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Parental Mentoring:
An African American Approach to Raising Daughters with Self-Esteem

by
Qiana Brandy Smith

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Education
School of Education

Parental Mentoring;

An African American Approach to Raising Daughters with Self-Esteem

by

Qiana Brandy Smith

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

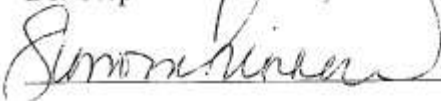
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12-5-14

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Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Qiana Brandy Smith

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Abstract

There is an ample amount of research that documents the positive effect of self-esteem on a child established through an affirmative parental or mentoring relationship, versus a specific parent-mentoring approach designed with a curriculum to enhance the positive self-esteem of African-American daughters based on the relationship with their maternal parent. The purpose of this qualitative study was to answer the following research questions: what strategies and behaviors are used by parents in African-American families to affect the self-esteem of female children and adolescents and, how can strategies and behaviors exhibited by African-American parental mentors be organized in a teachable format for African-American families? By utilizing a portraiture research design to study specific parental mentoring techniques and behavior exhibited by five female parents in African-American families which are intended to affect the self-esteem of their biological African-American female children and adolescents. The project focused on a unique group of African-American parents who had been recognized by the court system as *parental mentors*. They had been trained to use specific strategies and behaviors to assist their daughters in developing confidence in their ability to think and to cope with the basic challenges in life: success, happiness, self-worth, self-esteem, and efficacy. Overall, the results of the study showed supporting evidence of the importance of parenting African-American females in a diverse format which would allow the elements of self-love, confidence, and historical pride to aid in the comprehension of effective coping procedures. The emerging strategies that were a commonality among the mothers throughout the entire process were consistency, behavior representation, love, historical teachings, communication, processes, and involvement. The mentoring

component demonstrated by the mothers exposed them and their truths in a transparent form to all that were involved in a Rites of Passage process. This exposure allowed daughters to view them from a humanistic perspective without the authoritative title of mother, which also allowed them to relate more based on gender and cultural commonalities.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	8
Rationale	10
Research Questions.....	14
Limitations	16
Definition of Terms.....	17
Summary.....	18
Chapter Two: The Literature Review	19
Life Coaching.....	19
Life Coaching as Language	20
Rites of Passage	20
Self-Esteem.....	24
Colonization and Self-Esteem.....	28
Social Comparison Theory	33
Youth Depression and Self-Esteem	34
Mothers as Mentors and Life Coaches.....	37
Mother Daughter Relationships	44

Summary	47
Chapter Three: Methodology	49
The Research Site	49
Research Design.....	50
Data Collection and Analysis Procedures	51
Summary	55
Chapter Four: Results	56
Introduction to the Results	56
Adult Portraiture Introduction.....	60
Adult Portrait One.....	60
Adult Portrait Two	61
Adult Portrait Three	62
Adult Portrait Four.....	63
Adult Portrait Five	64
Adult Initial Interview.....	64
Adult and Child Interview	82
Adult Second Interview	93
Child Portraiture Introduction.....	98
Child Portrait One.....	98
Child Portrait Two	99
Child Portrait Three	99
Child Portrait Four	99
Child Portrait Five.....	99

Child Portrait Six	99
Child Initial Interview	99
Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflection.....	122
Discussion.....	122
Research Question One.....	124
Research Question Two	132
Recommendations for Future Research	134
References.....	137
Appendix A.....	144
Appendix B.....	146
Appendix C.....	148
Appendix D.....	149
Appendix E	150
Appendix F.....	151
Appendix G.....	152
Vitae.....	154

Chapter One: Introduction

There is no available job description for being a parent. But, if there were, it would contain the words *endless*, *diverse*, and *change* because the job of a parent is dependent upon the needs of the child. Some of the responsibilities of the parent are to educate, encourage, and provide the necessities for a child in a positive manner that will become the foundational framework for childrearing practices. The bond between a mother and her child is unique; the child is connected with the mother in various ways beyond that of the umbilical cord. The developmental stage in which the child is growing inside the mother's womb and the umbilical cord connects the two. Support of this theory is evident in Taylor's (2006) research, which exhibited that child and mother become an inseparable unit; they share moods, nutrients, and pain, but most of all they embark together on a new chapter in their lives. Taylor advanced a position that motherhood is an occupation just like school teaching and lecturing. The role and the responsibility of a mother is to instill morals and values while encouraging the child's development of a positive self-concept, which develops her self-esteem, "motherhood is a profession by itself" (Taylor, 2006, p.113). Self-esteem as defined by Schiraldi (2009) as being "central to our journey, it is a realistic, appreciative of oneself" (p. 20).

Background of the Study

Taylor (2006) stated that Black children are special people who must learn to love their beautiful, black self, which can help them develop a positive self-image. Taylor maintained that a Black mother should always inform and assure her children of their beauty. The same mother should also refrain from statements that may show preferences towards such things as one color or hair texture over another since this can negatively

affect a child's self-worth. The role of a mother is to provide a safe and loving environment, one that will help a child feel secure and strong and which contains powerful role models to counter stereotypes they may encounter that portray African-Americans as negligent parents (Taylor, 2006). Goggins II (1998) maintained in his research that parents are their children's first role models for future behaviors and beliefs, and this serves as the basis for parents serving as life coaches for their children.

Kamau (2006) reported that a lack of self-esteem among African-American women of all ages has become problematic over recent years due to the emphasis in popular culture placed on physical attributes and contemporary societal norms.

Black people often display low self-esteem resulting from many generations where kids have lived in economically disadvantaged families with only the presence of a mother, thus leaving these young people without male role models who could serve to confirm their self-worth. (p. 86)

Individuals, therefore, have been searching for ways to empower Black women, the mothers in Black society, thus aiding them to claim their dignity. Kamau stated,

many believe that there should be a national focus on educating all women; all willing women should be provided help to construct stable and lasting family structures, thus attacking what some have termed as a cycle of self-loathing which affects African-American women. (p. 86)

Finally, there is a strong belief that a message to Black children needs to be forceful and constant that being Black is as much a blessing as being White.

African-American women have a rich legacy of being spiritually strong, energetic, enterprising, and self-reliant women who have successfully overcome many

obstacles to make invaluable contributions to the betterment of humanity. As reported in Taylor (2006), Cicely Tyson said of her own experience, “My mother leads the pack as a role model. I regard her as I do all of the other black women throughout history, miraculous” (p. 179). African-Americans can be proud that Black history is rich with examples of strong and encouraging mothers, grandmothers, and wives who have continuously displayed great audacity and determination in many aspects of life (Gladney, 2009).

Research has shown that truthful young African-American females have disclosed horrific and heinous levels of self-hate and misery (Hooks, 1993). Yes, they are taking classes, going on dates, dressing trendy, and texting 40 friends a day, but in the privacy of their personhood, they have been psychologically terrorized by low self-esteem (Hooks, 1993). Branden (1987) explained that as the acclaim of others does not create self-esteem, neither does knowledge, skill, material possessions, marriage, or parenthood (p. 9). Ironically and perhaps surprising to some, many of these young ladies are not victims of poverty and inner-city deprivation. In fact, most of the students interviewed by Hooks (1993) came from materially privileged backgrounds. This reality establishes the fact that low self-esteem and self-hate among young African-American females transcends mere economics. Further, it is deeply rooted in a “condition that promotes nihilism and despair” (p. 5).

The researcher studied mentoring techniques and behaviors present within five female parents in African-American families who were selected as participants in a study based on the gender and age of biological children being raised, and the years of experience the parents have been working with the foster care of children and

government sanctioned adoption services. They have been trained as Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and designated as *parental mentors* by the family court and social service system in the St. Louis Metropolitan area.

The national association of CASA professionally recruits and intensively trains all volunteers to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom and other settings. They are designated as parental mentors because of their successful children's services experiences and their record in dealing with child abuse and neglect, and their demonstrated ability to solve problems. This is a case study, which will determine specific mentoring techniques and behaviors as demonstrated by parent participants in their relationship with their own daughters, and the effects of this style of parenting on the self-esteem of their biological female children.

The purpose of this research was to study specific techniques and behaviors exhibited by selected parents in African-American families that could possibly affect the self-esteem of their biological African-American female children. Self-esteem for the purposes of this study is defined as thoughts and feelings one has that focus on the ability of a person to give and receive love, the regard one holds for oneself, the value one places on one's personhood, and the confidence one has in his or her ability to think, judge, choose, and decide (Hooks, 2002). The focus of mentoring is recognized as a way to bring together a person with experience in a certain area (mentor) and a person without experience in that area (mentee) in a developmental relationship, which will enhance the mentee's personal growth. This research evaluated the relationship of effectiveness on self-esteem as portrayed by mothers in the dual role of parent and mentor.

Interviews were scheduled with each parent to discover their successes and failures as parental mentors. Daughters from these families recorded their experiences on a daily basis in a journal, in addition to recordings of parental engagement and researcher observation. Participants, under the direction of the researcher, viewed the film "*Akeelah and the Bee*" (Atchison, 2006). This film was chosen for multiple reasons: to educate participants about the components of self-esteem, to stimulate discussion concerning the relevance of self-esteem to life challenges that African-American female children and adolescents may encounter educationally, and as a visual display of varying family structures and strategies employed by the mother in each family to assist their female children and/or adolescents to develop self-esteem. This 2006 film, rated PG, and written and directed by Atchison is an American drama that explores issues of education and self-esteem in a low socioeconomic African American community. Various video situations based on self-esteem and the skills and behaviors used to deal with each situation are discussed with the participants to gain their perspective. Participants, employing journals, used the major concepts to make journal entries concerning their perceptions of each video situation. Parents were expected to encourage their children to make their entries on a regularly scheduled basis.

Following the video exercises, the researcher separately engaged parent and child participants in discussions about their perceptions of the situations and behaviors, which they recorded in their journals. Discussion of the film and its similarities to the family's personal lives served as a visual portrayal to gain parents' comprehension of subliminal self-esteem issues experienced by their daughters.

Statement of the Problem

Research showed that low self-esteem with African-American adolescent females is a growing epidemic, based on how they perceive themselves physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997). It is important to realize that there are times in many women's lives when their confidence is shaken and their self-esteem is low; however, it grows more apparent when comparing themselves to others based on the things about which they are less confident. Low self-esteem can result in the development of dysfunctional relationships, feelings associated with mental depression, and the creation in a person's mind of a negative and bleak perspective on life. An array of factors can contribute to low self-esteem, including (but certainly not limited to) poor relationships with parents or siblings; being the victim of a physically, sexually, or mentally abusive relationship; or experiencing racist or discriminatory practices in one's personal or professional life.

A central question in this study is "How do successful African-American females exhibit self-esteem characteristics of love, acceptance, value, respect, and appreciation of themselves regardless of everyday life situations, societal problems, stereotypical attitudes of others, and other differences they may encounter?" Branden (1987) stated that this matter demands that African-American females experience some form of internal stabilization and standardization that allows them to be unmoved by external stimuli. This disposition would provide a foundation of unwavering self-awareness not influenced or affected by others. Branden offered a recommendation to challenge the person to "live consciously," by knowing and accepting all personal flaws and attributes (p. 5). The researcher stated that if the person is no longer a victim of circumstances, she

now becomes a driver and executor of her own beneficial circumstances. By living consciously, she now determines and declares that she is worth unconditional love and offers as much value as any other female, African-American or not.

Goggins (1998) maintained that this conscious living is further anchored in a tradition that reaches backward to eventually live forward. Nurtured by a rich ancestral legacy of social continuity, African slaves and descendent African-American freed slaves perpetuated their unique ethnic norms through rites of passage. Replaced today by formal systems of education, African kings and queens, tribal leaders, and matrons full of the spirit transmitted the collective and cultural forms of wisdom to their descendants (Goggins, 1998). From this ancient platform, African American children were taught how to live intentionally, morally, respectably, and industrially. Opportunity was pursued. Land was cultivated. Methodologies were demonstrated and continuity was assured. When these valuable nuggets of insight are not transferred to subsequent generations, the art of living consciously is threatened (Goggins, 1998).

Williams and Menendez (2007) found that African sages clearly demonstrated in antiquity the abilities and tactics that were necessary to sustain their communities and subsequently usher their sons and daughters from the plantations of their oppressors to living consciously as free citizens following the period of Reconstruction in United States history. Today, African-American parents are to be coaches and mentors to their daughters just as their ancestors coached, mentored, and nurtured their families. As coaches, parents can demonstrate the skills and competencies of an adult with life skills, even training to assist their daughters to live self-directed lives, intentionally designing their future as opposed to 'getting over' their challenging past (Williams & Menendez,

2007). Within the context of a long-term relationship, coaches aid their trainees in creating vision and goals for all aspects of their lives, and even the strategies for some of the goals (Williams & Menendez, 2007). Tactically speaking, parents of African-American females must help their daughters define the quality of their relationships by filtering and recommending as opposed to forcing and ruling. Having modeled the wisdom of the ancestors before their daughters, they established their credibility and experience to offer life lessons to their daughters. Hooks (1993) stated that since there will always be days when the female will be challenged to stay on course, the input of parents will ensure she's focused on "recovery" as opposed to rehearsing the same destructive behavior (p. 56).

Framed by the long-term relationship, African-American parents are able to offer sustainable assistance to their daughters. When young females are involved with family in scheduled get-togethers, monthly outings, or shopping they are engaged in some form of modeling of behavior or receiving communication from their parents. Overt behavior from parents and communication provides a teachable framework for both African-American parents and their female children.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose for this study was to conduct an analysis of specific techniques, strategies, and behaviors exhibited by African-American parents, which can positively affect the self-esteem of their female children and adolescents. The researcher believes this study will yield the data necessary to craft a parental mentoring package. Parks and Anderson (2000) described Parent-Mentoring as

Child-centered and future-oriented. It is an enlightened, loving form of parenting that helps parents have a better relationship with their children. The Parental-Mentoring method is a process that is utilized before children move into the high risk zone. (p. 12)

This combination of parenting and mentoring utilizes a 'village' of caring adults to advance and nurture the child. This work is intended as a case study to examine the dynamics within five African-American families as they courageously attempt to use parental mentoring skills and strategies to positively affect the self-esteem of their biological daughters.

Goggins (1998) argued that viewed through the spirit of ancestral continuity and legacy, the youth of today are victims of an identity crisis. Daily wandering in a daze of "who am I," African-American teens seek validation from peers, fads, brand names, electronic toys, the right cell phone, blog blasting, and unmerited popularity. Therefore, the suggestion was for African-Americans to return to the rites of passage (Goggins, 1998). The Rites of Passage process brings youth and elders together so the elders can pass on tradition, culture, history, and their special knowledge. The African Rites tradition is an academic system of teaching through experimental exercises, pictures, systems, and forms. It is a process used to guide and nurture our youth (Goggins, 1998, p. iii). Goggins concluded that contrary to what he regarded as unconventional wisdom, parents are a child's primary and perennial model for behavior and belief. However, African-American female children are trapped and suspended by a social jadedness that blinds them and blocks them from positive self-esteem, due to the lack thereof exhibited by their mother.

The backdrop of this study is the cultural myths associated with and perpetuated in popular culture concerning the physiological and psychological constructs of African-American women as African-American women. Psychologically, terms such as “blackball”, “blackmail”, “blacklist”, “black-market”, have never carried a positive connotation (Browder, 1989, p. 7). Hooks (2002) stated from her research that, consciously or subconsciously, Blacks have been made to feel inferior and/or less than whites, because of the negative and demeaning claims associated with the color “black.” Further research discovered the truth claims of this “black enigma” with subjects who were in the process of receiving an education that most blacks could only dream of receiving. Seated and ranked among some of the best students in the country, beautiful and bright young African-American college students were yet, beset by internal feelings of unworthiness, ugliness inside and outside (Hooks, 2002).

Rationale

The researcher, who served as a human services professional at the time of the study, perceived a need to understand factors within African-American families that may promote a productive and fulfilling lifestyle among family members, particularly females. The phrase ‘Mothers raise their daughters and love their sons,’ is a proverb commonly referenced in the African-American community to describe the character of the mother-daughter relationship. The historical meaning of this proverb relates to the quality of breast milk and the frequency of feeding which increased in African mothers with the birth of a daughter verses diminishing with the birth of a son. Metaphorically, the proverb signifies the larger biological investment mothers place on their daughters than their sons to positively alter the family’s socio-economic status. Thus, the mother

teaches the daughter holistically—lessons of achievement, marriage, parenting, and domestic protocol. Character is based on experiences that come with African-American womanhood. It unfolds as the mother teaches and coaches her daughter on how to survive, cope, and succeed in an environment that may at times be hostile, while fostering family and community loyalty (Leadbeater & Way, 1996). The researcher's mission was to study the influence of African-American parents who have been recognized as parental mentors as they use specific strategies and behaviors to assist their daughters in developing confidence in their (a) ability to think and to cope with the basic challenges in life; (b) confidence in the right to be successful and happy; (c) feeling of being worthy and deserving of what they strive for; and (d) feeling of being entitled to assert their needs and wants, and enjoy the fruits of their efforts (Hooks, 2002).

Self-esteem is important to personal success and failure; it is the key to understanding one's self and others (Branden, 1987). The demand for such cultural reinforcement is dictated by a plethora of dysfunctional outcomes with females lacking self-esteem and confidence (Hall & Brown-Thirston, 2011). These outcomes range from anxiety, depression, fear of intimacy and success, the abuse of substances, academic underachievement, spousal and domestic battering, suicide, sexual dysfunction, and child molestation (Hall & Brown-Thirston, 2011, p. xvii). According to Branden (1987), these displays of dysfunction can clearly be traced to poor self-esteem. Therefore, one of the primary steps to redirect challenging youth who suffer from low self-esteem, is to recognize and comprehend the family origins of self-esteem and its behavioral results and actions (Coopersmith, 1967).

“All children can learn no matter what the circumstances are of their birth or of their environment” (Goggins, 1998, ii). This points to the existence of hope for young African-American families no matter their origin. Often, matrons of this young demographic are controlled by the external factors of appearance, the defining messages of the media, and the alluring promises of propaganda, which promises instant popularity and satisfaction if they will try the latest and greatest. The eldest maternal female in a family is often referred to as the matron. Thomas (2008) wrote,

We women have a bad habit of looking at what other females have and comparing ourselves to them and when we do that we always seem to come up short. It is this cycle of horizontal evaluation that continues to hold young African-American daughters and girls hostage from true independence and personal comfort with themselves. (p. 37)

Hooks (2002) asked if this condition was because of racism and if so, had it always been so. She concluded that perhaps a little of both was truth; it was both racism and it has existed for a long period of time. Certainly, racism is referenced as the sole culprit of low self-esteem among blacks (Hooks, 2002). However, among the young, males and females alike, the position of the pendulum, praise or blame (Burt & Perlis, 1999) dictates the degree to which the young are fortified internally with confidence and affirmation from the praise of their parents and communities or desecrated by blame, because of misguided words, insensitive authority figures and a trail of abusive relationships. For both young and old alike, one’s concept of self is who and what they consciously and subconsciously think of themselves—physical traits, psychological traits, assets and liabilities, and certainly one’s self-esteem (Branden, 1987). Why her skin is

darker or her lips are thicker is never quite answered. It is, however, true that the privileged and seemingly happy and smart girls are white, fair, and liked by everybody. Television commercials and leading ladies are usually the same kind of girls.

Browder (1989) stated the choices and decisions that are made by an individual are impacted by self-concept, which for many young African-American mothers is draped in low self-esteem. He explained that this is the Law of Karma at work, which is the universal principle of 'cause and effect.' It is inevitable, Browder argued, that the ravages of dysfunctional relationships, diabolical predators disguised as boyfriends and drugs would find a young Black girl who feels she does not deserve anything better. This internal void of emptiness only leads to the cycle of so many African-American women who grow up into domestic slaves caring for and doing for everyone while neglecting their own needs, if those needs are even known (Thomas, 2008).

Hooks (2002) explained,

Praise delivers an outcome diametrically opposed to that elicited through blame. This dynamic of praise was clearly present in the ancestral pathos of slaves and the freed in two timeless forms. First, African slaves defined and developed a culture of soulfulness and resistance which had no regard for economics, but always triumphed over dehumanization. Colonization was a circumstance of their existence, but certainly not criteria for identity. Hope was theirs to be and do whatever they set their minds to do. Secondly, the community of the faithful, who regularly called on the God, was known for her words of mutual encouragement and affirmation of its members. The self-esteem of many blacks

was nurtured in the crucible of opposition and optimism, difficulty and deliberation, rejection and celebration. (p. 26)

With this same focus on instilling positive reinforcement and intrinsic value within young African-American girls, the subjects of this study offer solutions to turn the tide of generations of females missing the opportunity to perpetuate the positive cycle. It focuses on successful African-American matriarchs and the reasons for their success with particular emphasis on the influences of parental life coaching skills, which can be transmitted to their female children, and how African-American females can transmit their learned self-esteem to others.

Research Questions

In this qualitative study, the researcher worked with five female African-American parents and their six female children, either adolescents or children, to determine the answers to two questions:

1. What strategies and behaviors are used by court-designated exemplary parents in African-American families to positively affect the self-esteem of their daughters?
2. How can strategies and behaviors exhibited by African-American female parents with their daughters be organized in a teachable format for African-American families?

The following questions were written as a guide for female adolescents and children as they engaged in their structured journaling activities. These questions served as a base for the researcher to develop a guide, which assisted parents, adolescents, and children to conduct structured journaling, interviewing, and observation activities after viewing video situations addressing components of self-esteem. The original two research questions promoted the composition of additional self-questions to provide a

reference for those who were viewing and analyzing the video situations.

1. Which components of self-esteem shown in the video were most memorable? Why?
2. Which of these components of self-esteem shown in the video are present in my life?
3. Which components of self-esteem shown in the video have I seen in others I know?
4. How can parents affect the self-esteem of their children?
5. How can adults affect the self-esteem of other adults?
6. How can outside sources such as other people, and the media affect the self-esteem of persons?

Journal Entries: Instructions for participants.

While you are observing the events that occur during the video simulations, use your understanding of self-esteem to respond to the following questions using your journal:

1. What events in the film did I feel were most important to you in understanding what is self-esteem? Why were these events so important?
2. The film shows various part of self-esteem. Which of these parts are present in my life?
3. Which of these parts of self-esteem as shown in the video do I see in the lives of others I know?
4. How does my parent contribute most to the development of my self-esteem?
5. How much is my self-esteem affected by other people and the media?

These were just a few topics to guide and focus the journaling and observational interviewing. If there were any personal thoughts or concerns that the participants had regarding self-esteem or how it should be encouraged, they were to enter it in their

journal. Their entries also included thoughts or ideas of how others and society could work on addressing issues concerning self-esteem.

Limitations

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), in any study that either describes or tests relationships, there is always the possibility that the relationship shown in the data is in fact due to or explained by something else. If so, then the relationship is not at all what it seems and it may lose whatever meaning it appears to have (p. 178).

When this occurs, the study could be subject to threats to internal validity, which is based on the study actually addressing what it is supposed to measure, and its reliability, which refers to its values as a research resource in other studies, or its replicability. The researcher determined that the following factors could pose a threat to the internal validity and reliability of the findings of the study:

1. This study was restricted to a limited number of participants who comprise a purposeful and convenient rather than a random sample.
2. The study was specific to a unique group of participants and can prevent its replication to further test the validity of the study.
3. Members of the study group, other than parent and child or children, did not interact with each other. Group interaction was restricted to communication with the researcher.
4. The amount and intensity of parent involvement with mentoring techniques, strategies, and behaviors varied thus affecting the consistency of information/data gathered by the researcher.
5. The researcher as interviewer unintentionally displayed bias concerning certain questions asked during interviews. Therefore, subjectivity trumped objectivity.

6. The researcher did not received formal training in the process of conducting interviews.

7. There was a limited amount of information available concerning the research questions being pursued. The subject matter of this study was relatively new and limited research existed.

8. This study occurred over a short period of time.

Definition of Terms

Karma: The universal principle of cause and effect claiming that for every action there is a reaction. Karma is the source of a positive portrayal of African contributions to the civilization and history (Browder, 1989).

Life coach: An operating system which engages human relationships between trained coaches and people, also known as their clients, to assist them in the design of their future as opposed to trying to remedy and get over their past (Williams & Menendez, 2007).

Life coaching strategies: In contrast to traditional therapy, life coach strategies tactically enable a functioning and emotionally balanced client to progressively rise to a higher level of functioning (Williams & Davis, 2007).

Life skills: Life skills are best defined as the ability to live in concert with ones values and beliefs with minimal to no internal indicators of frustration, conflict, or living off-center (Williams & Menendez, 2007). Living skillfully in the context of this research is adhering to a moral barometer that governs and challenges balance and an equilibrium and moves the person forward and prevents stagnation (Lieberman, 2005).

Nihilism: A total and absolute destructiveness especially towards the world and at-large and including oneself. This behavior is clearly demonstrated in the lives of young African-American females by the fear of being unmasked as inferiors to their White peers, stressed to the point of hair loss, monthly episodes of an attempt of suicide, anorexic, bulimic, or addicted to drugs (Hook, 2003).

Portraiture: An approach to interviewing which involves focusing on a specific component of a context and the voice of the individual describing it, in order to comprehend their sense of the veracity involved. Portraiture involves giving the fullest possible expression to the interviewee's voice, through consideration of the context, relationship, emergent themes and aesthetic whole (Derrick, 2009).

Summary

This study views African-American female parents as mentors for their female children with regard to self-esteem. Parents, in the role of mentor, exhibit specific techniques and behaviors with nurturing, care giving, modeling, interpersonal communication, counseling, coaching, teaching, training, developing, and understanding, which affect the self-esteem of their female children and adolescents. The study utilizes a portraiture style methodology to interview five African-American mothers and their six daughters to gain an all-inclusive comprehension of how specific rearing practices affect the self-esteem of the daughters.

Chapter Two: The Literature Review

Chapter Two contains a review of the literature pertinent to understanding this study; it begins with literature dealing with varying perspectives and theories of life coaching. Following this, effective traits of life coaching are reviewed. The discussion on the rites of passage and family traditions is followed by a section on African-American females and their self-esteem, colonization and self-esteem, youth depression and self-esteem, social comparison theory, and self-esteem's impact on life skills. In the next section of the literature review, the techniques that parents and life coaches use, and the success they have achieved are reviewed. Chapter Two concludes with research on the challenges that parents as life coaches and parental mentors face, followed by a summary of the entire literature review.

Life Coaching

Life coaching is the basic operating system (Williams & Menendez, 2007). As systems are fundamentally comprised of inputs, processing, and outputs, so life coaching follows this paradigm. Clients from various walks of life provide input ranging from depression to how to get organized to how to lose weight. The operative and imperative component in this system is the coach's ability to listen (Williams & Davis, 2007; Williams & Menendez, 2007). Unique to life coaching is the concept that listening is not coming up with solutions, as this is a "great obstacle to coaching" (Williams & Davis, 2007, p. 108). This is the incubator that allows the client's issues to posit and settle within the coach who consequently, restates the core message and its meaning to the client for clarification. Research also suggested life coaching is a hybrid of psychologies from some of the most prominent minds and therapies (Williams & Menendez, 2007). In

fact, this new and emergent discipline synthesizes the tools from other fields (Williams & Menendez, 2007, p. xxii). As a result, the life coach is able to selectively apply the “appropriate” form of listening like therapy, but not as therapy, to assist clients with their solution as oppose to providing a solution.

Life Coaching as Language

According to Williams and Menendez (2007), life coaching as listening leads to another related theory which indicates a language distinctive as an imperative for client conversation. Language for this study is not defined as dialect. Language in this context is exclusively the mode and method of conversation, which segments dialogue into a beginning, a middle and an end, otherwise called the sacred or inspiring space. Such conversation is sacred as it is not your typical chat. (p. 17)

Williams and Menendez advanced a position that these dialogues are conversations that are foreign to their traditional lifestyle. It is the style of conversation that is valued, and unique, which validates the designation of sacred. The client is ushered into a comfortable place of discovery, which allows them to see their visions, and goals, with more insight. Consequently, they are inspired to share more, while building their confidence and motivation about a diverse and positive lifestyle. This innovative way of seeing prepares the client for the middle stage of dialogue, which facilitates planning and strategy to bring clarification and direction to their visions and goals.

Rites of Passage

When considering the origins of raising African-American females, research points to ancestral paradigms from the African village. The nine pillars: spirituality,

harmony, movement, energy, affect, communalism, expressive individualism, oral tradition, and social time perspective were foundational for raising family and village sustainability (Goggins, 1998). Each of these cultural components contributed to the construct of family traditions, which were basically subsets of the culture. Specific points of wisdom were adapted to further frame and define family traditions.

Consequently, family traditions were the child's initial exposure to the village and its essential pillars for community. Essential to the parenting process is the pillar of expressive individualism, which "refers to the belief that each person has unique and distinctive talents which must be developed and expressed in order to bring validity and meaning to one's life" (Goggins, 1998, p. 27). Based on this premise, the outcome of an African child was not available for social discussion. Much aligned with the ancient Jewish proverb, parents are responsible for knowing their child's focus and from that conclusion design and craft their individualism in the specific way aligned with their specialized area of focus (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 48).

In addition to eliminating chance and probability to a child's outcome, expressive individualism is achieved when children are challenged to know not only what they want to do, but who they want to be; when parents focus their children on a calling as opposed to just a professional career; and when children value intellectual curiosity as opposed to grades only. According to Boteach (2008) from the *Raising A Meusch* column, "a child is focused on character as opposed to occupation when they deal with who they should be as opposed to what they want to do" (p. 1). Aligned with the African village, this parental methodology prepares the child to be internally and socially whole without any regard for their occupation.

When children are focused on their calling as opposed to a career, they are sure to discover their unique gift, which complements a child's personality and individuality and shapes his/her contributions to the larger society (Boteach, 2008). A paradox about Americans is that 60% of Americans have a college degree, but 60% of college-educated adults cannot find Iraq on a map (Boteach, 2008, p. 1). This further supports the model of expressive individualism by raising children who are not exclusively trained to perform as opposed to knowing; to love knowledge as opposed to just acing exams; to be curious about life as a whole rather than specializing in specific subjects (Boteach, 2008). This focus on the child's individual content, gifting, wiring, and bent transcends cultures, race, and class and establishes the fact that a child's odds of growing up balanced increase when the parenting enterprise is focused on the child's individualism. Such a model eludes the questionable outcomes of so many African-American females today. Issues of self-esteem, body image and self-worth were clearly addressed in this stage of raising children.

This concept of expressive individualism is further confirmed by the research of Hooks (1993) who distinguished the emotionally stable versus the emotionally unstable among the Black female. Hooks (1993) noted, "black women need to learn about right livelihood" (p. 33). This venture entails bypassing the message of getting ahead, which focuses on how much money people are making as opposed to what craft and discipline they are performing to make the money. The young African-American female was raised to identify the right livelihood within the village and return as an adult to contribute to the village.

Within the village emerged rites of passage, a critical and coveted process which clearly embodied its carrying out of spirituality, harmony, movement, expressive individualism, and social time perspective (Goggins, 1998). A cyclical process, rites of passage had within its existence a model of preparation, separation, transition and reincorporation. According to Goggins (1998), preparation is that stage in which a member (or a child) learns how to be a member of the larger community (p. 39).

Founding Mother of a collegiate affiliate student based organization, Black Women United, Monica Badgett (personal conversation, July 5, 2011) claimed

the term Rites of Passage means an activity of celebration marking the successful transition from one life stage to another. From a holistic perspective, one must view the entire developmental life cycle as a series of transformation. Africans view life cycle in five different stages of evolution; birth, puberty, marriage, eldership, and death. An adolescent rite of passage is a community affirmation of a transformation in behavior and status of an individual adolescent or an adolescent group as the result of the successful completion of some prescribed criterion.

Goggins (1998) suggested,

African centered rites of passage process purpose is to promote an individual's positive self-efficacy and their own sense of competence. The process provides a framework, which fosters the association to heritage, therefore allowing a person to access communal wisdom when evaluating experiences; this in turn provides guides for interpreting information and developing strategies for fulfilling a personal mission and intent in life. (p. 22)

There are a variety of rites of passage models, however, the process is universal because it consists of three essential components: preparation, separation, and transition. Matriculation through these components is not necessarily linear, nor are the components mutually exclusive. Parks and Anderson (2000) suggested that parental-mentors guide children through the rites of passage of childhood into confident, responsible adults who take on respective leadership roles in society. A robust rites of passage process enables children to leave home with assurance and confidence in their own coping skills. They have a desire embedded within them to succeed in the pursuit of whatever goals they choose (p. 13).

Self-Esteem

There are a variety of definitions according to scholarly researchers as to how an individual defines his or her self-esteem. Due to the personal attachment associated with self-esteem, for the purpose of this study it will be recognized as an individual's perception and regard about herself, in addition to her self-appreciation, love, and pride as an African-American female (Joseph, 1994; Rosenberg, 1965).

In the halls of Ivy League universities, offices, hospital rooms, or on the couch at home, a recurring cry has been the profound lack of self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy—feelings of insufficiency and not being enough among African-Americans (Hooks, 2002). African-Americans have grappled with the issue of low self-esteem from slavery to the present day (Hooks, 2002, p. xi). The acquisition of earned degrees, status, money, and even material gain has frankly failed to overcome basic self-concepts passed down from slavery. Critical and almost mandatory to qualitative living is one's self-esteem for it is the mechanism that affects and leverages each and every aspect of life

which includes how we function at work, in relationships, as students, how we operate as parents, to how high or low we will go in life (Branden, 1987).

Self-esteem, fully realized, is the experience that we are appropriate to life and to the requirements of life. . . Self-esteem is confidence in our ability to think; confidence in our ability to cope with the basic challenges of life; and confidence in our right to be successful and happy; the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants, achieve our values, and enjoy the fruits of our efforts. (Branden, 1987, p. xii)

McAdoo (2002) suggested that Black children who are exposed to explicit messages about race affairs are more likely to reject stereotypic images of their race, exhibit high self-esteem, and experience academic success. Black children are less likely to develop a negative self-image if their parents skillfully embed messages about self-esteem and self-worth into their family practice. This approach will encourage resistance against beliefs, attitudes, and practices that can erode children's confidence and weaken positive identity structure and development (McAdoo, 2002, p. 101). Compounded by childhood situations, stimuli, images, nurture or the lack thereof, the phenomenon of low self-esteem can live on from and through multiple generations. Based upon the levels of love, respect, nurturing and encouragement an African-American child's self-esteem either will be nurtured or undermined (Branden, 1987). Taylor (2006) explained that all children are born without ideas about race, it is the responsibility of the parents to teach them a variety of important lessons about race: "That all people are equal and no one should be judged by the color of their skin" (p. 95). Consider, a beautiful and educated Black female whose skin color was not light and fair, but dark (Williams, 2007). The

darkest sibling of her family, she was regularly teased and taunted by her siblings. With no defense from her mother or father, this battered young woman was left to conclude that her dark skin was a definitive trait of ugliness (Williams, 2007). Ignored by her mother, and sexually abused by her father, she journeyed into a black hole in which she suffered from isolation and feelings of worthlessness. Between death and living was the hope and belief of getting away to college for this young-girl. Her thoughts of resolution were to escape as far away from the abuse as possible (Williams, 2007, p. 35). Williams calls this unfortunate dilemma the “Double Whammy”, which is predicated on being Black and being a woman (p. 33). Women are discriminated against as a group, regardless of their race. African-Americans are also discriminated against as a group, regardless of gender. “Since we’re both Black and women, that’s how we get the double whammy” (Williams, 2007, p. 34).

The young girls’ story is an alarming and classic case of how both the African-American home and the larger society send the message that being Black and female makes two strikes against women before they even get up to bat (Williams, 2007). This further feeds directly into the negative stigma attached to the role of Black women in society. They have, since slavery, been deemed as having no worth, and seen as a workhorse whose emotional needs do not matter, thus her body is to be exploited (Williams, 2007). As a result, depression among African-American women is 50% higher than it is among White women (p. 32). This females’ story, however, is just the tip of the iceberg. The politics of color are all too common among African-Americans (Hooks, 2002). The frequent, but frowned upon term, “nigger” is one of the reasons for this self-esteem crisis. Slogans like “a black nigger is a no good nigger” or watching adults

degrade a child by suggesting he (or she) is evil because he is so Black, or by hearing a child speak contemptuously to another child about their appearance (Hooks, 2002, p. 42). The anti-racists and militant voices provided a glimmer of hope to end this color caste system and lift self-esteem among Blacks, but this glimmer quickly faded (Hooks, 2002). The colonized mind could not shake the internalized racism embedded by White supremacy as Black exploitation films sent a powerful message to African-American women (Hooks, 2002). "If you were light you were all right, if you were brown stick around, if you were black get back" (Hooks, 2002, p. 43). This system further poisoned African-American women with messages that almost demonized being Black and female. The Negro woman's Black face, African features, and kinky hair are physical attributes, which place her far from the American ideal of beauty, and make her, with reference to the American ideal, ugly. When the feeling of ugliness is reinforced by the rejection from both family and society, the developing female acquires a feeling not only of being undesirable and therefore unwanted, but also of being mutilated of having been shaped by natural forces in an ill manner (Hooks, 2002).

The paralyzing grip of the woman's physical features is clearly capable of blinding the African-American female to her true identity and beauty. As with the young-girl, she was unaware of the interests of young men who thought she was very attractive (Williams, 2007). She could not shake the obvious truth set in her mind by those who were responsible for her nurture and affirmation. In addition to various psychological and emotional issues that her parents were attempting to manage, they also had an issue with skin color. The mentality and cause of their behavior toward their

daughter is immersed in a well-crafted and systemic order that began long before Africans were free.

Regardless of the socio-economic direction of African-American families, inferences about the consequences to Black child development can be overly pessimistic. McAdoo (2002) explained that, “African-American families have a resiliency and strength that has withstood poor social circumstances” (p. 124).

Colonization and Self-Esteem

Hooks (2002) suggested African slaves discovered variances in the treatment of other Africans based upon skin complexion. Through observation, this system of casting Africans by color was noted as the frequency of favor from White colonizers. Fair skin and fine hair was equivalent to acceptance, as opposed to dark skin tone and coarser hair that was equivalent to trouble. This system of colonization effectively stratified and created the unfortunate differences in African slaves born of the slave master’s repeated episodes of violent rape from those born of African women. Hooks (2002) explained that, to institutionalize this system of colonization, slave owners and their biracial descendants created a diversity that only celebrated the resemblance to Whites, modeled the moral values and aesthetics of Whites, thus creating a standard of living that was higher than the standards of the darker skinned slaves. Long after slavery ended a new privileged class of Blacks with fairer skin complexions participated in creating and sustaining hierarchical social arrangements where they reigned over their darker counterparts. “Skin tone itself became the mark of status. Like the racist white master and mistress, a fair-skinned black person could deploy degrading on the basis of color to ridicule and treat with contempt darker individuals” (Hooks, 2002, p. 39).

Colonization clearly focused on the outward appearance. In the 19th century, however, it was not thought to be as important and crucial to the African's state of mind and spirit (Hooks, 2002). Black males, in pursuit of White slave owners' approval and favor, modeled their manners and standards and sought after fairer-skinned females as mates, which was their yielding to this hierarchical model based on color. White slave owners continued with similar thought by equating this fairness of skin color with intellectual capability. Consequently, the same Black males who were willing to mate with fairer-skinned females to sustain this status system now rebelled at the notion that a person's color was a factor of their intellect (Hooks, 2002). In addition, the mothers of the lighter-skinned females strongly advocated for their security and access to the master's resources. Logically, mothers of darker-skinned daughters were opposed to this system of linking intellect to the color of a person's skin. Darker skinned individuals were not inferior (Hooks, 2002, p. 40). The result was a psychological separation within the ranks of Africans, which included a stance against the notion of darker-skinned Africans as inferior to whites, otherwise called racism. It further included the acceptance and perpetuation of this hierarchical claim that lighter skin implied more intellectual ability and a superior to those Africans of darker-skin (Hooks, 2002). This merging of two categories led to the privileged Black and the non-privileged Black. According to Hooks (2002), this concept is most evident in historical pictures from the inception to the present day of students in predominantly Black colleges and universities, representing a visual collage of skin color politics. These pictures that Hooks (2002) referred to, would showcase extremely fair-skinned, African-American, female students, which were more acceptable by their Caucasian counterpart, and represented the privileged being, they

happily continued their reign over darker-skinned African-Americans. “Their color status tyranny, like that of the white colonizer, was advanced by the politics of shame” (Hooks, 2002, p. 41).

This hobby of shaming, brutal at times, became the catalyst of low self-esteem, which led to self-sabotage among Blacks in regards to their skin color, hair texture, and overall body image (Hooks, 2002). The mass media advanced this hobby of shaming as Blacks with darker skin were consistently portrayed as servants, those with lesser intelligence, or a villain (Hooks, 2002). The “good” beautiful Black woman was always of a lighter skin complexion with straight hair (Hooks, 2002, p. 46). Among the sexes, this damaging and debilitating reality continued to effect African-American females more than males (Hooks, 2002). In Black youth culture, this institutionalized colonization carefully engineered tremendous damage to the Black female. Hooks (2002) continued to emphasize that, “dark skinned females are rarely depicted at all. And even light-skinned black females get no play unless they have long straight hair” (p. 49). Hooks (2002) pointed out, that this color status system has “most exposed and interrogated in the fiction written by black female authors” (p. 49). Stories detailing the chronological trauma and suffering endured by African-American women illustrated their tragic experiences, and illuminated how they internalized low self-esteem.

According to Hooks (2002),

novelist Tony Morrison is the first black female novelist to critique the concept of physical beauty and to also confess that she was never able to look at a female face and not assign it to a scale of beauty that was totally based upon the scale of the silver screen. (p. 50)

This dangerous and destructive cancer of psychological division was not limited to Black female novelists, but also included other African-Americans. These individuals adamantly opposed the racism of colonization, but yet, passively subscribed to various ways of thinking about beauty and appearance that is undoubtedly aligned with white supremacists thought (Hooks, 2002). The adolescence phase for children at times is filled with unpleasant experiences of taunting and teasing by their peers. It is a time when it is complicated to view oneself in a mirror and say, "I like myself and I am competent" (Turnage, 2004, p. 21). The verbalization and belief of such a statement derived from a reassuring culture and environment, in addition to the teaching of self-esteem and self-love.

When Herron (1997), a Black author, published *Nappy Hair*, it created a social stir among African-American parents as this piece of literature was about a young African-American girl who was continuously ridiculed for having a coarse, tightly coiled hair texture, which was derogatorily described as nappy (Hooks, 2002). The book was publicly popularized when a White educator was threatened by black parents for sharing the book with students. Despite notoriety gained by the book, the original conflicting reasons expressed by Black parents were never brought to the public's attention. Hooks (1993) pointed out how "this work simply perpetuated the brutal sociological and psychological beating of shaming as her white peers pointed out to her that the author of this book was black" (p. 51). In other words, there should be no hysteria around this issue as it is Black on Black literary discussion. Prominent in other literature including *Nappy Hair*, there was a representation of fairer-skinned Blacks clustering together in privilege, and darker-skinned Blacks clustering together in despair. It is the reality that

African-Americans have internalized the thought patterns of the White supremacist notion (Hooks, 2002). “Colonized grown black people constitute the group that emotionally abuses black children by shaming them about their bodies daily” (Hooks, 2002 p. 51).

Many African-Americans within their hearts are opposed to this internalized racism and know they are just as intelligent as any varying Black complexion. In order to gain employment and realize career advancement, they have resolved to “wear the mask” (Hooks, 2002 p. 52) which could include straightening the hair. Many Whites have come to identify Blacks who wear their hair in its natural form as those who are boisterous, and proud of their ethnicity, which represents Black pride. This Black pride is perceived by many Whites as being equal to anti-White. Given the advances made by many African-Americans to gain a measure of equality within society, the impact on collective self-esteem remains minimal (Hooks, 2002). This disturbing reality has so many faces as seen with a young African-American female who thought the playing field was level and racism did not exist in her world.

Hooks (2002) shared the story of this young Black female who claims she did not really see Blackness in high school (p. 163). Her mom told her often that she thought she was White. The young student responded by telling her mother that they do not see color at her school and she is treated no differently at her school because of her color. Over time, however, she began to see quite the opposite and she began to note that she was being treated differently. As a consequence, her self-esteem sunk as she was made to feel she was never quite good or smart enough.

Social Comparison Theory

Frisby (2000) suggested there is a realistic and penetrating outcome among African-American women when they are presented with visual images of the “ideal beauty” as a direct consequence of social comparison theory (p. 10). This theory asserted individuals have a need to evaluate themselves and that they do so via comparison with others. Additional study has offered self-improvement and self-enhancement as two additional motives to social comparison (Frisby, 2000). Self-evaluation is the tool that a Black female would use to accurately determine where she stands in relationship to the idealized beauty of women portrayed and featured in advertising. Self-improvement subsequently results from the African-American female engaging in upward comparisons with the intent to feel efficacious, inspired, and motivated (Frisby, 2000). She is further moved to engage in behavior and/or employ the products advertised that she may eventually look like or become like the image displayed in the advertisement.

Studies, however, often show that engagement in upward comparisons result in both self-enhancing and self-deflating emotional postures (Frisby, 2000). Self-enhancement occurs as a direct result of a person engaging in downward comparisons that includes using those similar to themselves or even inferior than themselves (Frisby, 2000). From this perspective, self-enhancement is the practice of African-American females comparing themselves to other African-American females who they assess to be less attractive or desirable as they are. This angle of social comparison theory is very threatening, because people harbor unrealistically positive views of themselves. When compared to others who are deemed to be doing better, this drives the evaluator (Black female) to compare in a negative direction (Frisby, 2000). Consequently, the effects on

women when viewing ideal images of women resulted in comparisons being made with the women in the advertisements; women were less satisfied with themselves and their physical attractiveness after being exposed to the images; women exposed to ads showing images of beautiful women reported low self-evaluations as opposed to the women exposed to images of average-looking models; females with lower self-evaluations of physical attractiveness or self-esteem were more affected by idealized images of models than females with high perceptions of themselves (Frisby, 2000, p. 10).

Youth Depression and Self-Esteem

Research showed that depression in young people was 10 times more common than it was two generations ago (Williams, 2007, p. 125). Adult prejudices and biases have for more than 30 years perpetuated a blindness that is content with classifying youth as “at risk”, while ignoring that reality of depression (Williams, 2007, p. 126). The truth of the matter is children are people too with the same problems adults have, but with fewer resources – internal or external- to deal with their problems (Williams, 2007, p. 128). Trapped in this stage of feelings without any explanation, frustrations without the ways and the means to understand, and hurting without one source of healing inevitably leads to the reasons why depression among kids is growing at an all-time high (Williams, 2007, p. 128).

Boteach (2008) suggested,

a child must be taught that his life has to be directional, other-oriented and purposeful. If the children devote their lives to a worthy cause, then personal fulfillment and happiness will naturally follow. But if children squander their potential, their life will be filled with misery (p. 1).

Research has clearly shown that African-American adults are struggling in their daily encounters with racism, which fuels low self-esteem (Hooks, 2002). African-American females are clearly beaten down and losing as victims of the double whammy (Hooks, 2002). Based upon such claims, there is no logical reason to think that our kids and especially our female kids are capable of weathering this sad reality with their limited resources. To make matters more challenging for youth is the unfortunate, but very real dysfunction of parents who work on their children from a toolbox of double standards and subdued convictions that mirror the White supremacists views from the days of slavery (Williams, 2007).

Parks and Anderson (2000) suggested that most of the self-talk of children is negative talk. Children often know themselves by the negative labels others place upon them. If they are referred to or described as overweight, dirty, messy, gay, slow, shy, or obnoxious, they begin to have that perception of themselves (Parks & Anderson 2000, p. 17). Williams (2007) conveyed a horrifying account from a trip on the subway that bears out this terrible reality about parents. She saw a Black woman with her son who was about five years old. The young woman was tired and appeared to be much stressed. Her son had a lively personality and was still in a boundary-testing phase, as he challenged her authority each time she told him to sit down. Exasperated, she snatched him by the arm and pulled him into the seat next to her. The boy was startled and looked around. She could tell he was embarrassed to be treated this way in front of strangers. Trying to salvage his five-year old manhood, he defiantly stood up again. The mother reached the end of her rope and yelled at him to sit down. When he angrily refused she slapped him across the side of his head, saying, “Nigga, you ain’t shit, now sit your behind down” (p.

130). This clearly was not an isolated incident and begged the question of how many times this five-year old had to endure being called a “nigga” period, not to mention in a public venue.

Many African-Americans experienced abandonment as children either due to the physical absence of a parent or the presence of abuse by a parent (Hooks, 2002). Abuse is abandonment, because when children are abused, no one is there for them. In each act of abuse the child is shamed (Hooks, 2002, p. 151). Still alive and damaging the psyche of African-American youth is the internalized poison of shaming. Conclusively, parents in pain are parents who are damage psychologically and prone to dysfunction (Hooks, 2002). A host of African-American men are today absent fathers, because they have been socialized, even shamed, into thinking they do not matter (Hooks, 2002). According to Hooks (2002), absentee fathers are out-ranked by fathers who are in the home, but because of their psychological disorder and feelings of insignificance they are too often guilty of abusing their children and especially their daughters mentally and physically. Consequently, these children by the thousands are in pain and depressed and are too often told by their parents to suck it up and stop whimpering and crying “or else” they say, “I’ll give you something to cry about” (p. 153). This insensitive and senseless demand from dysfunctional parents that their children repress their pain and put on this mask to signify that everything is alright is a mark of soul murder and damages her self-esteem (Hooks, 2002).

When parents are actively involved with mentoring their child and perhaps someone else’s child during a period of difficulty, that child may then be able to reclaim her confidence and reach for positive goals. While parents are not always to blame for

their child's problems, it is factual that children do well in stable, loving homes where parents display respect to others and themselves (Parks & Anderson, 2000, p. 39).

Rhodes and Davis (1996) implied that adolescent females who have progressively advanced in spite of superficial, enduring stress often attribute their success to the influence of a natural female mentor, such as a relative, educator, community or church member (p. 213).

Mothers as Mentors and Life Coaches

When it comes to parenting, motherhood is a profession by itself: just like school teaching and lecturing (Taylor, 2006, p. 113). A healthy mentoring relationship is essential to meeting the needs of the 21st century youth; however, the relationship between young girls and adult women is perilous during the evolution into adolescence, because girls at this stage are fervent to pursue and accept advice from women. "In this capacity the adults may play a critical role in mediating adolescent girls' paradoxical needs for both independence and guidance" (Rhodes & Davis, 1996, p. 213). Parks and Anderson (2000) identified the mentoring term as one that describes the relationship between a selfless adult and a child or teen, and describes the power of mentoring as a rapidly growing American social movement (p. 8).

Hirschfield (2008) asked the questions,

What is the goal and mission of parenting? Is it about raising offspring to be replicas of their parents? Is it to raise children to fulfill the dreams and hopes of parents who unfortunately fail to fulfill their own dreams and hopes? The objective of parenting is clearly to raise and nurture children towards a realization of their own image. (p. 37)

According to Hirschfield (2008), this individuality that is encouraged in the Jewish child is not exclusive to Jewish children and further does not disregard the traditions of the child's heritage. However, the traditions that are passed down are a means to a more developed end that allows the child to grow and develop into a well-rounded individual capable of making their own contributions to society (Hirschfield, 2008). As previously established, life coaching is about listening (Williams & Menendez, 2007). Specifically, the parent as a life coach must specifically be engaged in three forms of listening, which include listening to, listening for, and listening with. When parents as coaches listen to their child, active listening is triggered and parents are not focused on what they are going to say, but totally on what the child has said (Williams & Menendez, 2007). This level of listening fosters healthy levels of positive self-esteem in the child as the parent is able to restate and mirror back to the child what was said and causes the child to "feel fully heard" (Williams & Menendez, 2007, p. 2).

Secondly, the listening strategy of the parent focuses on listening for what matters to the child as individuals full of their own expression (Hooks, 2002, p. 3). In this communication exchange, the coach is listening for that large life content that makes up the child's vision, values, commitment, and purpose in their words and demeanor, which focuses all communication on the child's agenda as opposed to the solutions and suggestions that would better fit the coach's agenda. In this arena of listening, the parents as coaches are not to be concerned with knowing what is best for their child as much as filtering their words as to nudge them and guide them with affirmative words on the path that best fits the child (Williams & Menendez, 2007).

The third and final form of listening has within its construct three additional ideas, which allow the parent to listen, not only with their total self, but also to listen with their heart, to listen with intuition and to listen with their body (Williams & Menendez, 2007, p. 5). Listening with the heart is to turn on the compass of emotions so as to identify the feelings of the child as they resonate with the child in dialogue.

An African-American female's discussion with her parent about how to understand boys better is an opportunity to hear her heart and identify what stimulates her about boys and how she can stay on track when she engages boys. Intuitive listening is so critical to the process, as it demands that the parent as coach has a frame of reference for and an understanding of the images, metaphors, and jargon that may emerge from the child (Williams & Menendez, 2007). This level of listening allows both parents and children to connect at the intuitive level, and it further encourages the children to know that the parents understand their world and the issues that matter to them. Listening with the body challenges the parent as coach to note with hypersensitivity how they physically respond to comments made by the client. This level of listening may very well produce an understanding the parent or child may never have had before, but it causes them both to dig a little deeper into what the child may have just stated to trigger a gut reaction or sense about what was just stated (Williams & Menendez, 2007).

Parents are often tempted to tell children how to do and how to accomplish using themselves as models and the standard from which to measure. In a moment of consensus brought about by an intuitive connection, the parent could easily leave the posture of coaching and quickly begin to recommend solutions based upon their past handling of a similar situation when they were of the same age as the child. Parents as

mentoring coaches must be cautious and watchful as they bring unconscious feelings from other situations into the coaching situation, which is called transference (Williams & Menendez, 2007). This will surely get in the way of powerful listening and certainly defeat the agenda and purpose of coaching (Williams & Menendez, 2007, p. 7). The parent must, as a strategy, counter-transfer in the event that the temptation to transfer emerges. Hirschfield (2008) explained that healthy parenting is not equivalent to Xeroxing a duplicate image of self, as much as it is about life coaching, and preparing children to make their own images. This is not to negate personal family traditions and values, in fact, these traditions are among the most influential utensils parents can give a children to assist them in routing their own way in the world (Hirschfield, 2008).

Great parents are similar to coaches who teach techniques and elevate the dexterity level of their players, but know that when it comes to playing the sport the players must take the field for themselves (Hirschfield, 2008). Self-disclosure has its place and function within the coaching experience, which is to increase the coach's connection with the child and to interject learning for the child into the dialogue (Williams & Menendez, 2007). The parent as coach is tasked with creating intimacy with the child, which will allow the exchange to flow and flourish for the benefit of the child. Kelemen (2008) implied that "if we want to raise ethical children, we have no choice but to work on developing our own character" (p. 1). Various religious traditions inform parents that they can be powerful role models to their children.

The Rabbis of the Talmud explained that a child speaks in the marketplace the way he heard his parents speaking in the home (Kelemen, 2008). Kelemen (2008) suggested that children have an instinctive capacity and desire to emulate adult human

behavior. Infants mimic an array of adult facial expressions before they are even old enough to know cognitively that they themselves have facial features that correspond with those they are viewing. This instinct is most useful during the developmental stages of a child, when the purpose is for the child to learn and master an immense gamut of behavior in short order (Kelemen, 2008). The fact that children emulate the behaviors and expressions of their parents is extremely vital considering this consists of both positive and negative behaviors. Parents should always be conscious of the actions that they are displaying to their child because the child will model what he or she sees.

Parents as mentoring coaches of African-American females must be focused on a destination that enables critical thinking, which is required for healthy self-esteem. Parks and Anderson (2000) explained that statistics support that mentoring style coaching has more power to positively change the behavior of a child than any other method used to date (p. 9). Racism in education, both in content and materials and in the manner of delivery, has frankly made it impossible for an American education to foster critical consciousness for African-American students (Hooks, 2002, p. 7).

Research has validated that in this nation, there is a powerful link between reading, critical thinking, and self-actualization (Hooks, 2002, p. 96). Much of the published literature following the civil rights era and Black power anti-racist movements served to inspire and stimulate critical thinking, which could certainly transform the consciousness of African-Americans. Enhanced with African-American vehicles of performance through the arts and the spoken word, illiterate blacks were able to receive this transformative information, which compelled them and more African-Americans to read. A personal mission to live based upon what was read versus what was heard would

usher in a better day for Blacks and undergird those who are focused on living consciously.

Unique to and typical within the matriarchal context is the ability and tendency of African-American women to “tell it like it is” (Hooks, 1993, p. 22). This sharp-tongued directly focused line of speech was used often as a tool of empowerment to ward off potential abusers and those who would disrespect the black women. This verbal asset of the Black female was also used as a weapon of abuse and shaming and caused many African-American females to wallow in self-pity and under the label of “worthless” (Hooks, 1993, p. 22). Harsh criticism, with a truth-telling component was typical in conversations between an African-American mother and daughter. Since many young African-American females were raised in homes where the love and affection springs from older African-American females such as mothers, aunts, and grandmothers they were bound to receive their fair share of this abrasive truth-telling tempered with some abuse. It was, however, positioned as a caring gesture from a mother who was only telling the truth in love (Hooks, 1993, p. 22). This kind of mother is clearly rooted in the white supremacists thought that hampered Blacks during and following slavery. With some modification, the parent as coach must offer critical affirmations that develop African-American females through the turbulence of racism and feelings of insignificance.

Parks and Anderson (2000) suggested that when parents mentor their own children—with proven, well-researched mentoring techniques—their children respond with trust, honesty and confidence at home, at school, and in the community, because mentoring is based on understanding and respect. Throughout the years, research has

shown that mentoring has demonstrated its effectiveness; it is regarded as a highly successful method of working with teens, which can be extended to parenting. Parents as mentors of their children can give their kids an inside track to successful lives (Parks & Anderson, 2000, p. 9). Mentoring is not an automatic parental instinct or characteristic when it comes to child rearing, nor are they one in the same. As described by Parks and Anderson (2000), “a mentor can never take the place of a parent. The parent offers bedrock security. The child must know that their parent will always be there, regardless of circumstances and situations. A parent is much more than a mentor” (p. 7). Parental mentoring is a specific style of parenting, it should not be confused with “The Tough Love Approach” to parenting; there are significant differences within the objectives (p. 6). Parks and Anderson (2000) explained that often the tough love approach strengthens the parent’s position by diminishing the child’s authenticity, or by creating a barrier between the child and society. Fortified by a hard-line, autocratic style, the parents may find themselves surrounded by a set of new friends by way of self-help parent support groups whose intentions start out well but end up building barriers between a parent and a child (Parks & Anderson, 2000, p. 6).

Parental mentoring is a risk-prevention, peak performance style of parenting. It encourages parents to become mentors to their own children, while demonstrating mentoring techniques that improve their child’s performance levels. This style of parenting allows parents to help their child identify their unique skills, talents, and passions and then surround them with the resources they need to achieve their goals (Parks & Anderson, 2000, p. 11). Parental mentors understand that it is still their responsibility to teach moral values and socially acceptable standards to their children.

Gradually, between the ages of nine and 17, as the child's identity begins to emerge, the parent needs to step to the side and play a different role in the life of their child.

Successful parents who intuitively understand this become mentors to their own children.

Parents who choose to be mentors to their own children will continue to love them

unconditionally, through times of pain, anger, or fear (Parks & Anderson, 2000, p. 7).

Mother Daughter Relationships

The relationship with a mother and her daughter is unique; their natural bond is often unexplainable because it is the first significant relationship for the daughter. As quoted by Friday (2010), "The truth is that when one woman gives birth to another, to someone who is like her, they are linked together for life in a very special way" (p. 20).

In a family structure, the mother as a main caregiver has a more imperative role than the father in rearing children (Shannon & Shaw, 2008, p. 30). The relationship between a mother and daughter is exclusive, because of the strong bond, and its level of intimacy, than any other parent/child relationship (Thompson & Walker, 1982, p. 44; Troll & Fingerman, 1996, pp. 105-205).

Research has shown that attachment styles to mothers or any female caregiver predicts the eminence of impending relationships (Bowlby, 1988). The relationship of adult daughters and their mothers frequently has intimacy, and support, which produce a mutual deep bond across their life-spans (Cochran, 1985; Rossi, 1993; Rossi & Rossi, 1990). A higher interdependence and emotional attachment is derived from the connectivity of the mother-daughter relationship in comparison to other dyads, which allows for the daughters social and psychological well-beings to be determined by the relationship with her mother role (Fischer, 1991, p. 237).

Hale (1982) inferred from his research that African-American females have a significant motherhood orientation, perhaps because girls are given early responsibility for the care of siblings and for their substantial household responsibility (p. 67). Cauce et al. (1996) explained the significance of the African-American community respecting the distinguished relationship between mothers and daughters. The African-American cultural proverb as referenced in Leadbeater and Way (1996); “Mothers raise their daughters and love their sons,” is a common saying referencing the character of the female relationship (p. 100). A character that is based on the experiences that comes with African-American womanhood. This character unfolds as the African-American mother teaches her daughter how to survive, cope, and succeed in any environment, while fostering family and community loyalty (Leadbeater & Way 1996, p. 100). African-American mothers are the strictest with their daughter’s versus their sons because of the thrust for proficiency and independence in daughters seem to be inspired by the felt need to prepare them to assume most of the responsibility for taking caring for themselves and nurturing their future families (Sharp & Ispa, 2009, p. 657).

Sirola (2001) clarified that

the narcissistic cathexis is naturally different for girls than for boys. It is easier for the mother to experience her daughter than her son as a variant and continuation of her own body and psyche. Shared experience and empathetic understanding develop more easily between mother and daughter. The narcissistic cathexis of the daughter contains the fulfillment of all maternal expectations, femininity and womanhood. (p. 219)

African-American mothers strive to educate, and mentor their daughters to become culturally proud women, with the ability to accurately assess their environments, and to gather information from an array of sources to create positive self-concepts and identities (p. 104). Collins (1997) expounded that the ability to provide for African-American children's overall survival, and presence to their sentimental, responsive needs continued as symbiotic extents of an Afrocentric ideology of motherhood (p. 329).

Despite adverse historical and ongoing challenges, motherhood has also provided African-American women a base for self-actualization. In the African-American community, motherhood is a source of power and respect because they are generally seen as key educators, and those responsible for continuing the cultural traditions of their past (Collins, 1997, p. 105). African-American mothers function as super heroes to their families and communities often because of their challenge to develop effective coping strategies for an increasing pool of epidemic problems in their family and community. As African-American mothers search for their niche in life, they are simultaneously striving to teach their daughters to accurately assess their environments, and to assemble information from diverse sources to create positive self-concepts and identities (Collins 1997, p. 104). Leadbeater and Way (1996) suggested that,

while female adolescents have been found to be in conflict with their mothers approximately twice as often as were sons with either parent, daughters learn from an early age that they can go to their mother for love and comfort when feeling pain or insecure. (pp. 106-107)

The mother-daughter bond has been described as one of the strongest and most influential throughout life and one of the most rewarding and affectionate relationships. Though at

times the mother and daughter relationship can be perceived as contradictory and complicated, it is extremely symbolic within the African-American culture. “Whether mothers of daughters or not, women have in common the experience of being a daughter, an experience that is shaped by and infused with cultural values, beliefs, and traditions” (Leadbeater & Way, 1996, p. 17).

African American mothers will relentlessly discover ways to directly and indirectly incorporate powerful lessons of resistance and cultural realism to their daughters as part of their daily parenting routine. “Mothers are to socialize their daughters to fit into a world that is receptive to dependent, obedient, and passive women, a world that is hostile to girls and women who question, challenge, or dispute” (Leadbeater & Way, 1996, p. 117). The bond that mothers have with their daughters is essential because of the nurturing role the mothers play in their daughters’ development (Leadbeater & Way, 1996, p. 106).

Summary

The deep-seated images of slavery gave birth to multiple generations of Blacks who failed to triumph over the mental anguish and brain washing of White supremacist thinking (Hooks, 2002). Victimized by severe encounters with oppression and internalized racism, Blacks became hopelessly dependent upon living unconsciously in comfort to survive, to get a date, and hopefully get a job. This perspective is in relation to a minority of racial class mentally avoiding the injustice associated with historical oppression to physically function in society. With a view from a different set of lenses can emerge the normality of living consciously, which empowers African-Americans to name and define their outcomes (Hooks, 2002). Living consciously, African-Americans

of today must search for ways to talk about the impact of racism on their lives that do not lead to any perpetuation of the notion that we are always and only victims (Hooks, 2002, p. 76). With critical thinking as a tool for processing and understanding, African-Americans will take responsibility for their lives as descendants of Africans and no longer accept the role of victim, but conversely stand tall in self-acceptance, which allows Blacks to stand tall in self-esteem. As the African village provided the hub for perpetual nurturing and the development of children for future societal re-entry, so the parent as mentor guides their African-American children to plateaus of self-affirmation aligned with their natural gifts and talents.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the specific techniques and behavior exhibited by agency certified parents in African-American families, which can possibly affect self-esteem of their biological female children and adolescents. Self-esteem for the purposes of this study is defined as thoughts and feelings one has that focus on the ability of a person to give and receive love; it is the regard one holds for himself or herself; it is the value one places on their personhood and the confidence one has in their ability to think, judge, choose, and decide (Hooks, 2002). The focus of mentoring is to bring together a person with experience (mentor) and a person without experience (mentee) in a developmental relationship, which will enhance the mentee's personal growth. This study views African-American female parents as mentors for their female children. Parents, in the role of mentor, exhibit specific techniques and behaviors with nurturing, care giving, modeling, interpersonal communication, counseling, coaching, teaching, training, developing, and understanding – all of which affect the self-esteem of their female children and adolescents.

The Research Site

The researcher observed parent participants as they interact with their children in scheduled meetings/sessions with the researcher and during home visits. An observation sheet containing the strategies and behaviors of parents to be observed is contained in Appendix C. Participants were involved with the researcher in six sessions over a three-month period. Each session lasted approximately two hours. A third interview was conducted with parent participants. Questions focused on the parent participants'

perceptions of the effects of their mentoring behavior and strategies on the self-esteem of their female children.

Research Design

The design of this study consisted of a qualitative style of research design defined by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) as portraiture, which is a method of inquiry that shares some of the features of other qualitative research methods, such as ethnography, case study, narrative, which attempt to render the subtlety of human experience and organizational life methods (p. 11). In addition to portraiture, this theoretical framework consists of various case studies that examine multiple family dynamics in which parental self-esteem influences their daughters' perception of self, the family's role in character building, dismantling the myths and stereotypes about the physical attributes of African American women perpetuated in popular culture, and how to teach their daughters through family values, morals, and culture heritage to love themselves regardless of any and all things.

The researcher studied mentoring techniques and behaviors present within five female parents from five African-American families who had been selected as participants based on their years of experience with foster care of children and adoption services, and the gender and age of their biological African-American children being raised. They had been trained as Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and designated as parental mentors by the family court and social service system in the St. Louis Metropolitan area. The national association of CASA professionally recruits and intensively trains all volunteers to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom and other settings. They are designated as parental mentors

because of their successful children's services experience, child abuse and neglect experience, demonstrated ability to solve problems, communication skills with children, parental rearing experience, and school involvement. These are case studies, which will determine the presence and depth of specific mentoring techniques and behaviors within parent participants and the effects of these on the self-esteem of their biological female children and adolescents.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The qualitative research methodology utilized for this study is a prospective intrinsic case study format. This methodology was chosen because it is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed (Stake, 1995) and because the researcher has a personal interest in the study, which makes it intrinsic. Case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data, which enable the researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships (Yin, 1984).

All data were utilized to provide answers to the research questions. There are three sets of interview questions for the adult participants and one set of journal entry instructions and two sets of interview questions for the juvenile participants and one set of journal entry instructions located in Appendix B.

Participant questions for the children are located in Appendix C. These were general questions based on their feelings regarding their mothers' parental mentoring behavior and actions toward them. The participants were informed of the following: Since the beginning of this study, you have been part of a working session, which contained discussion of a film with the researcher, and written journal entries about the skills and behaviors used in the video. I have observed you and your parent(s) together during our working session and in my home visits. In our first interview I asked you how your parents display certain behaviors towards you. Today, I want to ask you to respond as you can to the same behaviors as you may have experienced them since the study began. The second set of participant interview questions for the children are located in Appendix D.

As an imperative part of the qualitative study, all of the participants were asked to make journal entries throughout the research process. The adult participants were informed of the following: Based on the situations in the film and the strategies and behaviors used to deal with these situations concerning self-esteem please respond to the following questions in your journal entries. Adult participant's journal entry questions are located in Appendix E.

The adolescents and children participant's journal entry instructions were as follows: Use the events you observed in the video and the behaviors and plans to deal with these events to respond to the following questions in your journal entries. Adolescents and children participant's journal entry questions are located in Appendix F.

Participants

Each parent participant was interviewed at the beginning of the study with questions focusing on their general understanding of self-esteem, the factors affecting self-esteem of individuals, behaviors and skills displayed by individuals which show or do not show self-esteem, and strategies which may affect the self-esteem of individuals. A working session lasting three hours was scheduled together with all parent participants and their female children. This session took place in the home of one of the parents. The researcher provided parents and children with major concepts involved with strategies and behaviors to promote self-esteem and a journal for use in the activity, which follows. Parents and children, under the direction of the researcher, viewed the film; "*Akeelah and the Bee*." This film was chosen for multiple reasons: to educate participants about the components of self-esteem, to stimulate discussion concerning the relevance of self-esteem to life challenges that African-American female children and adolescents may encounter educationally, and as a visual display of varying family structures and strategies employed by the mother in each family to assist their female children and/or adolescents to develop self-esteem.

This 2006, rated PG film written and directed by Doug Atchison, is an American drama that explores issues of education and self-esteem in a low socioeconomic African American community video situations based on self-esteem and the skills and behaviors used to deal with each situation. Participants, employing journals, used the major concepts to make journal entries concerning their perceptions of each video situation. Parents were expected to encourage their children to make their entries on a regularly scheduled basis. Following the video exercises, the researcher separately engaged parent

and child participants in discussions about their perceptions of the situations and behaviors as recorded in their journals. These sessions were audio-recorded and exclusively used by the researcher for this study. A second interview with each parent participant was conducted based on ascertaining their coaching techniques and strategies and how these empower their daughters to develop positive self-esteem. Parent participants were asked to use their journaling notes from a previous session to prepare for the interviews.

The researcher observed parent participants as they interact with their children in scheduled meetings/sessions with the researcher and during home visits. An observation sheet containing the strategies and behaviors of parents to be observed is contained in Appendix G. Participants were involved with the researcher in six sessions over a three-month period. Each session lasted approximately two hours.

A third interview was conducted with parent participants. Questions focused on the parent participants' perceptions of the effects of their mentoring behavior and strategies on the self-esteem of their female children. Participant children were interviewed separately at the beginning of the study by the researcher to determine their understanding of self-esteem, factors that may affect self-esteem, behaviors and skills displayed by persons with and without self-esteem, and strategies others use to assist someone to develop their own self-esteem.

A second interview with participant children was conducted based on their perceptions of the coaching techniques and strategies used by parent participants and the effects of these on their self-esteem. Participant children were also observed as they

interact with their parent participants in the researcher's sessions and during home visits by the researcher.

Summary

The data collected in this case study is extremely personal as it relates to each participant. This process allowed for the participants to express their genuine most delicate feelings, and thoughts about their femininity, spirituality, education, self-esteem, culture, family, parenting, and efficacy purpose. The observation of each participant's demeanor, emotion, and reaction, in combination with their oral conversation, and written transcriptions could not adequately describe the positive and unconditional bond of adoration and leadership they unpretentiously share for each other.

Chapter Four: Results

My initial thoughts of the term “Parental-Mentor” were that every parent, especially African-American mothers, experience parenting as including aspects associated with mentoring. I thought it was just the way of life. During my career experience within the social services field, I quickly discovered that my assumption was false. Growing up as an African-American female, I was well aware of the excellent relationship with my mother, which derived from my profound relationship with my maternal grandmother. They were not my friends, but instead they were my role models. These women to me represented the essence of fortitude, and the epitome of Black beauty; nevertheless, I assumed that every child felt this way about her mother and grandmother, especially if she was raised by them.

Introduction to the Results

Despite a willingness on the part of many to acknowledge mentoring as a holistic method that is integrated in the rearing of children, a primary focus among African-Americans has been on authoritative traditional style of parenting. Parents advocating this authoritarian style see their children’s behavior and achievements as an extension of themselves (Boteach, 2008). As discussed in the Chapter Two review of literature, Karcher et al. demonstrated that the Matriarch mentoring style of parenting of an African-American female child by the mother of the family utilizes historical techniques based on self-esteem.

Modest research exists to specifically address the concept of Portraiture as a methodology to assess the efficacy of a parenting style based on the relationship between a mentor and mentee (Bandura et al., 2005). A caring relationship between at-risk youth

and an available adult improves outcomes for the child (Linares, Monalto, Li, & Oza, 2006). The results of these qualitative studies, however, may have been disputed or ignored since there is no evidence of follow-up or changes after their publication.

Portraiture was the methodology selected to explore the lived experience of a select set of mothers and daughters reflecting on their parenting related relationship. It is an approach that facilitates a deeper understanding of the meaning and nature of their relationship, described here in terms of mentorship. This study focused on the relationships between five African American mothers and their adolescent daughters, in St. Louis, Missouri: two single mothers with one daughter each, a widowed mother with one daughter, maternal grandparents of one daughter, and a dual parent household with two daughters. In addition to the portraiture style interview process, I was able to engage and participate in the intrinsic Rites of Passage experience with the participants. The facilitators of the sessions are interchangeably the parental-mentor mothers, with the older daughters exhibiting leadership when necessary.

The curriculum utilized in this research was a redesign of the original syllabus outlined by Parks and Anderson (2000). The purpose of the redesign was to address the specific needs of the African-American female while incorporating historical, cultural, popular, and contextual pedagogy. The original curriculum is a 10-step process outlined as follows: Session 1: Know Thyself; Session 2: Be in Good Health; Session 3: Be a Good Role-Model; Session 4: Get To Know your Children; Session 5: Listen Without Judgment; Session 6: Learn Conflict Resolution; Session 7: Practice Parent-Mentoring; Session 8: Make Your Children Your Heroes; Session 9: Build A Community of Support; Session 10: Help Your Children Take Steps Toward Their Chosen Goals.

The redesigned format consisted of 10 components designed for various age groups. The components were chronologically delivered in-group sessions with topics and activities emphasized by six of the seven principles of Nguzo Saba:

Session 1: Trust (Umoja-Unity), I am, because We are. We are, because I am;
 Session 2: Sister to Sister (Ujima = collective work and responsibility, I am my sister's keeper; Session 3: Identity (Kujichagulia = self-determination), Identity: Who Am I? Am I all I Ought to Be? Am I really all I ought to be?; Session 4: What Do I have to Give? Spiritual Gifts (Nia = purpose), Understanding Spiritual Gifts/Using Talents for God's Glory; Session 5: Confidence and Self-Esteem, Girl, Pray for Me: Moving Toward Unpluckable Faith; Session 6: Family Ties Umoja = unity (Relationships I) , Love makes your soul crawl out of its hiding place; Session 7: Intimate Relationships (Relationships II), A Desired Woman (Relationships) Eros (erotic love), Philos (friend love), and Agape (unconditional); Session 8: Legacy and Faithfulness (Nia = purpose, Imani = faith), Pass the Lessons On; RETREAT: When I See My Sister, I See Myself; Session 9: Guard Your Heart, Prevail over Rejection (Kuumba = creativity); Session 10: Teambuilding and Trust.

The comparison of the redesign to the original is heavily rooted in the traditions of the Rites of Passage for African-Americans, which incorporates the Seven Principles of the Nguzo Saba (also known as the Seven Principles of Kawaiida philosophy), which is identified by their Swahili terms (McAdoo, 2007, p. 11). According to McAdoo (2007), the Principles serve as a central value foundation and framework to inform personal and collective practices of African people (p. 11). These principles and philosophy is an ongoing synthesis of African thoughts and practices seeking answers to questions

regarding sustaining strong families, positive child-rearing, building a respectful society, honoring ancestors and elders, just to name a few (p. 10). The Nguzo Saba incorporated with the Rites of Passage comprises a fundamental communitarian value system, in which African-Americans rescue and reconstruct their lives in their own image and interests, while building and sustaining an Afrocentric family, community, and culture (p. 11).

In comparing the Parks and Anderson (2000) original syllabus outline to the redesign, many objectives are fundamentally similar, such as,

Session 1: Both explore the concept of self-identity, while one emphasizes how historical and cultural relevance impacts self-awareness; Session 2: Both explore the holistic health of self, while one emphasizes collectively striving for the holistic health of all as one; Session 3: Both are cognitive of setting the tone for positive role-modeling, while one emphasizes repairing self, to better project and mentor to others; Session 4: Both strive for a deeper parental connection, while one emphasizes the spiritual connection in parenting through their purpose; Session 5: Both approach parenting with non-judgmental views, while one emphasizes the instilling of self-esteem during the process; Session 6: Both utilize alternative methods to conflict resolution with strong communication foundation, while one emphasizes the historical and family connections on resolutions; Session 7: Both practice the parental mentoring throughout, while one emphasizes the specifics associated with the development of womanhood; Session 8: Both are devoting more time to coaching their children through rearing, while one emphasizes instilling traditions, and future preparation of adulthood; Session 9: Both focus on establishing a support system, while one emphasizes prevailing through

challenges while constructing a path for others to follow; Session 10: Both focus on parent and child working together to accomplish goals, while one emphasizes trusting self in setting goals and establishing self-efficacy.

There are multiple similarities in comparison between the original design of the curriculum and the redesign. I do not disagree with either structure, however, it is appropriate and more advantageous when any and all curriculum can be specialized to address the specific needs of a targeted population.

Adult Portraiture Introduction

Portraiture encourages authentic engagement with the study's participants as co-creators of knowledge. Portraiture also gives voice to the interviewee in the telling of her own narrative. By doing so, it is possible to illustrate the presence of specific mentoring techniques and behaviors of parent participants. A brief descriptive background of the adult participants is significant in the process of conducting portraiture style qualitative research.

Adult Portrait One

Mrs. Khadijah is a wife, and mother of a blended family, with three children, two of which are young girls: nine and 14-years-old. She has been a licensed school and community social worker for 20 years. Her husband of 15 years is a licensed financial advisor and athletic coach. Holding baccalaureate and advanced degrees in their respective fields has allowed the couple to maintain an above average socio-economic status. Khadijah's childhood rearing was filled with Christian principles, African-American cultural traditions, and strong character development.

Khadijah has always had a passion for providing services and counseling for those afflicted by abuse, neglect, and poverty. She is one of the primary individuals who initiated the Family Court Parental –Mentoring Program focusing on African-American females, which included the Rites of Passage as a curriculum foundation. In addition to the standard on-going foster parent training, these participants were trained as Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Conflict Mediation Specialists. Upon successful completion of the prerequisites for the parental-mentors program, the Rites of Passage workshop curriculum must be completed through a cohort style experience.

Khadijah's involvement with the agency as a parental-mentor originated from personal volunteering and advising on healthy relationships, self-efficacy, conflict resolution, truancy, and community resources that she was doing with mothers and daughters that she came in contact with throughout the community. Her commitment to parental-mentoring was established due to the results of mentoring with young African-American females. These results were demonstrated through improved and positive academic performances, self-esteem, peer relationships, extracurricular involvement, character development, and conduct behavior.

Adult Portrait Two

Mrs. Jillian is a widow with an 18-year-old daughter. She is a former model who continues to work in the fashion industry. Since the death of her husband of 24 years, who was the primary financial provider, her family has suffered a severe hardship. She has been unsuccessful with maintaining employment within her skilled field, and struggles with contributing to her daughters' educational needs.

Mrs. Jillian and her husband held collegiate degrees and were the best of friends in high school. They modeled a healthy relationship for not only their daughter but served as role models for extended family and friends. Their socio-economic status was slightly above the average for African-Americans due to wise financial investments and successful career advancements, which allowed the family to temporarily sustain financially during economic distress and health afflictions. Years before his death, Jillian sacrificed one of her kidneys to aid in her husbands' genetic disease Sickle-Cell Anemia. His declining health conditions hindered his employment as an ordained minister, counselor, and negatively affected the family's stability.

Both Jillian and her husband had a history of involvement within the social services field with specific emphasis on parental and youth mentoring. Their association allowed them an active role within the agency establishing parental-mentoring groups for a few years. Jillian explained that her affiliation with the group as a mentor is paramount for both her and her daughter for the purposes of growth, guidance, and self-esteem.

Adult Portrait Three

Ms. Eboni is a single mother of a six-year-old daughter. She is a community development professional with an extensive background in higher education, medical research, and African American holistic health care. She holds multiple degrees in the scientific fields of biology and public health with complementary certifications in grant writing and not-for profit organizational management. Eboni has a 15-year history of mentoring African American females ranging from adolescents to young professionals in the metropolitan area. Her familiarities of the parental-mentoring methodology were introduced to her within her family origins of specialized multi-generational child rearing

practices. Her knowledge of the parenting style attracted her to become involved with the volunteering of services with the agency because she perceived the model as a successful technique designed to meet the specific and individual needs of African-American females.

Adult Portrait Four

Ms. Dawn is a multi-level educator and professional development trainer who is also a single mother with a 10-year old daughter. Dawn has worked as an educator and reading specialist within the public school system for over 10 years, served as a faculty and professional development trainer for proprietary and private institutions in multiple states, a freelance writer for local publications, and active member of several community service organizations. Her vast liberal arts credentials range from English, communications, education, literature, and African-American studies.

Dawn's knowledge of parental-mentoring derives from her upbringing in a dual parent home in which her family was actively involved in the foster care system and practiced multiple style parenting methodologies. She believes that she favors parental-mentoring because it was the primary technique used in her home as a child and one that she perceives as most beneficial for her daughter and the many females that she serves.

Ms. Dawn is one of the newest members to the parental-mentoring group within the agency with only two years of involvement, however many mothers and their daughters were familiar with Dawn from her organizational and educational activities focusing on self-esteem, and empowerment with African-American girls.

Adult Portrait Five

The final adult participant is Mrs. Mollie; she is a mother of 10 (five are female), and has been married to her husband for over 50 years. She is a retired customer service representative, social activist, and zealous member of her church congregation. Mrs. Mollie is the maternal grandmother and legal guardian of her 16-year-old granddaughter.

Mrs. Mollie is well known and respected in the community for her service involvement, nurturing character, and overall symbolic matriarch status. She has been the surrogate parent for many residents in the community to aid in their guidance, holistic development, self-esteem, and behavior. Her involvement as a court appointed parental-mentor derived from her legal association with foster care as a kinship placement for her granddaughter. Mrs. Mollie was familiar with the mentoring style of parenting because she had read about it years prior, as a way to meet the needs of her personal ministry to young mothers. It is her belief that every child should not be parented the same, due to the fact that every child is different.

Adult Initial Interview

The initial interview with the parents participating in the study was conducted in Mrs. Jillian's home, a very spacious and comfortable setting. There was a variety of optional seating for everyone; Mrs. Jillian enhanced the relaxed environment by providing multiple throw pillows, fleece, snacks, and note taking utensils for all of us to utilize. All of the women were extremely comfortable with each other due to their professional and social familiarity. They welcomed the researcher into their parental mentoring circle and allowed her to initiate the discussion style interview.

The Researcher: Ok ladies, let's begin with you explaining to me; what does it mean for a person to have self-esteem?

Mrs. Jillian: That is simple; it means not allowing a person, situation or circumstance to change how you feel about yourself.

Mrs. Khadijah: No matter what the style, or trend, they accept their uniqueness with the flaws because they accentuate who they are.

Ms. Eboni: It means that no one can define you or place you in a box.

Ms. Dawn: It means everything; it means that they have character, pride, acceptance, truth, and unedifying beauty and essence.

Mrs. Mollie: They have faith, and love for God who made her in his image, and his image is nothing less than beautiful.

The Researcher: Ladies that question seemed as if it was extremely easy for you, there was no hesitation, it was so strategic, it sounded as if it was rehearsed.

Mrs. Khadijah: It's not that it was rehearsed, it is simply what we do on a daily basis, it is not difficult for us to speak the truth.

Mrs. Jillian: The truth is, on any given day, I may experience a self-esteem attack, and I know that these ladies will restore it for me and I have learned how to do so for myself.

The Researcher: How do you have self-esteem?

Ms. Dawn: I have it, because I do not know how not to have it, it is in me, it is in my culture. If I do not believe in me, no one will.

Mrs. Mollie: It is having faith, faith the size of a mustard seed. In Mark 9:23, "God said everything is possible for he who believes in him." I believe in me and who I am no matter what the situation.

The Researcher: I saw that all of you clapped and gave Mrs. Mollie praise after her response, what was that excitement for?

Ms. Dawn: Mrs. Mollie is going to always give us that Biblical and motherly perspective with love.

Mrs. Khadijah:

I agree with Dawn, Mrs. Mollie is going to always make you feel like you have purpose, and that you are always better than any circumstance that you may be going through. That is that 'real Black love' that you cannot get anywhere else except from the soul of a Black woman who has experienced life. Yes, we are here as parental-mentors, but often we receive mentoring on a regular basis from the women in our circle, especially Mrs. Mollie.

The Researcher: Mrs. Mollie, how does that make you feel to hear these ladies praise you like that?

Mrs. Mollie: Baby, I pay them no mind. All of these women are beautiful, talented, smart, and most of all, care about the mothers and daughters we are helping. We are just doing God's work, that's all.

The Researcher: Well said, Mrs. Mollie, I feel connected to you already and I look forward to our journey, so let us continue with the response.

Mrs. Jillian:

I have not always had the best of self-esteem; it was not until I became a mother that I discovered it. My self-esteem comes with sacrifice and knowing that everything I do is for a purpose and I only have one time to make a first impression.

Mrs. Khadijah:

I have self-esteem because I know that my heritage and faith is made of it. As an African-American woman I know that my ancestors did not lack self-esteem because they did not have time for it, it was not an option for them. In addition, I agree with Mrs. Mollie, my God made me in his image, and as a mother, you have to have it.

Ms. Eboni: It was not given to me, I was born with it, I have no choice, I am a Black Mother. It is not in one thing that I do, it is in everything, because I have someone watching my every move.

The Researcher: Well-said ladies, I already feel inspired. Has anyone ever taught you about the characteristics or components of self-esteem? If so, what did they teach you?

Ms. Dawn:

Well it depends on how you look at it. My mother and family always talked to me about believing in myself, the words 'can't or cannot, ugly, stupid, or dumb,' were not used in my home. My mother always said that if you do not like you, or believe in you, no one else will. My mother taught me to look in the mirror and see beauty always, and to see the positive in every situation.

Mrs. Mollie:

No one ever taught me self-esteem, in the way that school lessons are taught. I did not know what it was called as a child, but you learn from what you see. I always perceived my mother as a beautiful and smart woman, and by helping

raise my siblings I had to display confidence, that was the only way they would trust me.

Mrs. Jillian:

My mother taught me about self-esteem regarding my personal appearance. That was the main reason that she put me in modeling at the age of 14. I was a very tall young girl and I did not know how to accept it because I looked different from other girls my age and that made me feel awkward. My mother enrolled me with a modeling agency, that training helped me with poise, style, presentation, and what I thought was beauty, all of which increased my self-esteem. My mother later told me that I was already beautiful; the modeling only taught me how to wear their designs and gave me exposure to a different culture. That taught me how to embrace my height, and find the beauty in everything.

Mrs. Khadijah:

Every woman and man in my family taught me self-esteem. Self-esteem and Black pride was everything in my household growing up. My mother taught me etiquette and manners especially when it came to how a young lady should dress and carry herself. I grew up learning about my heritage, culture and the pride of my ancestors. I was taught how to hold my head-up high in all that I do, because society had already placed a negative label on me without knowing me. My mother used to tell my sister and me, if Harriett Tubman did not have self-esteem to create the underground railroad, we would still be slaves.

Ms. Eboni:

My grandmother and mother taught my sister and I the characteristics of self-esteem, along with keeping us involved with activities in our African Methodist Episcopal church. Every day I heard that I was beautiful with my dark chocolate skin and every activity that I was involved in, I had the support of my family. My granny always had the memorable talks with me on how special I was because I was a beautiful, smart, Black child of God. My granny and mother still to this day teach me and my daughter about self-esteem. My granny is the Matriarch of our family who has instilled in me that with self-esteem and faith I can accomplish anything in life.

The Researcher: How can a person's self-esteem suffer?

Mrs. Khadijah:

It is easier for a Black woman to have negative self-esteem as opposed to positive self-esteem. The reason that I said that is because of the exposure of negative influences in her life without the support of positive reinforcement of family, friends, self, or community resources. My professional experience as a social worker has taught me that a person's self-esteem is affected by everything in his or her life, whether it is positive or negative.

Mrs. Jillian:

I am a firm believer that we as Black women allow too many minimal things to affect our self-esteem. We allow insignificant relationships, media, public stereotypes, strangers, and dead-end jobs to title who we are as individuals. These things are not our biological or genetic make-up; therefore, they are not my self-reflection and do not speak to my uniqueness as a Black woman.

Ms. Eboni: Unbelievably, my response for this question is short and simple. A Black woman should not allow her self-esteem to suffer at any level because of things that she may experience in life.

Mrs. Mollie: Trials and tribulations may happen in life, but we were made to endure all things, when we have faith in God. We were made in his image not the image of others, and that is how we should see ourselves.

Ms. Dawn:

Black women were biologically equipped to endure more than other ethnicities, and more than men, we were historically trained to tolerate the worse of situations and spiritually created to conquer everything in life. If a woman has not been encouraged to see herself as a strong, accomplished, beautiful survivor then every situation in life will negatively affect her self-esteem, and in my opinion, when a Black woman's self-esteem suffers that is a prime example of self-destruction.

The Researcher: Ladies, all of those responses were great, now please answer the opposite to that question; how can a person's self-esteem grow?

Ms. Dawn:

For us as Black women, we must familiarize ourselves with positive influences, which would aid in changing our style of thinking and format of perception. We must analyze situations, complications, negativities and malfunctions in our lives as experiences not mistakes. Once we change that process, everything about self will grow positively.

Mrs. Jillian: It is a process of self-reflection, acceptance and determination. It is something that must constantly be monitored and worked on.

Ms. Eboni: When a woman dismisses negative thoughts and only allows positive energy and people in her life. I believe that positive influences of others can and will positively affect how much self-esteem an individual has.

Mrs. Mollie: When a person knows better, they do better. A woman has to want to have positive self-esteem and want to be a better person.

Mrs. Khadijah:

I agree with everyone on this one, especially Mrs. Mollie. We come to a point in our lives when we want to do better and desire more for our children out of life, and that is how our self-esteem grows. I was always taught, "Everything in life grows, and if you are not growing, you are dead."

The Researcher: As an African-American, how do you believe that a person's self-esteem is influenced by (a) physical appearance, (b) perceived intelligence, (c) socioeconomic status, and (d) heritage?

Ms. Eboni:

In my opinion, I believe that heritage is the least of the influential factors in relation to the Black woman's self-esteem because the younger generation does not comprehend the historical connection. Both the socioeconomic status and physical appearance are equivalent in my perspective because it has become a stereotypical standard with the African-American culture to base your self-esteem on how you afford to keep up with the trends of mainstream society. It is common for the younger Black women to equate self-acceptance and self-love to the recognition from others based on the number of compliments received from other females on her stylish physical appearance and compliments from males on

her physically endowed or enhanced attributes. Intelligence ranks similar in heritage in relation to the influence of self-esteem; it is not an important factor to young Black females, in fact it is almost something from which they suffer ridicule.

The Researcher: I see all of you shaking your heads in agreement with Eboni, and it looks like this has sparked some side bar conversations, let's talk about it ladies.

Mrs. Khadijah:

I agree with Ms. Eboni, and that is one of the primary reasons I mentor and coach my children in such a specific manner. I also believe that is the commonality that we as parental mentors share. It is easy to get accustomed to what the media and society stereotypes as physical beauty when a Black woman does not have realistic examples of physical beauty in her everyday life. Understanding the multi-faceted dimensions of African–American heritage will act as a positive reinforcement to all of the negative influences. I make sure that my daughters know what Black beauty is, and know that it cannot be categorized as one trend or opinion and how it resonates in self-first. I utilize our African cultural heritage and Biblical teachings to draw relations to self-esteem. The intelligence level of the Black female is also something that has positive historical and Biblical roots, therefore, over time those characteristic strengths should be enhanced not decreased. I teach them that an individual's socioeconomic status does not reflect who they are as a person, and that finances do not determine their self-worth.

Mrs. Mollie:

The make-up, clothes and jewelry are worthless without a body to put them on. A woman is what makes those things manifest, the woman is already the masterpiece, everything else is just an accessory, and if you are a Black woman, you were already created with natural beauty. The Bible says that we were created in God's image and that alone teaches us about self-esteem. I had to explain to my granddaughter a few years ago that knowledge is nothing to be ashamed or afraid of. She was concerned about her friends not being in advanced classes with her and them making fun of her for being smart, I told her that everyone cannot go everywhere with you. They talked bad about Jesus, but that did not stop him from spreading the gospel. Blacks, especially Black women fought hard for knowledge, we were not allowed to learn and were always expected to be ignorant, but we always found a way to teach ourselves, and in today's world, we must continue to prevail. We teach our girls about their African-American heritage, than we are planting the seed of confidence, self-love, and empowering them with self-esteem from their ancestors.

Ms. Dawn:

Everything in the world influences one's self-esteem. African-American women have forgotten or are ignorant to the richness and depth associated with our cultural heritage, whether it is beauty, innovation, spirituality, creativity, or status. Our heritage equips us with the ability to resolve all problems because it strengthens, motivates, and encourages how we perceive ourselves. Our ancestors relied on Biblical teachings to prevail; these same teachings enhanced their intelligence, and provided them with self-pride and acceptance. We derive from

Kings and Queens, and our socioeconomic status is simply how we perceive our future.

Mrs. Jillian:

My thoughts may differ slightly from the other mothers. As a young girl, I was a victim of low self-esteem influenced by the standard physical appearance of African-American women. I felt awkward, ugly, and suffered from depression because of my physique. I was tall, and thin, with a fair complexion, all of which I thought made me a target for ridicule. I did not fit-in with other girls my age, because I did not look like them. When my grandmother noticed my slumping posture, and standoffish demeanor, she began to encourage me and brought it to the attention of my mother. My mother arranged for me to receive etiquette classes, along with modeling and fashion training. The years of training and experience served as a foundation for me to begin my journey of self-love, growth, maturity, and positive self-esteem. I do not believe that the young Black mothers of today take the time and effort to embrace their daughters' uniqueness, by fostering an outlet that will encourage them to see their differences as characteristics of beauty. I am a firm believer that a Black woman must first love and accept the person she sees in the mirror, before altering the thoughts of how anything else will positively influence you.

The Researcher: Now ladies, some of your responses have lightly touched on this next question, but please answer to the best of your ability. What role(s) do you believe family values and morals play in a person's self-esteem?

Mrs. Mollie: This is the purpose of our organization; to emphasize the importance of how examples of strong, female family leadership combined with Christian morals and values build the foundation for success and positive self-esteem in Black girls.

Mrs. Khadijah:

Our family morals and values are the heart of our family. Our beliefs are Christian centered with an Afro-centric approach and discipline. If it were not for these heavily respected morals and values that make up our family, my kids would not have as much love for themselves and others. It has taught my girls to appreciate their holistic beauty, comprehend their heritage, and how it is something that they should be proud of.

Mrs. Jillian:

If it were not for the values and morals that my husband, our entire family and I set for my daughter Lex, she would not have the tools to go through the challenges and cruelty associated with life. It was important for us to mentor her as parents so that she could recognize that as a form of structure and guidance. The values and morals that are part of our family has taught Lex to see herself in a different way in comparison to her peers that did not have that style of rearing. She is aware of resourceful problem-solving and not situational depression, or negative self-perception.

Ms. Dawn:

Family morals and values is the self-esteem, it is all-inclusive, and you cannot have one without the other. When there is a void of cultural tradition, Christian

principles, life coaching, values, morals, mentoring, love and respect that equals a void of positive self-esteem, especially for African-American females.

Ms. Eboni: I agree with everyone. When we serve as primary mentors to our Black daughters, we are leading by exemplifying how they are to utilize the values, heritage, and morals we teach them.

The Researcher: What role(s) do you believe the media play in a person's self-esteem?

Mrs. Khadijah:

The media has the ability to play a very strong negative role, if we as mothers do not teach our children. All of us involved in this study have made it our responsibility to expose our daughters and those we mentor to diverse forms of media that highlight women in our culture. The media, whether it is film, music, print advertisement, product brand, sitcoms, or just fashion trend, have all represented us in a negative form. It is common for young African-American girls to associate beauty with relaxed hair, colored contacts, celebrity brand fashion, hair extensions, and inappropriate dress because that is what society displays and markets as beauty. The derogatory names that they are referred to, or the characters that they portray, constantly demoralize Black females in film or music. The media is part of the reason why so many beautiful Black girls have poor self-esteem.

Ms. Dawn:

The fact that there were so many of our mentees and other African-American females that had not seen historical films such as "Roots," "Queen," "Women of

Brewster Place,” “The Wiz,” or “School Daze,” they were completely unaware of the significant roles we portrayed and messages delivered in the film. It is our responsibility to teach them how to view things differently and dissect the subliminal messaging that is often displayed in the various forms of media referencing Blacks. When we teach, and mentor our girls to have self-love and self-esteem they will be more aware of the negativity that is displayed in media.

The Researcher: Mrs. Mollie I hear you clapping your hands over there, what are you reflecting on?

Mrs. Mollie: The youth of today are estranged from not only historical Black films, and their own history but from the teachings of the Bible. If they were familiar with any of this they would carry themselves in a different way.

Mrs. Jillian:

The media plays a very important role in the self-esteem of our Black girls. The media only highlight negativity and derogatory examples of African-Americans, especially women. Popularity does not include or equate to morals, values, positivity or standards of any kind. I was extremely happy when we viewed “*Akeelah and the Bee*” as a group, and discussed the mentoring and coaching examples displayed in the film and how it is a reflection of parenting.

Ms. Eboni: The media is the second teacher of self-esteem for all viewers. If the primary foundation of positivity is not set in the home by the parents, especially mothers and daughters, then children will gravitate to anything.

Mrs. Mollie: The media will affect the self-esteem of our Black girls only if we allow it to. I utilize different forms of media to my advantage, by using the negativity as a teaching tool to improve their self-image.

The Researcher: Thank you ladies, we are nearing the end of our interview and there are only a few more questions. How can the self-esteem of one person affect the self-esteem of others?

Ms. Eboni:

Just like everything else in the world, self-esteem is contagious. I am very selective of the company that I keep and the individuals that I expose my daughter to, because that is how I was raised and I believe that it has a tremendous positive impact on self. As I mentor families through various programs that I am affiliated with, I have noticed the adaptive change that my self-esteem has had and continues to have on the women. I have observed young girls altering how they perceive themselves based on how I present myself to them, for them I am a realistic example of Black self-esteem.

Ms. Dawn:

When people surround themselves around positive energy, they develop positive habits, the same as if they were to surround themselves around negativity. Positive energy motivates and inspires an individual to be a better person and to conquer challenges with preconceived thoughts of success.

Mrs. Khadijah:

Like many human habits, both positive and negative, its origin stems from surroundings. It is very important to surround yourself with the type of people

you respect, admire, and would like to model yourself after in some form. I believe that Black women with low self-esteem had a history of low self-esteem in their family and environment, because that is how they learned to think and feel pessimistically about themselves.

Mrs. Mollie:

Easily, the self-esteem of my mother and grandmother affected me; it made me who I am today. They put Christ first, and did not believe in the word 'cannot' when it came to achievement. I did not grow-up with low self-esteem because the women in my family mimicked women in Black History who modeled themselves after the women in the Bible. I will continue to mentor women in the same way that I received it and the same way I continuously mentor my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I educate them about Ida B. Wells Barnett, Harriet Tubman, Hallie Brown, Eve, Delilah, Sarah, Mary, Ruth, Esther, and all strong Black women in our history that influence us.

Mrs. Jillian: Everything and everyone has the ability to influence and affect you if you allow it to. It is the parental mentoring that a girl receives in her life that provides her with the ability to distinguish the difference between negative and positive influences, and how to accept and apply them in her life.

The Researcher: Specifically, why do you believe that young females (adolescents and children) may have self-esteem?

Mrs. Khadijah:

Self-esteem is not natural; therefore, we are not born with it, it is something that we acquire and develop in life. Self-esteem for young girls is their armor against

the difficulties presented in the world. It is how they value, perceive, love and respect themselves on a daily basis. Its development stages begin at infancy and is nurtured and polished through adulthood, it derives when a healthy balance of substance, morals, values, mentoring, and modeling is maintained. Young Black girls will have self-esteem when the mother takes the initiative to be the primary model of positive morals and values that will encourage positive self-esteem in her daughter.

Ms. Eboni:

When it comes to African-American females and their self-esteem, they have it because it is in our heritage, and we were raised to have it. Positive self-esteem is the only self-esteem that I was taught exists in our history and that is how I mentor other females. I do not allow them the option of negativity.

Mrs. Jillian: I believe self-esteem was given to young Black girls, whether negative or positive by the individual in their lives that had a significant leadership role. Someone in their life that had the most influence had the option to lay the foundation of self-worth, beauty, acceptance, self-image and self-love.

Mrs. Mollie:

They have it because it was given to them, and their self-esteem is based on the self-esteem of the women that raised them.

Ms. Dawn: Young Black girls have self-esteem because of their family, environment, friends, education, and media. Their esteem has nothing to do with self; it is compiled of ingredients from others that are in their circle.

The Researcher: What behaviors and/or skills are exhibited by a female with self-esteem?

Mrs. Mollie: When Christ is the head of your life, he assures your self-esteem. Black females with positive self-esteem are overall beautiful, confident, triumphant, determined, understanding, spiritually grounded, intelligent, and giving.

Ms. Eboni:

Positive self-esteem in African-American females is extremely diverse and revolving, and strongly nurtured in historic spiritual and cultural values. It is said when a person has positive self-esteem means that you are comfortable with yourself; yet always seeking opportunities for growth toward self-improvement, self-assured, optimistic, and strong-minded.

Mrs. Jillian: A Black female with positive self-esteem is an unstoppable force of self-confidence, her behavior characteristics include: inspiration, uniqueness, knowledge, success, resilience, creativity, substance, and self-respect.

Mrs. Khadijah: The behavior of a Black female that has positive self-esteem exemplifies respect, self-love, confidence, problem solving, pride, innovation, desire, gratitude, empathy, fortitude, cultural awareness, spirituality, sociability, intelligence, and conquering.

Ms. Dawn:

When a Black female has positive self-esteem, she has a vast amount of pride in everything that represents her. She has the thirst for knowledge and self-improvement, which allows her to accomplish tasks with motivation. A Black

female with self-esteem has healthy decision-making skills; she is more likely not to be involved in unhealthy activities and/or relationships.

This section of the adult interview revealed multiple lessons regarding self-esteem; within the realm of historical relevance, cultural identity, spiritual connection, and childrearing practices. The historical relevance referenced in this interview regarding self-esteem associated the courageous behaviors of various female abolitionists, and activists that demonstrated self-confidence by leading efforts for human, gender and minority equality. Self-esteem was linked with cultural identity by discussing the customs, and values established within the African-American culture and how its rich traditions evoke self-love, self-confidence, and variations of physical beauty through a rites of passage, and the involvement of extended and surrogate family members as positive influences on the development of self. The spiritual connection was affluent throughout the interview because it is a strong factor within the lessons of culture, history, and childrearing. The Biblical references made during the process would link all the lessons together while suggesting the importance and benefits of establishing a spiritual connection with a chosen higher being to find solidarity, tranquility, and guidance. All of these lessons are taught as best practices to influence the self-esteem of daughters through a childrearing process that is holistic yet differentiated in instruction to meet the needs of diverse families.

Adult and Child Interview

Mrs. Khadijah was the hostess for the second interview, she graciously welcomed all participants and myself into her spacious home theater. The scene was set with a variety of appetizers and ink pens for our disposal. During the process of preparing to

view the film, *Akeelah and the Bee*, I informed the participants to take notes because the questions afterwards would be based on information relative to the film and the mothers were encouraged to sit with their daughters during the process.

1. What excerpts from the film addressed positive examples and negative examples of self-esteem?

All of the mothers and daughters agreed that the movie they viewed presented them with an extremely positive experience.

Positive

- Three of the five mothers and each daughter believed that an example of positive self-esteem was when Akeelah won Crenshaw's inaugural spelling bee. The other two believed that it was a negative example because Akeelah did not want her peers to know that she was intelligent, so she feared the possibility of ridicule and taunting because of her win.
- Four of the five mothers and each daughter believed that an example of positive self-esteem was when Akeelah defended herself utilizing advanced vocabulary to Dr. Labey about being insolent; it proved that she was not like the average girl her age. One mother believed that Akeelah was sassing Dr. Labey and was disrespectful as a child.
- Four of five mothers and four of six daughters believed that an example of positive self-esteem was when Akeelah went to Woodland Hills School in Beverly Hills to practice with Javier because her socioeconomic status was not an issue and she was able to be their equal because of her intelligence level. One

mother and two daughters believed that Akeelah was just being a kid and not seeing any barriers.

- Three of five mothers believed that an example of positive self-esteem was when Akeelah read the Essay of Fear by Dr. W.E.B DuBois. Two mothers and two daughters believed that her comprehension of the essay did not occur until later in the film. Four of the six daughters had no comment.
- All of the mothers and daughters believed that an example of positive self-esteem was how Dr. Labey mentored and coached Akeelah about more than the spelling bee, Akeelah began to develop self-pride and self-love.
- All of the mothers and daughters believed that a positive example of self-esteem was when Akeelah screamed that she wanted to win the National Spelling Bee.
- Four of the five mothers and four of six daughters believed that a positive example of self-esteem was when Akeelah's mother encouraged her about the possibilities of spelling coaches in her community circle.
- All of the mothers and daughters believed that positive self-esteem with Akeelah and her mother was displayed when the mother showed support for Akeelah and her interests.
- Each of the mothers in the study believed that an example of positive self-esteem was when Akeelah shared the win of the Scripps National Spelling Bee with Dylan.

Negative

- Four of five mothers and all of the daughters believed that an example of negative self-esteem was when two of Akeelah's schoolmates taunted her at the water fountain about being smart and attempted to bully her into writing their papers.
- Three of five mothers believed that an example of negative self-esteem was when Dr. Labey challenged Akeelah's spelling ability and usage of correct grammar.
- Four of the mothers and each of the six daughters believed that an example of negative self-esteem was when Akeelah informed her mother that she was going to the Regional Bee, and her mother did not show interest in her excitement.
- Two mothers and all six daughters believed that an example of negative self-esteem was when Dylan told Akeelah that she would not have made it to the finals if it was not for the other contestant cheating.
- Two mothers and six daughters believed that an example of negative self-esteem was when Akeelah was rejected by her best friend Georgia to go skating because of her dedication and time commitment to spelling practice with kids from Woodland Hills.

2. How did these excerpts relate to you and your family situation?

All of the participants agreed that they could see multiple similarities in the film and their family situation.

- Two of the mothers explained that their busy and diverse roles as mothers at times does not always allow them to give sufficient attention to each and every one of their daughters' accomplishments and accolades.

- Each of the daughters explained that their mothers are always there for them from the beginning to the end of everything that they participate in, often encouraging them every step of the way.
- Four of the mothers explained that it is common for a mother to be unable to recognize all achievements, but simultaneously be aware of their daughters' overall involvement in activities.
- Four of the six daughters explained that at times their mothers' job occupies a lot of their family time and that causes her to miss out on some important school, and athletic activities personally, but will send a representative in her place.
- All of the mothers agreed that their mentor parenting style incorporates the Nigerian proverb; "It takes a village to raise a child," which is relative to the excerpt from the film when Akeelah's mother encouraged her about the possibilities of spelling coaches in her community circle.
- Each of the daughters agreed with their mothers by explaining how their mothers have taught them to seek the assistance of others that they respect and value, while assisting younger children with learning.
- Each mother agreed that when their daughters are able to find the commonality and relation of various African proverbs, Biblical passages, historical relevancies, and family ethos to utilize during times of difficulty and problem-solving, it symbolizes a job well done on behalf of the mother. The relation of this situation was expressed in the film when Akeelah read the Dr. W.E.B. Dubois essay.

- All six daughters were able to share with their mothers examples of when they used what their mothers had taught them to problem solve or encourage another girl.
 - Four of the women explained that their daughters have experienced rejection and taunting from their peers because of their intelligence, perceptions, self-esteem, and overall character, and this is similar to the films' excerpt when Akeelah was rejected by her best friend Georgia because of her academic dedication.
 - All of the daughters were able to explain how they have positively dealt with taunting, and ceased bullying by their peers.
3. Are there certain behaviors and skills that are exhibited by a female who has self-esteem?
- All participants agreed that there are certain behaviors and skills that are exhibited by a female who has self-esteem. Some of which are; displaying self-respect through personal appearance, language, healthy relationships, problem resolution, ownership, and being goal oriented. Self-respect through personal appearance is valuing your body as a temple, dressing in a manner which is reflective of your character, and understanding the negative stereotypes, connotations, and perceptions associated with dressing in a revealing fashion. The value emphasized in a woman's personal appearance is displayed through the universal care of the body by living a healthy lifestyle that is free from all forms of abuse. The participants explained that the usage of appropriate and respectful language is a display of the level of a females' self-esteem because it demonstrates their level of intellect and ability to communicate effectively during all circumstances. The

selection of healthy relationships exhibits personal worth of standards and the essence of self-esteem. Relationships which embody love, enhance character, support personal goals, compliment morals, and are all-inclusively beneficial to the positive growth of a female distinguishes her level of self-esteem by the individuals that she allow to inhibit her personal environment. Participants expressed that a female will reveal her self-esteem by the formality in which she provide resolutions to challenging situations and how she shows ownership of the error of her ways, all of which should consist of a level of dignity and pride. When self-esteem is present the higher road is often chosen because of confidence and the knowledge of applicable skills taught within a parental-mentoring relationship. Being goal oriented is another characteristic of self-esteem, a female with self-esteem will work towards growth, improvement and advancement in various aspects of her life because of the lessons that she was taught regarding self-efficacy, and confidence.

4. Why do you think these females exhibit self-esteem?
 - Three of the mothers believed that the reason that their daughters exhibit positive self-esteem is because they reflect the behavior of their mothers.
 - Two of the mothers believed that their daughters exhibit positive self-esteem because of their family, and cultural heritage.
 - All of the daughters believed that girls' self-esteem comes from their mothers, mother figures, or female role models.
5. How can parents assist their daughters to achieve self-esteem?

- Four of the five mothers believed that parents must exude positive self-esteem so their daughters will achieve it.
 - Three of the mothers agreed that positive reinforcement and effective communication assists their daughters in developing self-esteem.
 - Each of the mothers agreed that specific parenting styles, expressing self-love, pride, and uniqueness assists their daughters to achieve self-esteem.
 - All of the daughters believed that their mothers should keep doing what they have been doing.
6. How has the journaling component of this study affected your self-esteem?
- Four of five mothers agreed that the journaling component of this study has made them take more time to analyze how they present themselves to others, which positively affected her self-esteem, because they want to be perceived as a role-model.
 - The same four of five mothers explained that this process made them appreciate their mentoring skills more, which increased their self-esteem of effectiveness.
 - Each mother agreed that journaling increased their positive self-esteem because it strengthened their relationship with their daughters. One mother's journal entry included:

For an entire week I paid close attention to the things that my daughter said to me on a regular bases regarding my appearance, parenting, career, and relationships. I took notes on her communication style and timing of her comments and our conversations. The purpose of this was for me to listen

more, and understand her perception of me based on my daily actions. My results were enlightening. Every morning, Dawnyaë wrote on her “positive board” (I had ignored it for a few months because I was busy), she complimented me several times about my clothes, hair, and perfume, and would then mention how she is my daughter and is just like me; so that means we look good and smell good mama. Before dropping her off at school, she would say things such as; “I hope your students learn today. Do you teach others to be good teachers like you? Are all your coworkers your friends, because they all know who I am? How can someone fail your class if you help everybody?” During the evenings, Dawnyaë would ask about my day at work, if I needed any help with ideas for topics to discuss or write about. She would also talk about her friends and explain what she think is positive about them. This was just a small challenge for myself, with the objective of recognizing my daughters’ conversation with me. My result is much more than what I expected. I personally learned that my daughter says positive things to me and encourages me on a regular bases because of my communication with her. These things I often glanced over, as words from a child, but it was not until I placed them on paper and tracked consistency, did I realize how aware, and caring she is about me, my career, and others in general. I thought that my child did not pay attention to simple things in my adult/parenting life, but I was gladly mistaken. To my surprise, this challenge boosted my parenting self-esteem! A parent, especially a mother, always wonders if she is setting a good example for her child, and if her child is aware of the things that go on

behind the scenes when it comes to providing and overall rearing. This eased my concern, yet motivates me to do better because I know that she comprehends and actively digests the things that are present in her life.

Another mother wrote:

Today was an eye-opener for me, I cried when no one was around and I prayed and asked for forgiveness and guidance. I think the world of my kids, I believe that all of them are beautiful, smart, athletic and overall talented. I noticed last week that Imani and Arie were a little more athletically driven than normal. They were doing more exercises and limiting the amount of food they were eating. I had been busy preparing for the gala the last few weeks and consumed with myself and with preparations. I had been trying on dresses with endless disappointment and full of frustration, subconsciously displaying negative feelings and emotions that I expressed verbally. I asked Imani what was going on with her and her new eating habits, and all of the extra workouts. She began to cry and tell me that her, Arie, and Daddy kept telling me how beautiful I looked in all the dresses, which ones were their favorite, how I should style my hair and what accessories I should wear with them, but I did not believe anything they were saying. Instead I was saying how fat, ugly, and disgusting I looked and how I wished I could cut my fat off. Imani was devastated to hear those words from the person that everyone told her that she looked identical to. She said that if I see myself like that, I must also see her like that. She told Amari, and they agreed to work together to lose weight so I wouldn't think they were fat and ugly. God knows that I

could never see my kids that way! I think that they are beautiful, and I tell them that as much as possible. I feel bad because in my selfish moment I neglected my kids, I did not demonstrate for them the type of woman that I emphasize in our family, home, and culture. I feel like I failed them. After reviewing some of my previous entries regarding the gala, I saw my own frustration and lack of self-confidence in my words. The ability to go back and track my days and conversations through this journal has made me realize that I need to always be aware of and work on my self-esteem as a black woman, because that is the self-esteem that my kids will have.

Five of the six daughters explained that the journaling experience helped them communicate more with their mothers, which made them proud.

Four of the daughters expounded on the journaling component of the research by expressing their realization of similarities that they shared with their mothers. A few quotes from the daughter's journals were:

I did not think that I would like the idea of writing in a journal, but I do. When me and mom talk about stuff we write about, I am shocked that she knows more about me than I thought she did. She said today that she writes in her journal when she is upset, it calms her down, I just wrote the exact same thing in here three days ago. I notice that we worry about some of the same stuff because we write about it during the same time, like when President Obama is on TV addressing the country, when stuff happens in our family and in our community. She worries about how I feel about things that happen in the world and what I learn from it.

Another daughter's journal entry read,

Today was like I discovered a new side to my own mother, it was like we were bffs [best friends forever] and talked about fashion, creativity, dating, everything, she was not motherly at all, she was more understanding. She shared things with me from her childhood and teenage years that are very similar to the things that I am going through. She explained a lot, she said that she sees so much of her in me, she showed me parts of her journal that she wrote about me when she is worried and proud. I never knew that mama cared so much about the stuff that goes on in my world. I guess this is the stuff that I hear other people talk about when they say how powerful the relationship is between a queen and her princess. I like how we have connected in our own special way through my rites of passage, but especially through the stuff we write about. If every mother and daughter did this, I doubt if there would be so much tension with their relationship, because it would show them the personal side of each other, which would allow them to let all guards down. I know for sure that I get my sense of swag from mama, because she had it when she was my age.

More information regarding the participants' perspective of the film is detailed in Chapter Five of this research.

Adult Second Interview

1. As a parent mentor what specific behaviors and strategies have you exhibited with your biological children?

Ms. Eboni:

I have seen my daughter exemplify self-pride, confidence and knowledge at such an early age. She is aware of her African culture because of the various children stories with illustrations that is read to her. She will often inform me that she wants to be like one of the women in the books because of their beauty, talent, and how they help people.

Ms. Dawn:

My daughter has confidence in who she is and takes pride in the differences associated with other African-American girls. She has her own style, which is something that she is extremely proud of, and she encourages other girls to be unique. Dawnya, tells her classmates that all Black girls are beautiful inside and out because they are smart and can do all things. I believe that this characteristic derived from many of the activities within the Rites of Passage and my specific parental mentoring technique in demonstrating confidence and womanhood.

Mrs. Mollie:

In relation to age, I have a few years on the majority of the women participating in this study, in addition to the number of my biological children. In my years of being a parental mentor, I have had the pleasure of observing growth, maturity, self-esteem, and self-love in my daughters, mentee mothers, mentee daughters, and granddaughters, all because I lead by example and my passion for mentoring. Brandi exhibits positive self-esteem, Christian values, pride in her heritage and cultural awareness because she perceives herself as an example for other females involved in the program and in the community. She has learned how to utilize both Biblical and Black historical references to problem solve, appreciate

strengths and weaknesses, recognize healthy relationships, and love herself for the beautiful Black woman she is. Brandi began to show growth during the Rites of Passage when she began to mentor the younger girls using the things that she learned about self-esteem. The more she exercised the things that she learned the more she began to understand how to apply different techniques to solve problems and change her perspective on difficult issues.

Mrs. Khadijah:

My mentoring style of parenting has taught my daughters how to value and appreciate their culture and African-American heritage more than their peers. The fact that I emphasize the importance of self-esteem from a holistic perspective teaches them how to conquer battles seen and unseen. The teaching of cultural relevance and historical value demonstrates to them that the same principles applied in the past to address dilemmas are the same principles that they should currently apply. My mentoring style of parenting encourages my children to formulate their own support circle of friends and family while understanding its relevance. Since serving as a mentor to other families, my daughters have expressed to me the growth that they see in themselves when they are able to interact with the mentees. Both, Arie, and Imani speak positively by using affirmations when talking about complex issues in their world, and they display the same behavior when engaging in activities with the mentee's. They present themselves as role models to their peers, by implementing what they have been taught.

Mrs. Jillian:

The mentoring style of parenting has worked well with Lex, especially during her teenage years. I have observed her being extremely confident about her beliefs, even when she does not have a crowd of supporters, she displays optimism when solving problematic issues, she accepts all of her strengths and weaknesses as characteristics that define who she is. Most of all, Lex has the compassion of sharing knowledge, she mentors other girls about self-love, beauty, and positive self-esteem.

2. Which of these behaviors and strategies has been most effective in assisting your child with developing self-esteem?

All of the women agreed that the most effective behavior and strategy exhibited by their daughters in developing her self-esteem was effective communication of all things. Mrs. Khadijah explained that communication may sound very simple, but it is extremely vital in how you want your daughter to comprehend the message. We must use innovation when communicating the purpose of all things, and we must always provide the linkage to our culture, spirituality, self, values, morals, education, heritage, future, and community. Our communication must not be limited to language. We must illustrate with pictures, current events, films, music, trends, and other tangibles, while simultaneously leading by example.

3. Which strategies and behaviors have been least effective in assisting your child with developing self-esteem?

All the mothers agreed that the least effective behavior in assisting a child with developing self-esteem, is leading by example without incorporating dialogue, and talking at a child instead of engaging in conversation. Mrs. Mollie clarified that being a role model is more than just a body, and parents often make that mistake of just

displaying the actions that they want their daughters to mimic without communicating with them about their actions. Parents also have the tendency to talk at a child as if they are not human instead of talking to or with a child to stimulate their thought process. When we neglect the effective communication component of mentoring, we are developing robots instead of holistically healthy, intelligent, positive, and spiritually grounded young women.

Several participants identified best practices and lessons learned during this section of the interview. With regards to the most effective strategies and behaviors utilized in developing self-esteem the best practice acknowledged is effective communication. Prior to comprehending the participants' response, the general assumption may have been that the best practice would be a strategic plan, consisting of varying deliverables, and complex assessments. This was not the case; effective communication was explained in a simplistic manner in which to communicate with your daughters about all things major and minor, leaving nothing to chance.

Effective communication techniques that were utilized by the mothers immortalize the backward design of instruction model within education, because they provide ongoing feedback throughout the childrearing process. In conjunction with the best practice, the most valuable lesson learned as expressed by the mothers is to not assume that leading by example is independently sufficient in modeling appropriate behaviors for your daughter. It is invaluable without the essence of communication. Communication should consist of a dialogue and engaged conversation and not talking at a child.

As a result of parental-mentoring, these participants observed an increase of confidence within their daughters, advanced intellectual maturity, cultural awareness,

pride, acceptance of diversity and self-identity, a profound sense of self-efficacy, and the natural desire to mentor others in a capacity that teaches self-worth and value. This observation of exhibited behavior witnessed through the matriculation process of their daughters served as their ideals of best practices regarding parental mentoring. The overall lesson is that with the combination of differentiated and backward design instruction used to teach the fundamentals of past, present, and future life lessons, the daughters are equipped with both self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Child Portraiture Introduction

The young girls participating in this research have developed a sister-like bond with each other, one that reflects the bond that their mothers have formed with other mothers. This bond has manifested out of time spent together through the Rites of Passage, extra-curricular activities, Family Court volunteering programs, community engagement, and family gatherings. The young girls speak highly of their bond, and value the trust established within their sisterhood circle.

The young girls welcomed the researcher into their sister-kinship like bond, with the older teenage participants serving as leaders to the younger girls to establish trust with the researcher. The girls were aware of the purpose the researcher had with them because their mothers had spoken with them individually and collectively explaining how they would be involved in the research study.

Child Portrait One

Lex is 18-years-old, and the oldest of the adolescent participants. She is also a senior in high school with plans on attending college with on a scholarship. Lex's

demeanor is very poised; she is attentive to the younger participants, and extremely social within a group setting.

Child Portrait Two

Brandi is 16 years of age and a high school junior with plans on attending college. Brandi is mature for her age, and has excellent communication and leadership skills.

Child Portrait Three

Imani is a 14-year-old eighth grader; she is exceptionally athletic, and knowledgeable.

Child Portrait Four

Dawnyae is an energetic 10-year-old sixth grader; she is artistic and culturally aware.

Child Portrait Five

Arie is an athletic and talkative nine-year-old fourth grader and sister of Imani.

Child Portrait Six

Sanai is a respectful and inquisitive six-year-old first grader.

Child Initial Interview

The location of this interview with the daughters took place in the family room of Ms. Dawn and Dawnyae's relaxed and scenic home. The décor of their home stylishly represented eclectic urban artistry with a combination of tranquil sounds and tapestry. Their beautiful family pet, the chocolate Labrador named Harlem, was a gentle giant with all of the guests. The interview was conducted in an age appropriate, comfortable, and relaxing dialog style led by the pace of the participants. The older girls explained that they would lead by example during the interview, similar to how they conduct themselves

with other program activities and during their Rites of Passage. This method provides a level of comprehension to the younger participants and establishes reliance while respecting elders.

The Researcher: Girls I would like to ask you a few questions about your mothers, and I want you to tell me how each action makes you feel. How does your mother encourage you?

Lex: My mother encourages me by telling me that I can do anything that I set my mind to, this makes me feel like I can conquer the universe.

Brandi: By telling me not to give up, this makes me feel like I can make it through anything.

Imani: My mom encourages me by telling me quitter's never win, I feel like I must do my best no matter how hard it is.

Dawnyae: My mom tells me that if she can do it, I can do it. That makes me feel good.

Arie: My mom says that if it is not my best, she does not want it. That makes me feel like she loves me.

Sanai: Big girls can do it. Good.

The Researcher: How does your mother teach you?

Lex: My mother teaches me about the etiquette of being a lady, by always demonstrating elegance and appropriate demeanor. This makes me feel like I am a valuable asset.

Brandi:

My mom teaches me about spirituality, and how important it is to love myself by spending quality time with me. This makes me feel like I can find the answers to even the most difficult questions, and that makes me feel confident.

Imani: My mom teaches me that Black girls are born strong, from the books we read. It makes me feel strong.

Dawnyae:

My mom teaches everything when we read together and when she has me write book reports and show her that I understand. It makes me feel like she wants me to know stuff that other kids don't know about my history.

Arie: My mom teaches me stuff through sports and activities. She wants me to work hard and be a smart Black girl. It makes me feel happy.

Sanai: My mom teaches me with games and books.

The Researcher: How does your mother show that she understands you?

Lex:

My mom shows that she understands me by following-up with conversations that we had and when I thought she wasn't listening. She will ask me how I handled a situation, and do I believe in myself and the decision that I made. It makes me feel like, even when I think that she does not care, she does, and it makes me feel like she has taught me how to have confidence in all of my decisions.

Brandi:

My mother shows that she understands me by talking to me about the things that I am interested in and showing me how it relates to things that she experienced. She will write me a letter almost like a summary of what we talked about, and it reminds me of all the points we made, and it shows that my mom was paying attention to me.

Imani: My mom shows that she understands me by explaining things in a different way that she does to my brother and sister. It makes me feel like it is okay to be different.

Dawnyae:

My mom shows that she understands me by answering my questions, and letting me explain my steps on how I'm going to finish something. It makes me feel like as long as I explain myself and have a plan she will believe me.

Arie: My mom understands me when she tells me that she understands me, it makes me feel like she knows everything about me.

Sanai: My mom lets me sleep with the light on because she knows I don't like the dark.

The Researcher: How does your mother praise you?

Lex:

My mother shows that she is proud of me by encouraging me to challenge myself, and showing me how the most important praise is showing another girl how to work to her potential. She will send me a text message, give me gifts or just brag to others about me. It makes me feel proud, just because she is extremely happy whenever I succeed at something or accomplish my goals.

Brandi:

My mother praises me by surprising me with cards, flowers, weekend trips, or just special quality time activities. She is always creative with how she does things and she reminds me to always be thankful to God for all of my blessings and to remain humble. It makes me feel like she is my number one coach, mentor, cheerleader, and teacher and will always be there for me.

Imani: Before I answer, I need to explain to the younger girls how to answer the question.

The Researcher: Thank you, Imani. Would you like for me to explain it to them?

Imani:

No, ma'am, I can do it. Ok, Dawnyae, Arie, and Sanai pay attention to me. I need all of you to tell the researcher what does your mom do to show you that she is happy for you, and how do you feel when mom is happy for you? Did everybody understand me?

Dawnyae: Yes, I will lead.

Arie: Yes.

Sanai: Do I follow Arie?

Arie: Yes.

The Researcher: Great job, girls!

Imani:

My mom shows that she is happy for me by leaving notes in my notebook telling me that I did a great job, or by giving me hi-fives, or by adding money to my bank. It makes me feel like my mother is proud of me.

Dawnyae: My mom shows that she is happy for me putting stickers on my chart. It makes me feel good to get stickers.

Arie: My mom shows that she is happy for me when she lets me lead the girl circle. It makes me feel excited.

Sanai: My mom is happy with me when I bring home good papers, and she shows Granny my papers. I feel good because Granny takes me for ice-cream.

The Researcher: How does your mother communicate (speak/talk) with you?

Lex:

My mother communicates with me by being extremely honest, with every topic. She has always made time for our conversations that we now refer to as 'Meetings of the Minds'. The titles of our designated conversations changed throughout the years and stages of my life, it was all a part of My Female Rites of Passage as my mother explained to me. I have always valued the conversations with my mother, because they brought us closer, and with each style of conversation during the different phases of my life I can reflect on the lessons learned.

Brandi:

My mother communicates with me in the same way. She explained to me that specific words, examples, topics, affirmations, and Biblical stories are paired with the stages of my life and they must be told to me at that time, because that is the only way that I will understand how to be a proud African-American woman. I always loved the way that my mother communicated with me and allowed me to communicate with her, because I thought that made our relationship unique. It made me feel comfortable with talking to her about problems or questions that I had. I assumed that it was the norm for all mothers and daughters; I did not realize that it was a specific style, until a couple of years ago.

Imani:

My mother communicates with me all the time, sometimes too much. We talk during 'Sistah Talk', 'Leadership Circle', and 'Female Rites of Passage,' she will also leave me affirmation notes on my mirror, and we 'Journal Exchange.' She explained that these are the vital years of my life and it seems like a lot now, but I won't always feel that way. We are almost finished with 'Sistah Talk' and

'Leadership Circle' will be combined with my 'Rites' (Female Rites of Passage).

I like the different stuff that I am learning and how I understand that me and my mother have a lot of things in common.

Dawnyae: My mother talks to me with stories, pictures, notes, and our personal quality time. I like it because we get to do different things and talk at the same time.

Arie: My mom talks to me when we write in our journal, and when we have 'Just for Me' talks. I like it because I always feel good.

Sanai: My mom talks to me and we do 'Teach Me Sanai', we have fun.

The Researcher: How does your mother model behavior for you?

Lex:

I don't remember a time when my mother didn't model positive behavior for me. She has always been my role-model. She chooses her arguments wisely, thinks before she speaks, and is always demonstrating to me and others the appropriate mannerisms that a lady should have, including how she should dress. The positive self-esteem that my mother has for herself and how she encourages and compliments other Black women has helped make me who I am today. She is always going the extra mile for others, regardless of our circumstances. To me, that is how she demonstrates acts of kindness and selflessness.

Brandi:

My mother has always taught me that actions speak louder than words, and that is definitely what she has always modeled. She uses various sayings such as; "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything"; "Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped"; "A chick that will grow into a cock can be

spotted the very day it hatches, the lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did, or you can tell a ripe corn by its look.” I have learned and I will continue to learn how to be a respectable young Black woman because of how my mom carries herself and presents herself to others. She models endurance, grace, wisdom, strength, and pride in her womanhood and culture for me and everyone that knows her, especially women. My mother prays and always relies heavily on her faith in everything that she does, and that is how she has taught me to be.

Imani:

My mother models everything for us. She tells us that great Black women surround themselves with greater Black women. My mother always has a positive attitude and faces all challenges with the purpose of defying all odds. She shows us how to be the type of women that were our ancestors.

Dawnyae: My mother models behavior that she wants me to have.

Arie: My mom tells me to watch her and my sister, and I will know how to act.

Sanai: My mom shows me how big girls act.

The Researcher: How does your mother provide you with feedback?

Lex:

My mother makes sure that she provides me with feedback even when I didn't ask her opinion. She is very vocal in her thoughts, concerns, and opinions when it comes to me being a Black woman. She has always told me that it is a style of mentoring and parenting combined which enables me to have positive self-esteem and it is the best way for me to learn how to be a woman of substance and

character. My mother sets the tone for us to have conversations that will allow me to work through any dilemmas or concerns that I have, she has taught me to step back from the situation and view it in another perspective. Once I communicate my plans she never tells me that my decision is right or wrong, she just gives non-objective feedback so that I will be confident in making my own decisions.

Brandi:

My mother provides me with feedback by having me explain to her my reasons for making the decision. She has taught me to use my knowledge, experience and faith to make decisions and how to give myself feedback on issues. She will always be willing to give her opinion, but not as much as she did when I was younger because she says that I have been taught how to make the right decisions, and I must have the confidence in myself and my knowledge.

Imani:

I think that me and Dawnyae can answer this question, because Arie and Sanai cannot answer in a correct way because of their ages and where they are in the Rites of Passage. Is that ok that they do not answer this question, if not, can I ask the permission of the elders to pass?

The Researcher: Thank you Imani for your leadership and it is acceptable that the younger girls pass on this question.

Imani:

Thank you. My mother gives me feedback the same way that my teachers do. She will talk to me about the things that I did, and tell me what type of grade I got

and why I got it. I understand it better that way, and it makes me want to always get an A, at home and at school.

Dawnyae:

My mom gives me feedback through my journaling. She will explain different things to me when she writes me back she also explains different tasks or projects that she give me throughout the week or month. Sometimes she checks on me to see if I am working on the project, and other times she tells me that it is my responsibility.

The Researcher: Thank you girls; I really appreciate your attention to answering the questions in detail. I only have a few more questions to ask you, if you feel as if you have answered the questions in some of your previous answers, please just let me know.

The next question is, how does your mother coach you?

Lex:

My mother coaches, mentors, and guides me in everything that I do. She has always had a mentoring style to her parenting, and she coaches me through dilemmas she does not repair them for me. Coaching to me, means guiding, and leading by positive example of success and by my definition my mother has always been my life coach, even when I was a cheerleader, she was my coach. She had never been a cheerleader before, and she was not the designated cheerleading coach for my school, but the way that she mentored and guided me about confidence, poise, self-esteem, attitude, time management, and practice made her qualified to be my cheerleading coach.

Brandi:

My mother coaches me by allowing me to demonstrate what I have learned from Biblical and historical teachings, my past experiences, and the experience of others. She will tell me that she will not always be there to hold my hand, and I need to rely on the things that I have learned during my Rites of Passage, and the valuable lessons that life has taught me. My mother has coached me on how to perform in different situations. I will always remember four valuable affirmations that she taught me in different stages in my learning, like; if you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family. Only a wise person can solve a difficult problem. By crawling a child learns to stand, and he who learns, teaches.

Imani:

My mother coaches me and my sister all the time. She used to tell me when I was younger about a child crawling will later learn how to stand, and she who learns, teaches. I know that my mom coached me on how to stand and walk, but I knew the basics because I crawled first. I learned from my mom coaching me how to walk longer distances, and how to balance myself. From me learning how to walk, I was able to teach my sister because I was leading by example.

Dawnyae: My mom coaches me by practicing and telling me to find my mistakes and review everything before she does.

Arie: My mom coaches me with basketball, track, and dance. She tells me that whenever I'm not on the court, I never stop being an athlete. She coaches and teaches me how to be smart in school and with sports.

Sanai: My mom is my coach with pom-pom and school time.

The Researcher: How does your mother counsel you?

Lex:

That is a very easy question to answer because it is very similar to other questions that we have answered. I would also like to ask permission to take the initiative and sum up how our mothers counsel us, because I don't think that the younger girls will understand how they have already answered the question in a different form.

The Researcher: Lex, I appreciate your leadership initiative and welcome any decision that you make regarding this research study.

Lex:

The way that my mother has counseled me over the years has changed according to my age, experiences, and level of maturity. Her methods have always involved teaching experiences and examples of success utilizing African-American proverbs and activities incorporated in my Rites of Passages. Her form of counseling taught me to be comfortable with myself, feelings, and confident with my decisions. The way that my mother continues to counsel me at the age of 18 is similar to mentoring, because of how she advises me. Her mentoring style causes me to look within for answers and resolutions to life's complex issues. Her and the other mothers do an excellent job of leading by example, which has always influenced the positive self-esteem of me and other African-American girls.

Brandi: I agree with Lex on how the mothers counsel us. They have made sure that they all counsel us in a mentoring style and remind us of the strength found in our heritage to conquer all that life throws us.

The Researcher: That was a great summary on counsel girls, thank you. I would now like to ask, how does your mother care for you?

Lex:

My mother cares for me in various ways. She has always insured that all of my needs have been met, while at the same time instilling the appropriate morals and values in me needed for independence. She is always there to listen to me and advise me on appropriate decisions, regardless of the situation. Our relationship has evolved into something that I consider extremely phenomenal because she cares enough for me to give me the space that I need to succeed using everything that she has taught me.

Brandi:

My mother shows that she cares for me in everything that she does. It is not just about shelter, clothes, or food. It is about all the other things that some people may not consider caring that I think symbolizes it to me. The fact that my mother listens to me and my friends without passing judgment and supports us whenever we are putting forth a positive effort, in a way that I think she cares for me.

Imani:

My mother shows that she cares for me and my sister by providing for us beyond just our needs, but supplying our wants. She supports us with all of our activities especially sports and is a cheerleader for us and the entire team.

Dawnyae: My mom cares for me by helping me with my homework, and how young black girls should behave.

Arie: My mom cares for me by helping me with everything and teaching me stuff that I need to know.

Sanai: My mom cares for me when she tells me she loves me.

The Researcher: How does your mother support you?

Lex: I would like to answer this question the same as I did the others, because the younger girls have answered this question in their response to similar questions.

The Researcher: Thank you Lex, that is not a problem.

Lex:

I believe that I can speak for all of the mothers because they all support us in various ways; they constantly demonstrate the African proverb, it takes a village to raise a child. Our mothers support us the same way that they coach us, care for us, teach us, mentor us, communicate with us and praise us. All of those things we have learned through the Rites of Passage are one in the same; one cannot and does not happen without the other. Each phase in the Rites of Passage is appropriate to the age and growth of the girl, and our mothers support and encourage our growth throughout each phase. We can all go to different mothers with a version of the same issue and they all would give us the same response, which is appropriate to the phase we are familiar with and their examples will be something that combines our lessons, cultural heritage, and future goals. Support to us is not about how much our mothers physically do something for us, but how they parent us in a way that includes more than just the typical discipline and

authoritative parenting styles. They mentor us, and serve as role models for other Black women; they support us by showing us the different places where our support comes from.

The Researcher: What does it mean to have self-esteem?

Lex:

Wow, that has been something that I have heard all of my life throughout the Rites of Passage. Having self-esteem is living life with fortitude! It means that I accept who I am and I am aware of what I represent. I have respect for my African heritage, traditions, culture, and diverse beauty, and having that respect allows me to appreciate who I am and who I will be. Self-esteem means that I will not allow my temple to be disrespected with any form of abuse: drugs, physical, emotional, mental or verbal. My ancestors demonstrated self-esteem by fortitude, perseverance and pride, so I have all of their blood running through me, which means I know nothing less.

Brandi:

Self-esteem is something that all the girls know about, because our mothers made sure of it. Self-esteem means believing in self, no matter what the situation is and remaining confident at all times. It also means seeing yourself in others; regardless of the difference and be willing to repair any broken pieces. When we were taught the African proverb, When I see my sister; I see myself, it means that every black woman has some type of connection with each other, whether good or bad and they are able to relate to it. For example, when I see Oprah Winfrey, I see myself, because she persevered through life to reach her goals, and Oprah can

relate to Sojourner Truth for some similarities in her life. These similarities can be positive or negative, but regardless of what they are, black women can relate to them all and close the gap that separates them. It basically means that you can recognize the differences without judgment and see them as strengths.

The Researcher: Brandi that was explained very well, I liked the examples that you gave to ensure comprehension. Is that how self-esteem is taught in the Rites of Passage?

Brandi: Thank you, and yes that is how it is taught, I believe the entire Rites is a Passage for self-esteem, no matter your age.

The Researcher: I like how you summarize that Brandi. Imani, your turn.

Imani:

Self-esteem means everything that African-American women are. Self-esteem is rich, it is deep, it is unique, it is pride, it is beauty, it is love, it is confidence, it is growing, it is acceptance, and it is knowledge. Having self-esteem means that I have love for myself and love for the things that I need to improve on.

Dawnyae: Self-esteem means I love who I am and that I take pride in me. Self-esteem is everything positive, it is always growing and working to be better.

Arie: Self-esteem means feeling good about me and thanking my family in history for the things I can do now.

Sanai: Self-esteem means I love everything about me.

The Researcher: Thanks girls, I really liked your answers. Can either of you tell me more about the way the younger girls answered the question? It seemed like they were very familiar with self-esteem.

Brandi:

I will answer. The reason that all the girls know about self-esteem is because it is the foundation of our Rites. With every phase, we have multiple activities that focus on self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-love, and self-respect. Most of the answers that they gave you were the ones that they used on previous projects and activities that we all experienced at various stages or all together as a group. They are very aware of individuality in themselves and others, and that is something they are comfortable talking about. The affirmations, African proverbs, Bible stories, and lessons that our mothers and other elders teach us during the Rites of Passage and in everyday life equips us with the knowledge of self, which leads to success and our overall appreciation of our African culture and how it has made us who we are.

The Researcher: Thank you Brandi for that explanation, it seems as if all of you are extremely familiar with self-esteem and your mothers have done a great job teaching all of you. I have one final question for everyone; how have your parents helped you to develop self-esteem?

Lex:

The first thing that comes to my mind is the Rites of Passage and of course all of the teachings and practices, but most of all it is how my mother exemplifies self-esteem. I remember when I was young and my parents made it their priority to ensure that I had positive thoughts of myself. I believe that the development of self-esteem began with my great-grandmother and other female relatives,

speaking positively about their womanhood including their distinctive African-American physical features.

Brandi:

I think this is my favorite question! My self-esteem was developed before I came into the world, it is in my family history, my faith, culture, and therefore it is in me. My Madea (grandmother), mother, aunts, cousins, and friends have all developed my self-esteem. My mother has always made sure that strong women were a significant part of my life, because these women would all serve as examples of strength, confidence, positivity, intelligence, courage, faith, and perseverance. One person did not develop my self-esteem; it was a collective village of people that developed it.

Imani: I will answer for me and my sister, and I think that Dawnyae should answer for Sanai. Dawnyae is that ok with you, and can you talk to Sanai now so that you understand her?

Dawnyae: Yes, I can do it, do I do it the same way I do in Big Sister, Little Sister Circle?

Imani: Yes, that way.

Dawnyae: Sanai, can we learn together?

Sanai: Ashe' (African term meaning Amen, or agree).

The Researcher: Great leadership Imani, and Dawnyae. You can begin whenever you are ready.

Imani:

My mom helped us develop self-esteem with everything that we do. She reminds us to be confident in everything that we do and be proud of who we are. She

teaches us about courage and being respectful to our ancestors and elders. We know that we have to watch her and other Black women because they are our leaders and I know that Arie is watching me. Some of the girls in my school used to make fun of me because I don't have a relaxer and because my skin is dark, the first time that it happened I told my mom and she was very calm, and had me look in the mirror and explain to her what I saw. She stood next to me and looked in the mirror, and told me to describe her, and she asked me what did I think of her. I told her that she was beautiful, because of her hair, her eyes, her smile, her face, and her body. She told me that I looked just like her and we were both beautiful and that is the great feature of Black women that we come in all sizes, shapes, and shades but we look beautiful. I told her last year that Arie had been crying because kids at her school was making fun of her just like they did me. She asked me why did I think they were saying mean things to Arie, and I told her that they haven't seen beauty like Arie before, and then I asked her if I could do the mirror talk with Arie by myself. She said yes, and I did! Me, Arie, and my mom all looked in the mirror and I explained to Arie what beauty was, and how she should feel about herself, everybody cried because we were all happy with the queen and princesses we seen as our reflection. My mother has always explained to us that self-esteem is something that we are born with, and that we get it from our ancestors.

Dawnyae: Our mothers help us develop self-esteem by teaching us, talking to us, letting us be different and showing us how to be happy with how God made us.

The Researcher: Great girls, you have answered all of my questions. I think that you all did a wonderful job; I enjoyed myself, and look forward to learning more about you. Thank you for all of the fun and even the tears, all of you are extremely smart and I am very proud of you. My favorite part of this journey was the Rites of Passage that I got to experience with you, and discussing how you feel about yourself, mothers, and village.

In summary, as derived from the Child Initial Interview section, the lessons learned by the participants are demonstrated in their activity of dialogue and comprehension of applicable skills, behaviors, feelings, and emotions as they relate to self-esteem. The ongoing display of leadership at all ages is executed in the style of mentoring and coaching which is highly apparent when communicating with the younger girls.

Personal Reflections

Throughout my life I have experienced multiple Rites of Passages; the first was as an adolescent. It was during this time that various morals, values, principles of self-love, religious beliefs, gender mannerisms/role responsibilities, family involvement, and African-American heritage connections were enhanced based on the foundation of rearing practices that my mother and chosen village elders established.

The second Rite of Passage was during my young adult years; it was at this time that my ethos of character was being enriched. The lessons focused on inaugurating my self-esteem, understanding self-efficacy, enhancing femininity, mentoring, promoting healthy relationships, community involvement, personal perspective, goal, comprehension of the importance of a spiritual relationship, and correlating cultural relevance.

The third Rite of Passage experience is the most recent. The lessons covered during this process derive from the application of information learned throughout the matriculation of female adulthood, leadership development, conflict resolution, family preservation, faith increase, self-esteem reformation, and respecting my body as a temple.

My personal journey through multiple Rites of Passages has equipped me with the tools of life required for holistic success. The lessons taught strategically throughout the sessions allowed me to heal from personal sufferings that were causing subliminal stagnation in the matriculation of much needed experiences. I learned to alter my perspective on a variety of things that had haunted me throughout my life while realizing its effects on my self-esteem. One of many paramount realizations for me was my perception of self and beauty. Consequently, I lacked confidence in relationships, not just those of the intimate nature, but all relationships. The relationship associated with a career, with family, friends, and most importantly, the relationship with self. I often over exaggerated the expression, and delivery of my qualities, skills, and talents in the attempt to blind the sight of my physical appearance to others. My inappropriate thought was if an individual would first appreciate my inner beauty, they would accept the lack thereof my physical.

It is through this exceptional experience of Rites of Passages and parental-mentoring that I continuously receive the tools of teaching, application, comprehension, and contextual theoretical practices, which allows me to conquer all things relevant to the statue measurement of success in my life. I unceasingly learn that my beauty is equivalent to any masterpiece; I am created with distinguishing flaws which enhances my exclusivity.

The origins of these Rites of Passage and many other experiences that developed my self-esteem were initiated by my mother. She knew the importance of equipping an African-American daughter with the specific tools needed to succeed in all things challenging by first respecting and loving herself. These lessons came easily for my mother because they were the practices that she was accustomed to receiving from her mother and other family matriarchs.

The style of parenting that my mother utilized began to intrigue me as an adult because of my professional experience and ability to witness the lack of self-esteem associated with young African-American females. These experiences enlightened my knowledge while dismantling personal stereotypes of the mother and daughter relationship with African-American women. My philosophy is that every African-American female should have a significant relationship with a mother-like figure. This relationship should be uniquely equipped with robust leadership, respect, guidance, communication, accountability, rearing, mentoring, structure, gratification, and unconditional love. This philosophy derived from my relationship with my mother, matriarch, and other prominent women influenced my womanhood, ethnicity, femininity, and overall being.

Incorporated into my philosophy is the important practice of a form of instruction, which affirms cultural relevance, self-love, community solidarity, fortitude, morals, spirituality, feminism, and education. All of which can be used as tools of success, especially in times of change or crises. The manner, in which this practice is strategically implemented, is not my primary concern because of its specific design, which is used to meet the needs of the individual. The purpose is to assure that each female completes the

experience with an innovative and empowering story that aids in their responsibility for the decisions that establish the course of their future. Life has made it apparent to me that every young African-American female does not have this relationship with her mother, but nevertheless, life has made it clear that this type of relationship is very much needed.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflection

In order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of an African-American approach to raising daughters with positive self-esteem through parental mentoring, the study used a portraiture style methodological foundation (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). It involved interviewing 11 participants: five African-American mothers and their six African-American daughters. The focus was on relationships, interactions, context, evolving themes, and the holistic aesthetic responses of the participant's perspective. A portrait was designed for each of the 11 participants to understand the factors within African-American families that may promote a productive and fulfilling lifestyle among family members, particularly females. Two fundamental questions guided the present qualitative study.

The subsequent sections discuss the findings of the present study as described by the research questions. Five themes: self-esteem, African-American history, parental-mentoring, self-efficacy, and trust emerged from the interviews and are integrated into the discussion of the research questions. The results of the present study are discussed in the context of existing literature on the subjects of parental-mentoring and self-esteem.

Discussion

The results for this study were obtained through a multi-methodology approach, utilizing case study data, journal entries, and most importantly, the Portraiture technique throughout the research.

The Rites of Passage activities were holistically profound because they were customized for each universal phase in an African-American female life. These activities allowed the daughters to experience the similarities of parental-mentoring styles being

delivered by other mothers, along with conflict resolution, and confidence enrichment. The mother's behavior in the category of leadership development was most effective for the daughters because of their influential demeanor in relation to the actions associated with having positive self-esteem.

The process of leadership development through parental-mentoring and the Rites of Passage corroborated the actions of all the things that were contextually and theoretically taught to the daughters. The daughter participants believed that as a parental-mentor, their mothers' behaviors visually validated the purpose of self-esteem; for them it is perceived as realistic examples of the origins of self-efficacy. They learned how to be courageous when faced with decisions that contradict the ideology of popular culture, love their physical dimensions, and comprehend its derivation in their ancestral pedigree.

The mothers in this research have observed the lack of and inadequate parenting skills of mothers associated with the judicial family courts system and have witnessed the negative impact that it has on their family with special emphasis on their daughters. The adult participants in this study disclosed that mothers with negative self-esteem raise daughters with no self-esteem and poor problem solving skills. These participants acknowledge that their primary objective is to educate court affiliated mothers on the foundations of parental-mentoring to redefine self-esteem within them and establish it within their daughters. In addition to this being their primary goal, they often discovered that the disconnection has been the family history of improper decision-making based on the lack of knowledge and universal inadequate feelings.

The theoretical results of this research provided a clear understanding of the parental-mentoring method of rearing children in a universal formality in addition to the flexibility allowed to meet specific variables of family dynamics. The results perspective of the research obtained through the qualitative and portraiture analysis were distinct in the fact that the parental-mentoring techniques were executed using a differentiated instruction method, which involved cultural, historical, and psychological teachings. These varied teachings of subjects were essential to the participants' comprehension, which were displayed through their revised thoughts, actions and behaviors regarding self-esteem. Participants were assessed on their knowledge through rites of passage activity participation, conversational dialogue, and journal entries.

Research Question One

What strategies and behaviors are used by parents in African-American families to affect the self-esteem of female children and adolescents?

There are multiple strategies and behaviors that were employed by the mothers that affected the self-esteem of their daughters. The common diversified strategies were consistency, behavior representation, love, historical teachings, communication, processes, and involvement. The mothers demonstrated consistency by addressing all challenges and successes in the same format. They believed in the results of the curriculum, therefore, the delivery and usage of the practices and theories had to be punctual. This form of consistency was the type of influence that Parks and Anderson (2000) suggested regarding the habits that parents most form to mentor a child during difficult times to reach a positive goal (p. 39).

Behavior representation was ongoing by the mothers for the purpose of mimicking by the daughters. As supported by Keleman (2008), children will emulate the behaviors and expressions of their parents. The mothers often informed me that, “we practice what we preach,” referencing that their attitudes, behaviors, demeanor, beliefs, language, and parenting were who they were all of the time, with their children and others. McAdoo (2002) suggested that Black children are less likely to develop a negative self-image if their parents skillfully embedded messages about self-esteem into their family practice (p. 101). Throughout the 10-session curriculum, behavior representation was one of the primary actions exhibited by the parents as a teaching method to the daughters. This behavior is most apparent in sessions 2, 4, and 6-10 with various activities and conversation topics.

When it came to love, I was informed by the mothers that there is a strategy to loving someone and teaching someone to love themselves. The strategy that they utilized was allowing themselves to be transparent when teaching, and to engage in a more in-depth and trustworthy connection with their daughters. The mothers had to dismiss the inaccurate thoughts and assumptions that the daughters had regarding the meaning and the actions associated with love. This type of love display is similar to the description of love referenced by Hooks (1993) as the abrasive truth-telling, yet caring gesture from an African-American mother all done in love (p. 22). Throughout the 10-session curriculum, both self-love and self-esteem was apparent, with emphasis in sessions 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 through activities, conversation topics and journaling. A few titles of the activities included; mirror perception and reflection, blinding vision versus seeing the truth, goal setting with building blocks of achievements and stumbling blocks of

challenges, and me, myself and I against media, social, and integrity. After each activity the participants would converse regarding their thoughts and perceptions.

Historical teachings were emphasized in the utilization of cultural proverbs, civil rights memoirs, slavery folklore, and Biblical scriptures to relate to current situations and identified resolution perspective. A variety of historical examples referencing slavery and the demise of the self-esteem of Black women is illustrated by Hooks' (2002) explanation of the colonization of Blacks based upon their skin complexion (p. 39). While Hooks (2002) explained in detail the historical correlation of slavery and the Black woman's negative self-esteem, McAdoo (2002) explained through historical relevance's the resiliency and strength associated with the African-American culture and their ability to withstand poor, and unjust social circumstances (p.124). Historical relevance was obvious throughout the entire 10-session curriculum with the incorporation of diverse examples for comprehension and illustration purposes.

The strategy for communication was one of the most diverse and extensive, because it was ongoing and effective. In addition to the various writing forms of journaling, essays, and workbook exercises, there were the communication practices of pictorial illustration, listening, miming demonstration of non-verbal exercises, creation and showcase of an acting skit performance, music, dance, food, and art demonstration of communication and comprehension. The communication strategies utilized by the participants are supported by Williams and Menendez (2007) in their explanation of the life coaching language process of effective communication, which guides one into a sacred and inspiring space (p. 17). This specific style of conversation is valued and unique which validates the child. The significance of listening by parents allows them to

hear with their heart and identify with the feelings of the child, which will resonate a profound dialogue with the child (p. 5). This strategy was apparent throughout the entire 10-session curriculum in a variety of methods. In the beginning of the session more listening is done by the daughters and throughout the process they develop their voice through various forms of communication. The end result of the sessions was the evolution of the daughters matriculating into their respective leadership roles while the mothers assume the position of listening to the voices of the daughters. This evolution of growth served as assessment for the mothers of the daughters' comprehension of material learned.

The processes employed by the mothers to affect the self-esteem of their daughters, were all inclusive. This process strategy demonstrated success in its alignment with the research concluded by Parks and Anderson (2000) regarding the benefits of a rites of passage process enabling children to leave home with appropriate coping skills, assurance, and self-esteem (p. 13). The phrase that was often used by the mothers when explaining both positive and challenging situations was; "trust the process." When this phrase was explained to me, it highlighted the difficulty in trusting and believing in someone other than self, by allowing faith and the loyalty and love of sisterhood to sustain you. This strategy is best illustrated in sessions 1, 2, 6, 8, and 10.

The final common diversified strategies employed by the mothers that affected the self-esteem of their daughters is involvement. Involvement is similar to both behavior representation and communication in the sense that it is all-inclusive and profound throughout the Rites of Passage and its entirety. Involvement during this process is equivalent to the application of information learned. The sessions of the

passage are all inclusive of self-love, esteem, efficacy, and respect, yet they are fostered through the engagement of others for the purpose of reaching potential. Each of the commonalities were specifically administered to meet the needs of the individualized daughter but universally structured in a format to be delivered to any female in specific age groups.

The mothers in this study were confident in their exemplified behaviors that coincided with the pedagogy delivered to all the daughters. As identified by the mothers, the theory of leading by example was the most important behavior they could employ when it came to promoting the positive self-esteem of their daughters. They made sure that their behavior demonstrated the characteristics of self-esteem that they deemed valuable for their daughters to have, some of which consisted of those passed down to them from the influential women in their lives. These characteristics included African-American pride, empathy, heritage homage, education, ambition, fortitude, respect, femininity, spirituality, esteem, resilience, leadership, compassion, love, family morals, and values. The parental-mentors explained that there are a few enhancement differences in the characteristic formation and overall rearing they provide their daughters in comparison to what their matriarchs provided them. Those variances include diversified methods of philosophy, which encourage the coaching required in the contemporary culture in which these young African-American females live.

Parental-mentors suggested that holistic self-love and its representation, was emphasized through their role-modeling behavior as they strived to promote and establish positive self-esteem in themselves and their daughters. Their priority was to demonstrate a holistic form of love, which incorporated beauty, intelligence, strengths, weaknesses,

health, and a diverse all-inclusive form of parenting to establish the foundation of esteem in their daughters by exemplifying the challenging path to self-love.

The strategies that were used to teach positive self-esteem to the daughters varied in the form of learning styles, and age appropriate content delivery. The diversity of the individuals did not eliminate the consistency of the overarching theme and goals established by the mothers in each phase/session of the rites of passage. All of the phases/sessions consisted of learned affirmations, storytelling, journaling, conversation, and leadership development in addition to various complimentary activities.

The parental-mentor mother's agreed that the most effective strategies that are utilized during the rearing of their children are storytelling and leadership development. As described by the parents, these strategies were the most significant to them because they were the most robust and emphasized throughout the rearing and rites of passage process. According to Parks and Anderson (2000), "Parental-Mentors, who role-model confidence and caring, guide their children to become confident, and responsible adults" (p. 64). It was also the most common and familiar form of rearing that they experienced in their childhood. After discussing in detail their assumed effective strategies, their perception transformed into one that acknowledged that their pedagogy strategies were slightly biased and centered on their personal comfort levels. The parental-mentor mothers re-established their responses, realizing that the most effective strategies are those that their daughters learn best from, and that is on an individualized basis.

The strategies and behaviors used by parents in African-American families to affect the self-esteem of female children and adolescents were defined differently from the perspective of the six female daughter participants. The commonality of the

strategies utilized by their mothers were journaling, affirmations, and conversations. The daughters expressed that these three strategies were the most prominent because it allowed them to express themselves without ridicule from other participants. It allowed them to become relaxed in their expressive thoughts, develop character of self-worth and acceptance, while respectively understanding the differences and similarities of all participants. The daughters perceived the journaling, affirmations, and conversations as personal time with their mothers.

The daughter participants' self-esteem was habitually affected by the specific behaviors demonstrated by the parental-mentors throughout the entire rites of passage activities, leadership development, and the visual illustration of the African proverb: When I see my sister, I see myself. The visual illustration exercise associated with this proverb required the daughters to look in a mirror and describe themselves from their visual personal perspective, exchange mirrors and describe another female from their perspective, compare and contrast the challenges from an opposing female, and find similarities that allow them to see themselves in the other person. This particular exercise validates more commonalities seen and visually unseen that Black women have in others that are perceived to be unlike others.

The parental participant's perception of the film *Akeelah and the Bee* was exceedingly dissimilar from that of the daughters. The mothers' perception of film consisted of the empathy and knowledge relevant to the plight associated with the lifestyle of an African-American single mother. This referenced lifestyle is all-inclusive of the absenteeism of a father and/or male dominant role model, the socio-economic status of the family, and the utilization of community resources; which is holistically

equivalent to the African proverb, *It takes a village to raise a child*. This equivalency implies the exhibited actions of community members to meet the needs of their neighbor, for the functionality of a cohesive society. The mothers also experienced the visualization of the African proverb, *Mothers raise their daughters and love their sons* through the lens of the actress portraying the single mother and her child rearing methodology, which included firm and defined structure and expectations applicable to the daughters versus the coddling, leniency, passive, unconditional love experienced by her son.

Within the Child and Adult Interview section outlined in Chapter Four, the difference of opinion expressed by the mother's regarding various scenes depicted in the film is based on personal beliefs associated with the level of respect displayed through non-verbal actions and mannerisms of a child. In addition to the perception variations, differences were also related to the correlation of participant commonality of experience versus the challenges displayed in the film. The participants would place themselves in the position of the character in the film and make decisions accordingly, and negate to take the film's family structure into consideration instead of their own.

The daughter's perception of the film was most relevant to the protagonist and her overall standard of living. They were able to relate to having a non-biased and/or non-discriminatory sentiment toward anyone regardless of whether it is not mutual, especially in their educational environment because of the feeling of solidarity as a student. The daughters expressed how self-esteem is affected based on the involvement of others, and it is evident in the film when the mother did not support Akeelah's quest for knowledge in the beginning, which caused her to lack confidence in her vocabulary aptitude. They

made the correlation between Akeelah's family's financial conundrum and how she was trying to assist her mother by being independent, which she considered aided in alleviating the stress. The daughters expressed empathy with Akeelah because they exercise the equivalent practice of relevant to problem solving in their daily lives.

Research Question Two

How can strategies and behaviors exhibited by African-American parental mentors be organized in a teachable format for African-American families?

As defined by this research, a paramount example of a teachable format of strategies and behaviors exhibited by African-American parental-mentors, is a diverse Rites of Passage curriculum and process designed for an individual's matriculation through life. The curriculum for the families would consist of a combination of contextual information of African-American history and current relevance, in addition to a general educational application of all assignments associated with the Rites of Passage.

This research compared the parental-mentoring strategies defined by Parks and Anderson (2000) to the techniques utilized and modeled in a parental-mentoring case study of African-American mothers and daughters. The findings of the research outlined multiple parenting strategies, which are applicable to children of all ethnicities. The theoretical data is designed to rear children in a universal method based on common age appropriate high-risk dilemmas such as; peer pressure, self-acceptance, alcoholism/drugs, relationships, and educational achievement.

The case study portraiture outcomes differ in the specialized delivery method of the practices. The essential objective of the pedagogy is designed to impart the characteristics of self-esteem into the lives of young African-American females. This

specific redesigned Rites of Passage curriculum embodies a holistic approach to self-love utilizing the application and comprehension of historical traditions, cultural relevance, spiritual guidance, and mother-daughter parental-mentoring. Though there was difference in the deliverance of the content, the overall objective was more similar than not in relation to problem-solving, self-esteem, and parental-mentoring relationship.

Implications of Research

The implications of this qualitative research results are best utilized in a variety of diverse social service and educational programs, which focus on the holistic self-esteem and success of minority females. Within the realm of social services the results of this research has the practical use in programs and classes affiliated with females involved in the Family Court Judicial system, healthy relationships, anger management, trauma and abuse healing, teen independent living, suicide prevention, and appropriate discipline techniques. The results of this qualitative research supportively align with prior researchers such as Branden (1987), Collins (1997), Hall and Brown-Thirston (2011), Hooks (1993), Goggins (1998), McAdoo (2002), and Parks and Anderson (2000) in their methodologies of understanding and addressing challenges within the African-American culture and family in addition to the importance of a uniquely designed process of matriculation to teach, heal, recover, and restore the self of women. Other researchers such as Friday (2010), Frisby (2000), Leadbeater and Way (1996), Lieberman (2005), Stack (1975), Turnage (2004), and Williams and Menendez (2007) supported the importance of specific communication techniques utilized in the relationship of African-American mothers and daughters, with varying emphasizes on mentoring, coaching, and self-esteem.

The findings of this research can be used practically within an educational setting to enhance the academic success of minority female students utilizing a holistic approach emphasized in the Rites of Passage curriculum. The implementation of this curriculum in a program format at various grade levels has the ability to primarily impact delinquent students and addressing challenges in a dysfunctional family.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future studies would be to enhance the innovation of the empirical data to be collected by researching various ethnicities and gender combinations verses the socio-economic and family dynamic variables. This revision of data collection and research would allow a more intense comparison of variables, which would foster greater skepticism on behalf of the researcher, based on its uncommon relationship. The case study and portraiture style of the methodology I would suggest remain the same due to the quality of information that is derived from it, the type of data that has to be experienced to comprehend its purpose.

In addition to this recommendation, I would also advocate for not using a film, or selecting a documentary film, which addresses the stigmas, myths, stereotypes, and prejudices perpetuated in a specific culture in a non-fiction format. The film that was selected for this research did not foster the quantity nor quality of dialog intended.

Conclusion

During the beginning of the case study, I had a significant amount of skepticism, due to the fact that there was not an ample amount of research available on the topic of parental-mentoring, in addition to personal biases regarding ethnic and culturally based parenting techniques. The results and the experience of gathering the research voided my

initial skepticism. The findings of this study supported the effectiveness of specific female parental-mentoring techniques designed to meet the unambiguous needs of African-American females.

This research experience has been exceedingly interesting and holistically rewarding from a subliminal personal perspective emphasized in the portraiture section. Stack (1974) implied that when conducting a qualitative style study, the researcher is perceived as a foreigner regardless of the affiliation to the community and cultural commonality. She suggested that a researcher must gradually adapt to the environmental culture being studied to gain approval and acceptance with the objective being to become a layman member of their society, which would allow the researcher to “become both an actor and a subject whose learned definitions can themselves be analyzed” (p. xiv). Contrary to her implication, my experience did not incorporate a sense of foreign invasion of private territory, instead it was extremely embracive and family oriented at all times. This study and research experience is most favorable to the suggestions of Ladner (1971) in the explanation of the inability of non-African American researchers to comprehend, and research the vital issues among African Americans. The cultural difference hinders most non-African American researchers from accurately observing and analyzing the significant culture and the influence oppression has upon African-Americans holistically (Ladner, 1971, p. 6).

This research and its experiences were far more gratifying and worthy than personally and professionally anticipated. It was an eye-opening journey, which allowed me to grow and develop as an individual. More importantly, it cultivated an elite bonding relationship among African-American women of all ages. The portrait of this

culture of women illustrates the phenomena of their rearing practices while graphically representing through writing in their own words, the purpose of their parental-mentoring technique.

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Appendix A

Letter of Introduction and Consent

To Whom This May Concern:

My name is Qiana Smith. I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, MO. I am conducting a study as part of the dissertation research process and I am requesting your assistance in the study as a participant in a case study.

My study will address the topic "Parental Mentoring: An African-American Approach to Raising Daughters with Self-Esteem." My research questions are "What strategies and behaviors are used by parents in African-American families to affect the self-esteem of female children and adolescents?" and "How can strategies and behaviors exhibited by African-American parent mentors be organized into a teachable format for African-American families?" I believe that this study is important because research shows that African-American females often lack the self-esteem that will assist them in developing strategies to deal with challenges in their lives. The researcher believes that these skills and behaviors will help them to live life by loving, accepting, valuing, respecting, and appreciating themselves regardless of any situation, societal beliefs, stereotypical views of African-American females which may exist in society, and dealing with problems and differences they may encounter.

I am requesting permission to meet with you and your family in an informational working session to explain the components of self-esteem and mentoring. This session will also involve participants in viewing a video concerning situations involving self-esteem, journaling their thoughts on the video situations, strategies, and behaviors, and establishing a process for making journal entries and observations by the researcher of parent interactions with their children. Parent participants will be interviewed three times during the study. Adolescent and child participants will be interviewed twice. All interviews will be private and confidential. No names of participants will be used. Recordings of the interviews will be made, used by the researcher in this study, kept in a secure place, and then destroyed after three years.

It is a goal of the researcher to create a teachable format for strategies and behaviors used by African-American parents to affect the self-esteem of their adolescents and children.

Thanks for your anticipated participation in this study. I can be contacted at 314-283-5483 or by e-mail at qtheory56@gmail.com. My dissertation committee chair, Dr. W. Emrick can be contacted at bemrick@lindenwood.edu.

Thank you

Qiana Smith

Appendix B

Adult Participants' Interview Questions

The first set of interview questions for adult participants are as follows:

1. What does it mean for a person to have self-esteem?
2. How do you have self-esteem?
3. Has anyone ever taught you about the characteristics or components of self-esteem? If so, what did they teach you?
4. How can a person's self-esteem suffer?
5. How can a person's self-esteem grow?
6. As an African-American, how do you believe that a person's self-esteem is influenced by a) physical appearance, b) perceived intelligence, c) socioeconomic status, and d) heritage?
7. What role(s) do you believe family values and morals play in a person's self-esteem?
8. What role(s) do you believe the media play in a person's self-esteem?
9. How can the self-esteem of one person affect the self-esteem of others?
10. Specifically, why do you believe that young females (adolescents and children) may have self-esteem?
11. What behaviors and/or skills are exhibited by a female with self-esteem?

The second set of interview questions for adult participants are as follows:

1. What excerpts from the film addressed positive examples and negative examples of self-esteem?

2. How did these excerpts relate to you and your family situation?
3. Are there certain behaviors and skills that are exhibited by a female who has self-esteem?
4. Why do you think these females exhibit self-esteem?
5. How can parents assist their daughters to achieve self-esteem?
6. How has the journaling component of this study affected your self-esteem?

The third set of interview questions for adult participants are as follows:

1. As a parent mentor what specific behaviors and strategies have you exhibited with your biological children?
2. Which of these behaviors and strategies has been most effective in assisting your child with developing self-esteem?
3. Which strategies and behaviors have been least effective in assisting your child with developing self-esteem?

Appendix C

Children Participants' Questions

1. How do your parents

encourage you?	How does this make you feel?
----------------	------------------------------

teach you?	How does this make you feel?
------------	------------------------------

show that they understand you?	How does this make you feel?
--------------------------------	------------------------------

praise you?	How does this make you feel?
-------------	------------------------------

communicate(speak) with you?	How does this make you feel?
------------------------------	------------------------------

model behavior for you?	How does this make you feel?
-------------------------	------------------------------

provide you with feedback?	How does this make you feel?
----------------------------	------------------------------

coach you?	How does this make you feel?
------------	------------------------------

counsel you?	How does this make you feel?
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care for you?	How does this make you feel?
---------------	------------------------------

support you?	How does this make you feel?
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2. What does it mean to have self-esteem?

3. How have your parents helped you to develop self-esteem?

Appendix D

Children Participants' Intense Interview Questions

1. How have your parents

encouraged you?	How does this make you feel?
taught you?	How does this make you feel?
shown that they understand you?	How does this make you feel?
praised you?	How does this make you feel?
communicated (spoken) with you?	How does this make you feel?
modeled behaviors for you?	How does this make you feel?
provided you with feedback?	How does this make you feel?
coached you?	How does this make you feel?
counseled you?	How does this make you feel?
cared for you?	How does this make you feel?
supported you?	How does this make you feel?

2. What does it mean to have self-esteem?

3. How have your parents helped you to develop self-esteem?

Appendix E

Adult Participants' Journal Entry Questions:

1. Which components of self-esteem shown in the video were most memorable?
Why?
2. Which of these components of self-esteem shown in the video are present in my life?
3. Which components of self-esteem shown in the video have I seen in others I know?
4. How can parents affect the self-esteem of their children?
5. How can adults affect the self-esteem of other adults?
6. How can outside sources such as other people, and the media affect the self-esteem of persons?

Appendix F

Children Participants' Journal Entry Questions

1. What events in the film did you feel were most important to you in understanding what is self-esteem? Why were these events so important?
2. The film shows various parts of self-esteem. Which of these parts are present in my life?
3. Which of these parts of self-esteem as shown in the video do I see in the lives of others I know?
4. How does my parent contribute most to the development of my self-esteem?
5. How much is my self-esteem affected by other people and the media?

Appendix G

Observation Sheet

Parent strategies and behaviors

- nurturing

example(s)

- caregiving

example(s)

- modeling

example(s)

- feedback

example(s)

- teaching

example(s)

- training

example(s)

- developing

example(s)

- interpersonal communicating

example(s)

- encouraging

example(s)

- counseling

example(s)

- coaching

example(s)

- affirming

example(s)

- understanding

example(s)

- praising

example(s)

Vitae

QIANA B. SMITH, EdD

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EDUCATION

Ed.D., Instructional Leadership, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO. 2014
Dissertation: *Parental Mentoring; An African American Approach to Raising Daughters with Self-Esteem*

M.A., Character Education, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO. 2014

M.Hum., Humanities, Wright State University, Dayton, OH. 2004

Thesis: *Dismantling the Images and Stereotypes; Examining Black Youth Gangs from New Perspectives*

B.A., Mass Media Communications, Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, OH. 2001

Thesis: *Subliminal Messaging Associated with Alcohol Advertisement*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

National Youth Advocate Program, Dayton, OH

Apr. 13-current

Trainer / Facilitator

Develop and implement a three-tiered foster parent training curriculum specific to the needs of traditional, specialized and therapeutic foster parents. Develop and coordinate staff training curriculum and monitor their implementation. Provide a method for insuring that all staff and foster parents have been provided with the necessary training hours as required by licensing and certification entities. Apply current andragogy techniques to ensure the comprehension of complex learning material. Facilitate training on conflict resolution and crisis intervention for youth and non-bio parent. Establish and promote an effective adult learning environment, demonstrating confident and engaging presentation skills and classroom facilitation techniques leading to desired training outcomes, including readiness to execute organizational objectives. Train parents on advocacy methods and responsibilities. Develop effective communication methodologies for families to utilize to assist with appropriate discipline. Administer assessments, collect and record results during and following training to validate training effectiveness and trainee proficiency level. Provide group and individualized instruction, utilizing the most appropriate method of delivery to ensure mastery of the competencies presented. Continually improve training effectiveness by researching and developing new techniques that cater to successful adult learning.

Sinclair Community College, Dayton, OH.

Feb. 13-July 14

Academic Success Coach (Grant Funded)

Coordinated a unique and comprehensive student support system for eligible students including academic, transfer, financial, career and personal development domains. Provided consultation to student services programs to assist eligible students. Determined students' academic needs based on a wide variety of data sources and assist students in developing educational plans for graduation and transfer. Developed and provide informal seminars on relevant topics for eligible students. Developed and maintained a

variety of community relation activities; served as college liaison with various student/community outreach organizations. Provided specialized intrusive advising to ensure the success of minority students. Provided ongoing coordination of supports and resources for students across post-secondary institutions and through college completion.

Sanford Brown College, Hazelwood, MO **July 09-Oct. 12**
Department Chair of General Education & Faculty Development Coach / Evening Dean

Managed general studies curricula and instructional staff (60+full-time and adjunct faculty at a campus). Ensured proper instruction and delivery of curricula while ensuring the learning environment met requirements. Actively engaged in retention activities, implementation of school policies and procedures. Ensured compliance with accrediting standards (ACICS, ACCSC, ABHES, ASHP, ACCSC). Measured the outcomes of the educational process to ensure that all programs meet their objectives and the requirements of the state and the accrediting bodies. Designed and executed a staffing plan to meet requirements through selection, training and supervision of assigned staff. Supported teaching and learning by organizing and facilitating pedagogical faculty development opportunities on campus that include trainings and workshops. Prepared departmental objectives; evaluated the quality of services provided and determined ways to improve services and implement changes. Developed budgets that monitored and approved department expenditures. Provided comprehensive training for new hire employees and refresher training for existing employees on process and systems training coupled with effective teaching, service skills and communication skills training. Addressed complaints and grievances involving students and faculty. Prepared for training classes, including but not limited to overseeing training calendars, room and/or equipment preparation, room reservation, gathering sample calls, ensuring appropriate systems and/or software availability, and arranging for Subject Matter Expert guest speakers. Conducted observations of coursework to evaluate curriculum design and implementation. Supervised student academic discipline process, taught Humanities, Sociology, Culture, Interpersonal Communications, Investment to Success, and Professional Development courses per academic term. Provided feedback on evaluation and assessment metrics for curriculum quality and design.

Youth In Need, St. Louis, MO **Dec. 08-July 09**
Foster Care Case Manager

Managed caseloads of juveniles in the Foster Care system. Provided intervention services to children and adults using individual, family, and group treatment. Worked closely with parents to ensure parental involvement. Worked with various court officials to provide services for incarcerated youth. Produced legal judicial documentation adhering to governmental and federal policies. Provided crisis intervention to mentally/emotionally disabled clients. Provided Holistic Wraparound theory to case load. Completed psychosocial assessments. Provided family preservation services for at-risk youth. Demonstrated the ability to critically assess challenges and identify effective solution.

Wright State University, Dayton, OH **May 02-June 04**
Mentor Coordinator (Assistantship) (Boling Black Cultural Resource Center)

Used a balanced blend of motivational and targeted instruction methodologies to enhance curriculum. Coordinated mentoring relationships for first year students. Implemented a robust orientation program. Established professional partnerships with community leaders for student extern/internships. Utilized multicultural and differentiated instructional methodologies. Applied strategic and critical thinking in order to proactively identify challenges and thoughtful solutions.