Love in Black and White

With all this focus on America's racial problems, let's look at the bigotry directed toward interracial relationships.

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I had an interesting experience last week while scrolling through Facebook. A friend posted a question to her African-American friends who are in a relationship with someone white. She asked, "How is that working for you now?" This was in reference to the current focus on Black Lives Matter and racial inequality.

It was clear her question was rhetorical as she agreed with those who spoke out against interracial relationships. I was going to reply to her post, but I didn't for two reasons. First, I find it so hypocritical when those who are the victims of racial equality use race as a judgment of those who love someone of another race. And second, I was simply tired of explaining my love in black and white, especially to strangers who have a bigoted view of interracial relationships.

I also was upset as I was one of the people she was referencing. The person I have decided to settle with is my longtime partner Joel, who is white. We met 24 years ago. Although I dated men of several races including my own, early on I knew there was something special about Joel. I will never forget when he expressed the same attraction. When we started dating, I knew I would face reactions not just from the white community but also my own. And it is crazy that in 2020, some have not moved beyond their ignorance and do not embrace that love is love.

As shared before, I was equally upset with my own people as we have a lifetime of being judged by our race. We have endured plain hate for even existing, so we should know how that bias feels. But we are blind to that and want to condemn those who have a relationship with another race. And I can simply ignore the ignorance and love who I want to love, but during this current focus on race, it is a topic I feel that needs to be addressed.

When I met Joel, he was HIV negative and I was HIV positive. He was not bothered by my status as he expressed his unconditional love. And to be clear, from the beginning I told him that as a black person, I knew race will enter our conversations. Whether it was something I experienced, something on the local news, and even movies/television shows that had a racial theme. So, to be with me he had to accept those conditions and conversations as I did not want to pretend how the outside world was dealing with race.

Similar to his views on my HIV status, he expresses his support. But he goes beyond simple support. He is aware not only of his privilege as a white person but also of the injustices of those who do not have the same privileges.

I can only speak from my experience as an African American man, but there are stereotypes that exist when it comes to dating outside your race.

1. The white person is financially supporting the person of color.
2. The white person only is with the person of color because of the size of his penis.
3. The person of color has self-hate and hates their own race
4. The person of color has given up their race card and are no longer allowed to speak out on issues affecting black communities.
5. God does not believe in interracial relationships.

So, this is a call to my black brothers and sisters, and I use the words of Martin Luther King, “Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love.”

It’s that easy. And I know that hurt people hurt people and we have been through centuries of hate. But as we are witnessing today, we must turn that corner and dismantle the outdated bigoted perspective of interracial dating and fully embrace that if someone, no matter their race, makes you happy, then we should be happy for you.

It’s as simple as that. It is so black and white.

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