from co-author of “Marital Secrets: Dating, Lies, Communication and Sex”.
Paris M. Finner-Williams, Ph.D., L.P., Esq.
Chief Executive Officer
Fully Licensed Clinical Psychologist
Forensic Examiner Diplomate
Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
Certified Christian Mediator
Certified Christian Counselor
Certified Trauma Services Specialist
Licensed Attorney and Counselor at Law
Founding Chairperson and Elder of the
Black African-American Christian Counselors
Division of the American Association of Christian Counselors
Author, Trainer and Conference Speaker
Finner-Williams and Associates
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- Psychological Testing, Examination, and Expert Witness in Civil and Criminal Litigation Cases
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<tr>
<td>$17.75</td>
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- How To Develop A Church Based Christian Counseling Ministry and
- Single Wisdom: Empowering Singles, Divorcees, Widows & Widowers for Living.
- By: Paris M. Finner-Williams, Ph.D., L.P., Esq. and
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THE FAMILY DONUT

“Marital Secrets”: Dating Secret: When considering a mate, it is important to know who has had the strongest influence in their life.

The shaping of our social learning begins at birth, as we observe the behaviors of others and then attempt them, rehearse them, have them reinforced or punished, and finally repeat or eliminate them in our later lives. Behaviors, potential behaviors and habits often are chosen according to whom we choose to model (Finner-Williams and Williams “Marital Secrets: Dating, Lies, Communication, and Sex”, 2001).

We are the product of (1) what we have seen with our eyes, (2) what we have been taught cognitively, and (3) what we have experienced through our five human senses.

We are the product of our values, morals, ethnical culture and our faith. All behavior that is taught is not learned. But all observable behaviors, actions and responses to stimulation is unquestionably the product of our social learning and our spirituality. How we behave, think and feel is the evidence of the culture to which we are associated.

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN GLAZED?
Sweetly or Bitterly?
THE FINNER-WILLIAMS PRE-MARITAL SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE (PMSQ) IN “SINGLE WISDOM”

“Single Wisdom” pages 104 - 129

Is composed of 160 questions that let you know how familiar you are with your potential partner. The questions are based on a combined total of more than 60 years of counseling and legal experience. We questioned numerous individuals about what it was they failed to know about their partner or spouse which led to marital discord, separation, and/or divorce.
I _______, take you _________, to be my wedded wife/husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, acknowledging before God and this assembly that I am aware of and totally dislike many of your ways such as your:

- ______________________________________________________
- ______________________________________________________
- ______________________________________________________
- ______________________________________________________
## TWELVE WAYS MEN AND WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT
by Cynthia Taueg and included in “Marital Secrets” (page 189-190)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men And Women Are Different</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Is Helper</td>
<td>Role Is Provider, Protector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Priority is Relationship</td>
<td>First Priority Is Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Apart/More Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Vitality</td>
<td>50% Stronger/More Muscle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually Stimulated by Touch and Words</td>
<td>Sexually Stimulated Visually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive, Perceptive of Details</td>
<td>Logical, Big Picture Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates through Words</td>
<td>Communicates through actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially Aware</td>
<td>Task-Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Oriented (Wants to know Why)</td>
<td>Solution-Oriented (Fix it Quickly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to Be Right – Focus on How It Should Be</td>
<td>Wants to Do What Works – Practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to Romance</td>
<td>Responds to Admiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex, Intricate</td>
<td>Simple, Basic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE EVOLUTION OF THE AFRICAN MAAFA, MA’AT AND SANKOFA

The African Egyptian term “Maafa”, in part, is the denial of the validity of a people’s colloquial culture. We have learned that the African Maafa, in part, is an ongoing ungodly process that dehumanizes and/or destroys the spirit and soul of African people.

The African-American women in our clinical treatment sample prioritized their marital issues and concerns with their husbands in the following manner:

1. Liar
2. Demanding
3. Condescending and verbally disrespectful
4. Lack of parenting skills and impatient with children
5. Non-nurturing
6. Unclean
7. Drinking too much
8. Lazy
9. Selfish
10. Separative and isolative
11. Wasteful
12. Boastful and prideful
13. Flirtatious
14. Insecure
15. Fails to consult with spouse before distributing marital funds/assets or others
16. Lack of respect and acceptance by in-laws
17. Lack of quality time with spouse
18. Harsh and authoritarian tone of voice
19. Blame shifting and displacement of frustration
20. Omission and lack of disclosure
21. Lack of appreciation of spouse
22. Failure to cooperate relative to saving money
The African-American Men in the marital counseling norm prioritized their marital issues and concerns with their wives as follows:

1. Lack of enthusiasm for the marital relationship
2. Constricted sexually
3. Verbally disrespectful
4. Lack of passion
5. Fails to cook
6. Doesn’t like kissing
7. Fails to make personal improvement
8. Lack of respect and acceptance by in-laws
9. Selfish
10. Lack of quality time with spouse in comparison with time given to others
11. Consistently untimely and late
12. Blames others for her feelings of insecurity
13. Lazy and fails to multi-task
14. Liar
Comparatively, African-American Couples generally perceive each other with the following commonalities:

1. Liar
2. Verbally disrespectful
3. Lazy
4. Selfish
5. Insecure
6. Blame shifting
How Has Your Relationship Challenges Caused You To Feel?
LOW FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE

Low Frustration Tolerance (LFT) is our not enduring and suffering challenges, struggles, discomfort, difficulties, disappointment, discontent, and painful emotions. Further Low Frustration Tolerance are thoughts focused on the idea that our challenge or situation is too difficult, too much, or unbearable. Cues may include: Agitation, tension, poor attention and leaving the situation we really could stand if we had the mind to do so.

Low Frustration Tolerance, called impatience or discomfort anxiety, is created by distorted views of a situation and our inability to put up with it.
# AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE FOR THOSE WHO DIVORCE IN THE UNITED STATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20 years old</td>
<td>27.6%*</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24 years old</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29 years old</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34 years old</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39 years old</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data from [www.divorcepeers.com](http://www.divorcepeers.com):
"These Boots Are Made for Walking: Why Wives File for Divorce"
Margaret F. Brinig and Douglas W. Allen

Tables

Table 1. Historical Filing Rates for Women in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locale and Year</th>
<th>Percent where Wife Plaintiff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1867*</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1880*</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1890*</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1900*</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1908*</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1922*</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1931*</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1960*</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dade County, Florida, 1962-63**</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton County, Georgia, 1962-63**</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. 1965</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California 1966</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey 1966</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida, 1969 (Sample)</td>
<td>68.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk County Iowa, 1969</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California 1970*</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey 1970*</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk County, Iowa, 1972</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dade County, Florida, 1972-73**</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton County, Georgia, 1972-73**</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California 1974*</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey 1974*</td>
<td>67.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida, 1974 (Sample)*</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut, 1995</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut, 1995, with children (85% of all)</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Friedman and Percival, 1976
**Gunter and Johnson, 1978

1 George Mason University School of Law, Simon Fraser University Department of Economics
Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Reports of Which Spouses Wanted the First Marriage to End, by Sex: National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-88 and 1992-94

Question: "Sometimes both partners equally want a marriage to end, other times one partner wants it to end much more than the other. Circle the number of the answer that best describes how it was in your case."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item and Response Categories</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I wanted the marriage to end BUT my husband/wife did not</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I wanted it to end MORE THAN my husband/wife did</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We both wanted it to end</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My husband/wife wanted it to end MORE THAN I did</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My husband/wife wanted it to end BUT I did not</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate/no answer</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>1237</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Remarriage Statistics

50 percent of first marriages end in divorce.
67 percent of second marriages in divorce.
73 percent of third marriages end in divorce.

“Sociologists believe that childlessness is also a common cause of divorce. The absence of children lead to loneliness and weariness and couples are childless”.

“Couples with children have a slightly lower rate of divorce than childless couples”.

Source:

“Jennifer Baker is a licensed marriage and family therapist as well as Director of the Post-Graduate Program in Marriage and Family Therapy at Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield, Missouri.”
MARRIAGE, FAITH AND HEALTH

Nearly two-thirds of African-Americans (62%) assigned great impact to their faith in transforming their lives, compared to half Whites (50%), and Hispanics (49%), and Asians (27%).

African-American females is the sub-group that exhibits the best ability to accept their respective reality.

- Married persons tend to live longer than their unmarried counterparts.
- 51% of married Christians divorce (George Barna Research Group)
- Married men in their 50’s, 60’s and 70’s have lower mortality rates than those who are unmarried (never married, divorced, or widowed)
- Healthier men actually tend to marry at a later/older age and postpone remarriage. This is determined by their healthier individual habits and preferences that promote both health and marriage.

Unhealthy men, by contrast, tend to:
(1) Pursue marriage more actively,
(2) Marry earlier,
(3) Are less likely to divorce, and
(4) More likely to remarry following a divorce or the death of a spouse.
Unhappy marriage can increase your chances of becoming physically or mentally ill by 35% and take 4 years off of your life.

“Working on your marriage every day will do more for your health and longevity than working out at a health club.”

Sources:

Center for the Study of Aging
www.rand.org/pubs/research

John Gottman, Ph.D.
Psychologist and Marriage Researcher
EMOTIONAL/EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION STYLES OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS

1. Communication and Problem-Solving Skills
   a. How do you regard your communication style? (Check only one of the following)
      ___ aggressive-force views on others
      ___ passive-others force views on you, “follower”
      ___ assertive-negotiate differences
      ___ passive-aggressive – express anger indirectly

   b. How do you regard your problem-solving style? (Check only one of the following)
      ___ flexible-consider a range of alternatives
      ___ rigid-stick only to preconceived ideas
      ___ conciliatory-comply without following principle
### SETTING RELATIONSHIP GOALS EXERCISE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>II.</th>
<th>III.</th>
<th>IV.</th>
<th>V.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDENTIFIED PROBLEM</td>
<td>PRIORITY NUMBER</td>
<td>IDEAL</td>
<td>ACCEPTABLE</td>
<td>DATE OF RESOLUTION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of Completion ________________________  Page _____ Of _________

Name of Preparer ___________________________

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDENTIFIED PROBLEM</th>
<th>PRIORITY NUMBER</th>
<th>IDEAL</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>DATE OF RESOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John speaks to me like a child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Speak to me respectfully</td>
<td>John will not call me stupid</td>
<td>6/18/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John’s female co-worker calls on his cell phone several times a day</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not to have her call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John drinks with his friends after work instead of coming home</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Come straight home after work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John doesn’t pay his portion of the bills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pay the mortgage and DTE bills</td>
<td>Will pay the mortgage by the 15th of the month and both DTE bills by the 30th</td>
<td>6/18/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John wants me to have sex whenever he wants it</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>If I don’t want it leave me alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of Completion _____7/19/04_______ Page ___1___ Of ___2_______

Name of Preparer _____Jane Doe_______________

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SINGLE WISDOM:

- Date a person at least 12-18 months before you become engaged to be married. It is difficult to maintain the appearance of righteousness and sincerity for more than 9 months.

- Approach dating like a horse race
  3rd - Win
  2nd - Place
  1st - Show

When eyes are closed, the spirit is open; when eyes are open, the spirit is closed.

- Do not rush to conclusions about the relevancy that a dating partner should have in your life. Observe a person’s behavior through all four seasons to learn how they handle a full array of life circumstances.
- Don’t expect evil people to respond to you in a rational way. Abort and shift ungodly thoughts to positive and constructive ideas.

- Accept your offenders for who they actually are instead of judging them or what they could be.

- Understand that forgiveness is an intellectual decision and not an emotional one.

- Don’t invest more in a person than you are willing to lose.

- Realize that we heal from the inside out.
An assertive communication style and flexible decision making style will best enhance romantic relationships.

Avoid substitute addictions when an unhealthy romantic relationship ends.

Only marry who you can make an informed commitment; don’t marry someone who you merely “love”.

Don’t allow munchkins to determine which actions and decisions you make.

Strive for emotional adrenaline rushes instead of physical adrenaline rushes for a gratifying endorphin high.

Don’t just marry a professing Christian, whose lifestyle and personality are not compatible with your own.

What we tolerate in our personal lives we grow to accept.

You must have “bosom knowledge”, tolerance and acceptance of every trait and aspect of your romantic partner.
If you marry prematurely, you will have to choose to accept what you did not try to learn about beforehand.

When you learn to let the truth run the show, you will be content and at peace regardless of the change in your marriage or in life circumstances around you.

Marriage consists of mutual life long commitments and continuous personal sacrifices for the benefit of each other.

The more time that a couple spends apart from each other, the greater the probability of marital discord, separation and/or divorce.

We should be careful not to expect more in a spouse than we ourselves can provide.

We can choose our behaviors, but cannot choose the consequences of our behaviors.
It is fruitless and senseless to waste valuable time asking “why” a spouse behaved in some way. See it, believe it, accept it and live on despite it.

It is important to keep your heart clean by putting minor, as well as major irritants, frustrations and offenses behind you.

The state of your spirit determines the quality of your marriage.

Gender should not dictate who should handle the marital finances.

Whoever has the most (a) financial responsibility, (b) punctuality with time management, © communication skills, and (d) negotiation skills should be responsible for paying the household bills and managing the marital finances.
The Lesson of the Cactus Plant

Photo by Robert D. Williams

Excerpt from “Marital Secrets: Dating, Lies, Communication and Sex” (pages 135-137)