

KRA COMMUNICATIONS

Be the Change Your Life Needs

“The meaning of insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results. Dysfunction lasts within families across generations because people are afraid to change things in the name of family. You have the power to end the insanity now.” This is a quote from my second book, *A Mother’s Love Through a Broken Heart*.

I would never recommend something I have not tried myself. I implemented the following steps in my personal life several years ago to end the generational curses in my life that were meant to derail and destroy my life:

Admit that it is a problem. The first step to change is to acknowledge that the way we are doing things is not beneficial to our end goal. A person's past is not the number one determining factor of their future —their choices are.

Begin the process of change. Determining you are going to change for yourself, your family and your future will not happen simply out of a desire to change.

Commit to finishing the course. It is not fair for our children to have to deal with family curses simply because we were not willing to come face-to-face with them in the present.

Ending generational curses often means severing ties with the family member(s) that caused the curse in the first place. That action can be viewed as disrespectful to the family because ‘family is supposed to stick together,’ right? It is sad that family stays together through dysfunction but cannot be supportive through healing.

*Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), **Shameka Beeks**, is dedicated to making a difference for those dealing with mental health issues who feel they do not have a voice. Through that mission, Beeks launched the #TEAMME mental health awareness initiative in 2016 that promotes the importance of doing what is necessary to live a fulfilling and purposeful life. She has been extremely active and passionate about spreading the word on the importance of mental wellness in the minority community. This initiative was created to eradicate the stigma associated with mental health issues, and to encourage those suffering in silence to seek help and access the resources needed to begin the process of restoration and healing.*

Beeks has been kind enough to lend her advice as a contributing Mental Health Expert to Kreative Korner so that we can help change the view of mental health issues, one click at a time. To connect with Beeks, please send your comments and/or questions to kracommunications1@yahoo.com.

Dear Friend,

Go inward and be nice to yourself. You have been through a lot. If the world has beat you up, do not join in on the beating. Be kind and loving to yourself. Have some compassion for you, pray for you and literally take it one day at time. One foot in front of the other. Know you will fall on some days, but get up, dust it off and keep going. Learn how to celebrate and honor you. You must do it for yourself and not depend on anything outside of you to do it for you. Manifest love within and trust me you will feel 1000% better about your life. Level up!

Dear Friend,

We are often oblivious and/or accustomed to the toxic emotions and thoughts living inside of us. The thoughts and feelings about ourselves, others, and the world. These toxins are developed over time by our life experiences that ultimately shape us. We find ourselves in toxic relationships, we have loose boundaries, and we seek unhealthy attachments to things and people which ultimately become our habitual “normal” way of living. This can be hard to recognize and very painful to get rid of. It requires a truthful assessment of ourselves and letting go of the people and things that feed the toxic beast inside of us. When that voice inside whispers “I knew better” or “I deserve better” it is imperative to take

the time to process what you are really saying to yourself because that is where the HEALTHY version of who we are is secretly hiding. That is what we are supposed to fight for.

Dear Friend,

Unresolved childhood trauma will block you from receiving and giving love to yourself and others. Its negative effects are detrimental to building healthy relationships with those around you. Your coping skills are impacted and depending on your level of awareness your coping habits can be either helpful or harmful.

We all have issues. No one alive is the image of perfection. We are all works in progress journeying through life with the skills we have. The challenge is using your current skills to face the hard stuff. It can be extremely painful, and scary to relive those moments in time when you felt shame, guilt or even nothing at all. It makes you vulnerable all over again and who wants to be vulnerable, who has time to be vulnerable.

The issues you run into by not dealing with your childhood trauma causes you to become stuck in an unconscious cycle of abuse and neglect that is self-inflicted. You see the effects of self-abuse and self-neglect in the following ways:

- The unhealthy relationships you commit to
- How you let others treat you
- The negative things you believe about yourself
- Your inability to set and achieve goals
- Functioning in chaos
- High levels of stress
- Having no peace within
- Poor physical health

Some of your experiences and behaviors are causally related to the thoughts and feelings you have on the inside. If your inner world is holding onto childhood trauma that has not been resolved, your outer experience could reflect what you have suppressed.

Know that it is okay to seek help to safely deal with past trauma. It is the first step to healing, loving, and taking care of yourself, so that you can ultimately live your best life.

Courtesy of Shameka T. Beeks, LMSW
#TEAMME

Mental Health Resources:

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

NAMI Helpline 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or info@nami.org

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mindful-anger/201706/4-ways-childhood-trauma-impacts-adults>

<https://yourbrilliance.com/trauma/>

<https://youtu.be/95ovlJ3dsNk>

*Licensed Professional Counselor **Tichina Burnett** is the wife to Dyril, mother of Naomi (and soon-to-be new baby), daughter to Eilene and Michael. Tichina was born and raised on the south side of Chicago in the Roseland neighborhood. She attended Morgan Park High School and further matriculated through the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where her love for therapy and psychology flourished. Tichina earned her Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Over the years she has worked with the elderly and adolescent populations with foci on mental health stigma, communal and cultural understanding of mental illness. She is dedicated to implementing strategies to eradicate intrapersonal barriers. Her current loves include raising mental health awareness in Black and Brown communities while working to vehemently disconnect the belief that communities of color are erasable, invisible.*

Grace Yourself

Biblically, grace is the unmerited favor that God gives us just because he so intimately knows our needs, mess-ups, and triumphant moments to come. Grace is the very reason I am alive today and continue to live a life not completely ruled by perfectionism and the constant need to have things just the right way ALL THE TIME. I got married with the understanding that

grace would need to be extended far beyond what I even knew I thought I could bear, and that it would take God to move me beyond my single habits to love my husband wholly. It has not been a cake walk. However, I like cake and I like walking, so I am in this good thing here for the long haul. Grace is how you will make it through each day if you give yourself enough of it to balance out how critical you are of yourself versus how much external and self-correction you allow into your life.

I passionately believe that when you allow yourself to make mistakes, examine the intentionality beneath your choices, and exert the energy to understand that everything will not always measure up to your standards, that you exact and accomplish some form of freedom. Grace allows you to be yourself, while also operating in wisdom and discernment that continually keeps you on the learning wheel. There is no "arrival," but there is more self-appreciation and empathy on the end of GRACE.

Comfort

Sometimes I am absolutely amazed at the lengths we will explore to ensure that others around us are comfortable, and yet we will walk in the room with discomfort, anxiety, and shoulders so hunched, we can see carpet fibers. There is nothing in this world more important than your ability to competently navigate your environment and to do so, you must establish effective, efficient boundaries that yield to your needs and that are parallel to maintaining healthy, happy relationships. If you find yourself uncomfortable around certain people or even hesitate at the thought of interacting with them, ask yourself why and be honest about the answer.

Here are a few ways to delightfully find comfort while making sure you are still healthy and looking out for yourself:

1. Take inventory of your friend group. Are these people that help, challenge, and affirm you? Do they give you great advice or gas you up when you know you should be making more rational choices?
2. Are you frequently in groups where you are forced to make decisions you do not necessarily agree with? What about peer pressure moves you to discomfort, but also makes you desire so deeply to please others?
3. Have you experienced any trauma associated with others' comfort? Friendship loss, loss of familial connection? If so, evaluate how that made you feel. Potentially seek the assistance of a therapist and determine how you can move forward without the feelings of guilt associated with

displeasing someone. It may also be helpful to sit and examine what makes you happy as you live your life each day.

Nicola Ellis is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and founder of Ellis Clinical Services LLC. She is licensed to provide therapy services in the states of Illinois and North Carolina. Nicola has more than 10 years of experience and specializes in working with domestic violence victims, minority/racial identity issues, women's issues, life/transitional issues, as well as trauma and grief/loss. She also provides clinical supervision to LSWs and LPCs across Illinois and is available for consultations and seminars.

As a licensed psychotherapist, I often work with adults who feel stressed out and overwhelmed on a consistent basis. It is often to the point they are not sleeping at night, their appetite changes (overeating or under-eating), they feel tired or lethargic, and report an overall lower quality of life.

This is not new considering the fast-paced society we live in today; everything is about instant gratification. People want what they want when they want it ... and typically that means right now. Oftentimes, this means jumping from one thing to the next, to the next, to the next and so on. This leads to over-commitment. You do not want to disappoint family, so you say yes. You do not want to disappoint friends, so you say yes. You do not want to disappoint coworkers, so you say yes. You do not want to disappoint partners, spouses, significant others, children, stepchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, so you say yes.

Continuing to say yes, even when you are at your worse, can be a lack of boundaries. It is important for your own mental health, self-care, and sanity to have boundaries. I know you have heard it all before, "you can't pour from an empty cup", "we have to put ourselves first", "if we don't take care of us then who will?" In addition to these sayings, I am adding another one:

No is a complete sentence!

Have you noticed that when you make the decision to finally say no, you feel the need to explain your no? "I can't because ...". "I won't make it because ...". "I would but ...". "I don't want to because ...".

However, no is a complete sentence.

It is understandable to feel like you are disappointing someone that you care about because you are choosing to enforce boundaries and prioritizing yourself by saying no. However, when self-care (deliberately taking care of your mental health) is practiced, it further creates the opportunities for healthy, happy, and functional relationships.

I am not saying that explanations are not sometimes necessary, but the fact remains – no is a complete sentence. You must remind yourself that “No” is the most important part of the sentence, not the information following the no. By keeping this in the forefront, it also creates opportunities for a healthy, happy, and functional you.

Therapy is always encouraged for those in need of additional supports. Your insurance company is a great starting place for referrals. If you need help or have questions on how to search for a therapist, please feel free to contact me at EllisClinicalServices@gmail.com with any questions or to schedule an appointment.