BLACK STUDENT/
WHITE COUNSELOR

Developing Effective Relationships

Third Edition
2000

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

I wish to acknowledge and thank the many persons who had enough confidence in this project to urge me to finish it. Thanks to my wife Marie who has shown great patience and understanding of my need to work evenings and weekends on this book. I am grateful to her for the time, space, and encouragement.

Special thanks to Norm Merkler, my associate and friend, who taught me how not to be afraid of the word processor; also to Sandi Pfeiffer, *Paul Sechrist, and Joe Taylor (my long time friend and mentor), all of whom told me years ago, that this book had to be written. Any mistakes found within these lines are all my own. A.S.B.

*Paul who wrote “Alone and Unknown” passed away in 1997. He is missed.

DEDICATION

To my daughters, Lynn and Lisa, to my grandchildren, and to all their black brothers and sisters, in the hope that they will someday, equally share in America's bountiful harvest with their white brothers and sisters.
ALONE AND UNKNOWN

You are not me;
   I am totally other,
   And utterly separate from you.

Yet we are alike,
   In so many ways;
   We rejoice, we hurt, and we mourn.

The distance between us
   A million miles is;
   A truly unbridgeable gulf.

Yet I in my lone-ness,
   And you there in yours,
   Are closer than books on a shelf.

So different am I
   From any one else--
   And sometimes I feel so unknown--

Till I see in another
   That very unknown-ness
   And find that I am not alone;

If I see that you see
   Our difference as likeness,
   Then I know that we're neither unknown--

And we can, if we choose,
   Take joy in our knowing
   That neither of us is alone.

   --E. Paul Sechrist, Jr.
FOREWORD

Counseling black students is an important task that many white counselors need and want to perform in the most personal and effective way. Some white counselors, however, are unsure of their ability to reach the core of black students because of a lack of knowledge about the personal and cultural factors that affect black students' transition and adjustment to higher education.

Al Bynum has given us an important historical and cultural overview of the black students' world. He reviews some of the important literature on black history and culture--a literature with which few white counselors are completely familiar. He shows us how to use this knowledge to enhance relationships with black clients. He emphasizes that white counselors can make a difference in black students' lives by helping them develop positive self-images and by creating supportive environments.

Dean Bynum outlines many specific strategies and techniques that white counselors will find useful. He urges the use of a holistic approach, which recognizes all aspects of students’ lives including the influence of special family ties, and the impact of black culture and tradition. Understanding individual students' goals, needs and aspirations is paramount to establishing the type of relationship that is necessary to build mutual trust and respect. Recognizing that all white counselors harbor some degree of racial bias, Dean Bynum offers suggestions for changing attitudes and behavior. Becoming familiar with black history and culture and reading black-oriented publications in order to appreciate the goals of black students and their families, are only a few.
Higher education is still considered by the black community to be a desirable path to sharing in the "good life." Through Dean Bynum's insights we have access to some of the knowledge and practical techniques that will help us become more effective change agents on behalf of our black clients. Any conscientious white counselor who sincerely wants to help black students realize their full potential and their dreams will find in the following pages important ideas and strategies for helping bring these dreams to fruition.

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INTRODUCTION

When students are culturally or racially different from their counselors. Guidance and counseling services can generally be termed weak or unsatisfactory. This condition results basically from a limited cultural awareness on the part of the counselor – thus producing ineffective interpersonal relationships. Competencies such as human awareness and good communication skills in meeting with persons of a different race unfortunately are not taught in most formal counselor education programs. There appears to be an erroneous assumption that if the counselor is only sincere, then all will be well.

Counselors want and need to be of equal service to all their clients, but often the topic of race or ethnicity is either ignored or given little emphasis in textbooks and graduate training curricula for school counselors. Much more is needed.

Hopefully, this book will open the door to the topic of counseling across racial lines through its organization and presentation of researched data. Additionally, the author and other practitioners relate personal experiences gained over the years. It should help counselors recognize and appreciate the cultural differences and social sciences of their clients. Most of all, the author will show how to use this knowledge to bring positives to the relationship. Counselors will be able to focus on the value of cultural differences and help the client to achieve his or her desired academic, career, and life goals.

Rather than use a negative pathological approach to the difference in human attributes, this book will use a historical, sociocultural avenue. By the use of such knowledge, counselors will be able to upgrade their own
human relations skills particularly by learning how to talk, listen, and relate to black clients – expressly by using meaningful operational terms rather than cold, memorized, theoretical phrases.

The reader will find that this book is not simply a report on a statistical study, but is a guiding document written for practicing professionals to use. So, if the reader can look beyond both the traditional academic expectations of manuscript writing and the use of professional jargon, my frequent first person suggestions for improvement will serve well.

If dedicated white counselors really understand and appreciate the social sciences of their black clients then better communication should take place. The client will perceive the counselor as a caring person who is genuinely interested in his or her development.

A.S.B.
ONE

THE AFRICAN DAWN BREAKS

BACKGROUND

Some background information may be in order to set the stage for understanding the social sciences of persons of the black community. It is, thus, necessary to begin at the beginning--African roots. It is not possible to include here a full, detailed explanation as to why and how blacks became a part of this country. Instead of attempting a course in Black American History some supplemental readings are suggested in the Selected Reading List, which is annotated especially for this purpose. Among those on that list are two distinguished black historians: John Hope Franklin (1967), and Benjamin Quarles (1964). Both give clear and articulate accounts of the involuntary arrival of blacks, their subsequent slavery, and finally, their integral
participation in helping America develop in both slave and free states.

**AFRICAN CIVILIZATIONS**

Before the first white explorer set foot in the New World, blacks flourished in their own civilizations throughout the vast "Dark Continent" of Africa. Ancient kingdoms and peoples had developed and produced many cultural, educational, social, legal, ethical, moral and religious dogmas and models for subsequent generations to emulate. Quarles (1964) notes that "...out of all the Old World (human) stocks, that entered America, none came from as wide a geographic area as the blacks."

The West Coast of Africa was the principal hunting ground for the slavers who wanted to cut their cost of operation by raiding the villages and the bush nearer the Atlantic Ocean where the ships waited to carry the unfortunate blacks in chains on the arduous sea voyage. The more ambitious slave traders captured a small percentage of human cargo in East African communities that were thousands of miles away from the ports on the West Coast. Many black slaves, thus captured and marched across the continent, did not survive the trip through desert, rain forest, and crocodile-infested streams and over mountain ranges.

Since he was of no single tribe or nation, the ancestor of the American black presents no singular physical type. They were, in fact, like the hues of the rainbow--dark-skinned like the tall, brooding Ashanti of the north or lighter-skinned like the shorter Bantu from the Congo. Such variety in nationality, language, customs, culture, dress, religion and physical types defied myths such as a single African personality or even a common tongue. The devious slave trader practiced "divide and conquer"
tactics by mixing these separate groups of humans to promote confusion and, thereby, maintain control. Families were broken up deliberately, and young voluptuous girls and women were set aside for the sexual sport of the sailors aboard ship. There are recorded instances of individual suicides by women thus violated and many cases of infanticide by the mothers who gave birth to babies aboard ship. Rather than face a life of slavery, these mothers, in desperation, would leap overboard with the infant into the angry sea, and both would drown.

**SLAVE TRADE**

The early slave trade became so profitable that it was known as "The Golden Triangle." This was primarily an economic venture principally participated in by Euro-whites, who provided the first side of the triangle by sending ships, loaded with metal and other manufactured hard goods, to African ports to be sold or exchanged for black slaves. The slaves then would be packed on board the same ships--refitted with chains and irons for the long passage to America. Once in the New World, the slaves were sold to dealers in the trade for public resale to farm and plantation owners. Most were purchased for use as free labor in the Southern agricultural areas of America. Once more, the ships were refitted to take on cargoes of tobacco and raw cotton from the plantation ports for the mills of England and other industrialized European nations. All three sides of the triangle would be completed and the process started over again.
TWO

A LONG PERIOD OF CULTURAL DENIAL

SLAVES DENIED OWN CULTURE

From 1619, when the first purchased blacks were debarked at Jamestown, until the end of the Civil War in 1865, generations of slavery and culture denial permeated the South of the United States. Not only did the white masters on the farms and plantations forbid marriages and normal family development among the slaves; tribal customs and religion were barred. It generally was assumed that the Africans had no religion because it was not Christian in foundation. They were, in fact, not "heathen," but either clung to the Islamic faith or one of many African religions centered in nature. Black people had great respect and love for a particular Supreme Being who was greater than them. Some
whites that owned slaves often misused the Holy Bible to justify white superiority and black inferiority. By doing this, the institutions of human slavery gained religious support and, therefore, church approval or at least a policy of non-interference.

**SLAVES NOT DOCILE**

In spite of the severe "slave codes" legislated in the Southern states and the Caribbean Islands, there were numerous slave rebellions. Most of the uprisings failed to turn the tide, but gave the lie to the myth that black slaves were a happy-go-lucky, docile group who enjoyed deprivation and lack of freedom. One famous uprising, known as "The Nat Turner Rebellion," was severe enough to strike fear into the hearts of the slave owners. The feared Nat Turner Band's exploits have inspired a number of pieces of literature, both historical and fictional. Some writers perceive him to be at least a folk hero, if not a martyr for the cause of human freedom.

During all phases of slavery in the South, blacks were denied the opportunity to practice their African heritage and cultures. Their language became a tangled patois, mixed with "pidgin English" which amused the white masters who reasoned that blacks were not capable of learning anything but hard work under a cruel supervisor and the worst of physical circumstances. African religious rituals were expressly forbidden in order to fully control their lives, but soon, missionary zeal emanated from whites that began extending some aspects of Christianity to the deprived blacks. The religious reaching out was limited first to the "house slaves," who were permitted to attend the services, but sat in a designated section (usually the balcony) removed from the whites. Pastors were known to further the white control by misinterpreting the biblical passage
from Apostle Paul's exhortation on civility to the community at Corinth by preaching: "Slaves obey your masters . . ."

Quarles (1964) stated that slaves practiced "day by day resistance" in a number of ways, often non-violent in nature. For example: when permitted to sing while working, the blacks made up their own songs which, when casually examined seemed harmless, but might contain a message of hope or even a condemnation of the white masters. Quarles continues that these Spirituals conveyed messages other than religious hope. The following songs, "Go Down, Moses" and "Pharaoh's Army" are good examples of the dual meanings conveyed by the simple words:

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt's Land,

Tell ole Pharaoh
To let my people go.

O Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn,
Pharaoh's army got drownded,
O Mary, don't you weep.

It is quite likely that the slaves identified their masters with Pharaoh in the Biblical story of Israel's harsh treatment while under Egyptian bondage. They envisioned themselves as the oppressed people of Israel and prayed that God would perform a similar rescue. Quarles concludes that whether the slave was singing about justice in this life or the next, "He was giving expression to his discontent with things as they were."
MIGRATION WEST AND NORTH

After the close of a great and bloody Civil War between the slave and non-slave states, black freedom was finally won. Thousands of former slaves, turned out by resentful masters started migrating west and north to escape the devastated south, which could not support much life. The fields had been left fallow and were overgrown with weeds because of neglect during the war. Cities and towns were virtually destroyed by the fighting, and slaves, freed without funds, beasts of burden, or even food, left the white farms and plantations in long, walking caravans.

As groups of blacks headed out, some of them stopped in what seemed likely areas in free territory and established settlements and towns that prospered for some time (Quarles 1964). The promise of a rosy future soon died in the newly established communities outside the South for a variety of reasons relating to economics, continuing white racism and the rise of violent white supremacy groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan. White dominated state legislatures treated the all-black towns with a form of "benign neglect" which effectively erected a tombstone over deep graves. Few of these communities exist today as viable, progressive towns.

BLACK CODES AND JIM CROW PRACTICES

After the Civil War ended and Federal troops were withdrawn from the Southern States, most white Southerners still believed that blacks were born inferior to themselves. According to Meltzer (1984), "By the Fall elections of 1865 prominent Confederates were put into office everywhere. Reconstruction was in their
The obvious plan to carry out a return to the status quo was the passage of ordinances called "Black Codes." Meltzer states: "These were adopted by state legislatures which in all but name restored the Black to his old position of slave." The codes permitted a form of control similar to the infamous "slave codes" which permeated the pre Civil War South. Quarles (1964) asserted in his discussion of Post Civil War history, that "The Black codes . . . were designed to take the place of the slave codes." There were statutes written which said: "Persons of color shall be known as servants and those with whom they contract shall be known as masters." Free persons of color were subject by law to indentured service if found without employment and unable to pay the arrest fine. Public vagrancy laws also abounded which gave law enforcement persons great power to arrest and jail any black seen moving about the area. White legislatures met and passed laws that constricted black persons in every manner possible, often under the guise of "Home Rule" and "States Rights."

A firestorm of protest grew over the "Black Codes" especially in the North and led to many rallies and conferences by blacks and whites to obtain the vote and justice for all citizens. They wanted oppressive laws repealed and blacks given Federal protection. Ultimately, there were some positive results. Among the gains made were the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865 by Congress as an aid society for impoverished persons; the passage of a Civil Rights Bill in 1866 which granted full citizenship to the former slaves; and the all important Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, also passed in 1866 and sent to the states for ratification. This addendum assured equal protection under the law for blacks. The Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed the vote regardless of race or color. It became for white Southerners a double blow as
it attacked their notion rights and the concept of black inferiority.

"Jim Crow" practices and laws were developed to segregate people by their skin color especially in schools, public accommodations, housing, jobs, churches, transportation and restaurants. The end result was that blacks were continually denied access to opportunities that were readily available to whites. There was no recourse since the socially based practices were supported by an oppressive set of laws.

The descriptive term, "Jim Crow", arose from the words and tune associated with a dance which black slaves sometimes performed. Its use in everyday language has declined since the Fifties:

Once upon the heel tap,
And then upon the toe,
An' ev'ry I turn around
I jump Jim Crow.

While today's students are a long way from their slave ancestors, they have learned some lessons well. The slave was always playing a role, trying to survive in spite of the hardship that was heaped upon his head. He could fawn and feign servility. His face could become a mask that belied emotion, giving the impression of docility. He was, though, a seething mass internally, hating himself for having to demonstrate such apathetic and even stupid behavior before the white master. Counselors will often find it difficult to discern what is behind that mask on a client's face. It will not be docile or servile, rather it may be defiant, watching, and testing. It would be well for counselors to recognize and understand the lack of eagerness of black clients to engage in an intimate, counseling relationship with a white person. The next step would be for the counselor to move forward with the development of a higher level
of trust by being earnest and honest in supplying information and advice to the student.
THREE

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

EMERGENCE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Despite great odds, the new black American persisted in a group cultural growth through the adopting of much of the wider culture's most desirable traits. There was a rapid advance into graphic arts, music, poetry and prose, which extended into the early 1900s. Some historians refer to this era as the "Black Renaissance"-perhaps a misnomer in that the majority of black Americans were not among that small, elite group of highly creative persons mostly located in the Harlem area of New York City.

The bulk of the blacks nationwide worked at ordinary jobs and supported families by honest sweat like most other Americans. They often were compelled to create businesses that would serve the black community since
white businessmen were not meeting their needs. Each black community eventually developed its own churches, barber shops, funeral homes, service businesses and places of entertainment. Most were of adequate quality, but generally limited by the social and economic system (reinforced by law) which forbade the white lenders to finance or otherwise support these businesses.

**COURT ENDS SEGREGATED EDUCATION**

America continued "business as usual" in terms of bad treatment of blacks in all phases of life. This was particularly true in education, social life, economic development and political justice. In fact, the U.S. suffered through two World Wars and an armed "police action" in Korea before the 1954 Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education decision by the U.S. Supreme Court struck down segregated education. The Black American's expectation of the Court's intent, "with all deliberate speed," was high. It was perceived as an approach to an answer for many problems in this country. Unfortunately, this was not to be. Use of the legal appeal process and the passage of unconstitutional state laws in segregationist legislatures stalled the edict for years. The immediate period following the Brown decision was overspread by clashes between the segregationists and the integrationists. The NAACP did much of the legal fighting on behalf of black plaintiffs and other organizations that believed in the desegregation of America.

During the Sixties, there were bombings of militant blacks' homes, churches and businesses. Innocent black children were maimed and killed by mysterious explosions, police dogs, water hoses and even electric cattle prods in the hands of white policemen. This was a
serious time in which a great personal price was paid by blacks in the South for a chance at freedom. Many of the gains made were the direct result of the real blood and tears shed by many young blacks (and some Northern whites) who dared to place their lives and futures on the line. They marched in protest, registered to vote, and became involved in the political process in towns that had always been run by white segregationists.

Following the Sixties, which saw many demonstrations by peaceful, petitioning blacks and the infamous brutal police actions against them, slow progress was made.

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFERS SOME HELP**

The subsequent decade produced an era of federally imposed desegregation that spoke for the minority person in education, employment and other areas of life. Significant inroads finally were realized as restaurants, hotels and transportation modes began providing equal accommodations in response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was clearly demonstrated that in many locales, the idea of custom often outweighed the law in that no changes were tolerated until about 1966.

There was great hope in the black communities of America that the concept at the base of affirmative action would permit the active search for qualified blacks for entry into educational institutions of post secondary education and previously restricted career fields. Beyond the simple termination of discriminatory practices, the concept of affirmative action is any measure used to correct past and present discriminatory practices so that discrimination will not recur and so that groups benefiting from such practices will cease to do so. Black boys and girls began to dream about some horizons never seen before in their families. This had a
positive effect on upward mobility for blacks and continued through the early Eighties.

In 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Bakke vs. University of Southern California at Davis spoke to some errors made by the University that had set some racial quotas. This particular decision admitted a white student to the Davis (California) Medical School on the complaint that he was a "victim of reverse discrimination." While it did not overturn affirmative action, the decision did, however, permit educational institutions to consider the ethnicity of the applicant in making admissions, but not to establish quotas.

**ACHIEVING SCHOOL RACIAL BALANCE**

The latter part of the Seventies and the early Eighties were concerned with attempts to desegregate the public schools, both the lower grades and the universities. These were nationwide efforts since there were many school districts and institutions of higher education that had totally white enrollments or in some way had limited black access. The primary issue was that of busing of black school children, under court order, to distant schools to achieve racial balance since the Federal Courts repeatedly declared racially segregated schools as inherently inferior. State legislatures and even the U.S. Congress became active in an attempt to stop the busing, but offered no other remedy for the basic, root cause of inequality. The prospect of universally acceptable solutions seems to grow out of reach the longer the issue is debated.
FOUR

A LOOK AT THE MODERN BLACK AMERICAN FAMILY

HUMAN AND BLACK

In sharp contrast to Moynihan and Glazer's limiting perception of Black Americans, Billingsley (1968) states, "We do not view the Negro family as a causal nexus in a 'tangle of pathology' which feeds on itself. It is indeed a subsystem of the wider society." Further, Billingsley asserts that it is extremely difficult for young members of the black family to learn how to become human and black at the same time in a white surrounding society. In order to survive, families must teach their young certain skills and behaviors which will allow them to remain black and moral. So, the challenge is double for black parents and their children's "significant others," for the child needs to learn to cope in a society which