

Module 10: Spiritual health. (The Zen Mind).

This module is one of the ones that I'm most excited about getting into the hands of the masses. Specifically, in the hands of African American men. Yet, it is also the one of the most challenging ones that I've embarked on throughout this effort. In that it is a dialogue concerning the mental health of African American men, and how our mental health correlates to our ability to create an environment in our home, that exudes harmony and love. Which can trigger more passion and peace between yourself and your wife.

Creating a climate in your home that facilitates emotional and psychological wellbeing for your family is essential for promoting overall wellness in your home. Some of the areas of this commentary explore are aspects of the *effects of slavery upon African American men, and how it has transcended into dysfunction in our marriages.*

I believe that the experiences of the middle passage, slavery, racism and exclusion from basic human rights and economic opportunities that our ancestors have endured for centuries in the United States can be described in a nut shell as a kind of, ***cultural trauma***. Which I believe, metaphorically speaking, has manifested over centuries into our DNA. And has manifested in form that have been characterized as, *generational curses* within the subconscious mind of the so called Negro.

Slavery, systematic racism and exclusion has indeed affected African American men in immeasurable ways. We must be aware of this reality, and recognize its influence on us and also how these ghosts still impact us in our ability as Men, to perform effectively in our marriages.

(Knowledge Is Power).

(We are not ignorant of his devices.).

A man's ability to cultivate an environment that encourages fluid and dynamic conversations and displays of natural affection that are reciprocated between family members is vital for promoting ***peace and harmony*** in his home.

This is something that I failed at and miserably in my marriages. Either because I didn't understand that I should have, and or that I was just too arrogant to. But had I cared enough about the mental and emotional state of my wife, I might very well have circumvented much of the stress that they endured because of my attitude. And, I might also have found contentment in both of my marriages, had I done so.

Looking back now, I am very aware of the dangers and challenges that a family can face when a man doesn't evoke love and harmony that flows like a stream from him to his family. There should a constant well of encouragement and affirmation that comes from the man of the house that is rendered to his wife and his children, throughout the day and into the night, with his wife. You create a vast and exhaustive virtual pool of contentment with you, when you practice promoting love and harmony in your home.

I cannot say enough about the effective utilization of the skills and techniques for facilitating an environment that is perceived by your wife as a sanctuary of peace, unity and calmness. Consider her day, when she comes home. Consider the events that your children have been exposed to all day. Remember that your family is looking to you to defend them, to protect them and the inspire them. With this mindset, *(The Zen Mind)*, you begin to see yourself as the healer of the family and intuitively you have become the priest of your home.

Your family is looking to you for the kind words of comfort to ease the tensions that they've ingested all day. Your wife is looking to you to offer her the emotional and mental rest in her home, that she needs and so desires. Any opportunity that you find to assist her in the decompression process when she arrives home, take advantage of it.

Whether it is as simple as feeding the kids, or picking on home maintenance functions, taking the initiative to do them evokes a comforting spirit with your home. Which will result in your wife being all the more relaxed and ultimately in a better state of mind, for taking care of your needs later.

Your goal is to disarm her. Your mission is to provide a proverbial calming and gentle atmosphere for your wife to have more and more reasons to enjoy coming home to you. She carries the weight of her work home. Now, you have an opportunity to change the polarity and offer her emotional healing and a refuge from her day to day grind.

If it's permissive in your home, have a class of wine ready for her. Have as much as you can get done before she gets home. I realize that your schedule may not accommodate this, so do what you can when you can. Take the initiative to let her know, that she isn't alone in the management of the home and that you care about her overall wellbeing.

You have a choice when she comes home. You have a choice to listen to her when she wants to tell you about her day. You have a choice to remain emotionally engaged and to allow yourself to be a part of it all. Rather than be emotionally disconnected. Remember, you are affording her the opportunity to settle down, in her comfort zone. With yourself and the rest your family, who are the loves of her life.

Aroma therapy goes a long way in the process of creating, 'Feng Shui. Freshly cut flowers also lend themselves nicely in creating a warm and inviting environment. And there are many other simple resources that you can utilize in creating an environment that is conducive for relaxation and for eliminating negative energy and inviting positive energy to flow throughout your home. Ideally, permeating every space. But it starts with you; the man of the house. Your wife and children are simply responding to your vibrations and your vibe.

There are so many instances that you can take advantage of to afford your wife to have more time for you, for your family and **for herself**. Your contribution in this regard, is invaluable. When you pick up the slack for her, without her having to ask you to, you plant seeds of gratitude within your wife's heart towards you.

Additionally, when you look for ways to reduce the amount of time that your wife has to spend tending to things that you could and should do without her asking you to, you give her the opportunity to get things done with greater efficacy. Which as a result allows you and her to rest more. Discharging stress as a result.

So, let's say that you didn't learn the basic principles of being a help-mate, from your dad. It isn't too late to learn how to cooperate with your wife and to be a helper not a hinderer and someone that she views as another person in the family that she has to tend to and take care of. It can be burdensome for your wife to essentially carry the load and pick up the slack for things that we as men could and should be doing.

These kinds of tendencies are analogous of the pervasive ideology that many African American man have adopted. And that it is, that it's okay to be apathetic, and all but lazy. Which are counter-productive to our progress in learning to work and collaborate together. And also when trying minimize stress in your wife. Remember, you are her help-mate, and not just the provider. This is your assignment, and that is to be the Spiritual guide and the one who sets the tone in the home.

Your wife is simply responding to you. But if she's uptight, stressed out and overworked there may not be anything left for her to give you, when you need her to. Because she's worn out mentally, and physically. But by taking the initiative to help out around the house, you can alleviate much stress and anxiety that may be there just because she feels as though she can't get to things that need to be done at home.

As the man you will reap the rewards of learning to become better at what may seem to you to be menial tasks. When actually what you're doing is paying it forward. Find ways to reduce the time that your wife has to spend doing domestics and other errands, such as paying bills, etc.

That way, she will be able to reinvest and better utilize that time more productively, compared to what many women have to do in Atlanta. Which is to sit in traffic on average 3 ½ per day. Not only is this a colossal waste of time, it is also very stressful that can influence her mood when gets home. So be aware of this.

Be mindful of your physical posture when she comes home from work. Be mindful of what you are communicating to her with your non-verbal communication. Be aware of your ability to change the mood in the room with your charm and with your warmth. And also, be aware

of how quickly one thing that you say can ignite an already volatile situation into a terrible fight. Or, turn it into intense love making later.

Much of the reformation of the way you that you view your ability to create an environment that is relaxing and calming, has so much to do with how you handle things. Which *are* the things that you can control. And the *things that you cannot, don't try to*. When you try to control the things that you shouldn't, you will only invite unnecessary stresses and negative energy into the environment.

Allow your wife to function within her gifts and talents, while helping out where you can. I don't mean to sanction foolishness. *Contraire*. But if you allow fear and apprehension to prevent you from doing something on your own that your wife normally does, then you've affected nothing. If you make a mistake, then you've triggered an opportunity for her to explain her logic, and the how and why she does things the way that she does and why.

In this way, you can eliminate stress and negative energy that lend themselves to the various ghost that manifest themselves in African Americans, typically as high-blood pressure, hypertension and or type 2 diabetes and sometimes obesity also. Or a combination of all of these systemic socio economic generational curses. Which are all lifestyle related that can often times be circumvented by diet, exercise, lowering stress. Which is essentially an editing of one's lifestyle.

Adopting these kinds of practices do take effort to do so. But they do become easier over time and practice. But when you make it your job and your ambition to develop your skills as a peacemaker in your home, there is a high probability that your wife will respond to it positively. With affection and with her special gifts that she has had on reserve, but that are now flowing because you are demonstrating your capacity as a ***spiritual leader and peace maker in your home.***

I remember the months preceding my wife's first child birth, which resulted in my wife suffering an acute instance of preeclampsia. Which triggered the premature birth of our daughter. The syndrome preeclampsia is one where women develop an extremely high blood pressure rate. That can become life threatening to the mother as well as to the unborn child.

There were also other inherent risk factors with my daughter's birth, such as my wife's age at the time. She was considered high-risk having never carried a child to full term as yet. And she was at the 37, with our first child birth. I understand it all much better now. The reality is that my emotional disconnection from what was going on in my wife's mind caused significant stress for her.

I realize it all much better now. Hind sight is a great teacher. Had I been aware of the potential results of becoming emotionally disengaged with my wife, especially during pregnancy, I may have behaved better. Had I had the realization that the stress that I was causing my wife, could have resulted in her death and even the death of my unborn daughter.

Seek ways to evoke harmony and love in your home, rather than finding fault with things. Look for opportunities to compliment your wife, even for the smallest things. See the beauty in the simplest things, and begin to practice speaking to your wife your children and to everyone that you know or encounter with kind words.

Shower your wife and children her with words of affirmation and kiss them regularly. These actions will trigger responses in your wife and children that can calm the storms of strife in your home.

It is your job as the spiritual leader in your home, to evoke harmony and love there. Leading your family into a closer and a more intimate walk with God, is essential to evoke the balance and centering that your family needs. I am not necessarily a religious man, as I have become discontent with much of the rhetoric that is emanated from many pulpits in America.

However, I am very deeply spiritually connected to God and I also consider myself to be an enlightened man of God. Doctrines themselves are man-made pathways to God. Doctrines give us a framework for worshiping and finding God. Which is an oxymoron. Because *God was never lost or dead or not listening to us*, as some suggest.

As far as church attendance goes, my preference for church services leans towards a non-denominational house of worship. However, I am a member of Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, in Atlanta Georgia. I am a member there largely because of their active stance on various civil and human rights initiatives. My membership there has been one of the most enriching and endearing church fellowship experiences as any church affiliation that I've been blessed to be a part of.

Having a regular place of worship and that is spiritually enriching to attend with your family is very beneficial for many reasons. Firstly, it affords your family the opportunity to share their pains and successes with people who are like minded and also on one accord. It also gives you an opportunity to focus on and center your spiritual life. In the context of sharing with others.

The assembling together in a house of worship with your family is one of most endearing experiences that you can share with them. These instances can have immeasurable psychological effects on them, emotionally and psychologically also. Which transcends into overall wellness.

By attending regular gatherings and services that are community oriented activities, your family is also potentially exposed to opportunities to assist in organized charitable endeavors to help and serve those who are less fortunate. Which can be very edifying to your family in learning to collaborate together for the purposes of helping and serving mankind.

Leading and guiding your family into spiritual truths is part of your job as the *spiritual leader* of your family. Allocating regular periods within the week to have family meetings can be a great time to teach your family the word of God, independently of your house worship's study helps to reinforce the beautiful that you've already instilled in them. And these precious moments speak volumes to your wife about your ability to lead and guide your family into spiritual growth.

These precious intervals will afford you yet another opportunity to communicate with your family on matters of the heart. Such as, the current epidemic in the U.S., of mass killings, and the civil wars that are erupting in our country. As a result of the current administration.

I personally don't have the capacity alone to engage my children in a dialogue about all that is transpiring in our world right now. As a result of the inherently evil presidential administration. I haven't found a way to fully convey the message to my children and grandchildren that all people aren't evil and that all people in the world aren't interested in excluding people of color, and or oppressing women.

The cliché, *it takes a village*, is very relevant today. I've not been able to effectively impress to my children the correct perspective about our country and the world, without the help and intervention of educational and consolatory professionals and the church, also.

To combat the generational curses that exist in our culture, it is incumbent upon you that engage the help of any available resources to help keep your children remaining safe and informed of how to process it all, without them being overwhelmed by it all.

For example, when it comes to issues such as the mass shootings in our schools, we need to connect with the professionals and counselors that are trained and committed to helping our children to understand these kinds of very unique stresses that are all but common place in our society now.

In my opinion, they are as a direct result of the current presidential administration. Which stands idly by, advocates and encourages those would be perpetrators and also sanctions the unconscionable acts perpetrated by those, so called good people.

These days, we need to allow various multi-cultural, multi-faceted organizations to assist us in teaching our children the correct way to respond to crisis and to adversity. *Rather than just the same old rhetoric that says to us, 'just pray about it'.*

Prayer and meditation is indeed the correct approach to dealing with the stresses our family's encounter these days. However, incorporating the involvement of community, civic and faith based organizations, gives us more strategies to help our children traverse the mental trauma that they incur from witnessing these horrible atrocities that we are witnessing in our county and in our communities. As well as the day to day stress that they may be feeling at home.

Allocating regular times to talk to your family creates a space to facilitate these conversations, and many more. There are no limits to what you can accomplish with your family when you bring them to the table and in prayer together. I can attest to the magical results that used to happen in my children and between Mia and me, when we would pray together. She would always let me speak. Sometimes, I wouldn't speak, and just be quiet in the presence of the King. Funny, these were the only times that I can remember, when Mia was quiet.

There is something so blissfully beautiful about kneeling down with your woman, in prayer. You are now going before the very throne of God, on behalf of your family, with your woman, your wife beside you. You are both being presented as a family before the universe, humbly requesting an audience with God.

It is simply beautiful, sweet and wonderful to be knelt down, prostrated before the presence of God, on behalf of your family while holding your wife's waist close to you. I would reach over to her and gently pull her close to me. I would feel her warm soft supple body close to me, and become one as we approached the throne humbly as a family and as lovers.

I would try to imagine the Levitical High Priest making atonement for the people. I'd try to understand the position that I had with God, in those moments of prayer. I'd try to realize how much they loved my family, and how much they enjoyed communing with us, during those times. I'd envision that we were having an informal dinner with my wife and them during our nightly prayer times.

I would later discover the beauty of offering Salat. Mashashalla, I'll have that pleasure of offering Salat, with my new Queen, soon. Her spirit will be just as willing and tender and I believe that I am being prepared to learn how to love her.

The gentleness. The quietness. The calmness. The sweetness. The tenderness. These feminine spirits are all in the room with you when you are presenting your petitions before the throne of God, and they guard your prayers and supplications as you lift them up.

Leading your wife and children into prayer with you can also have organic results on your love life. The connection that you have during prayer with your wife can trigger unprecedented layers of passion within your wife for you.

The feeling of being there, prostrated with your wife is one that I have longed to experience again. And, I have faith that I will. (*Mashallah*). I used to look forward to the time before our proverbial alter, just before we'd retire. I would place my arm around her tender waist, as we knelt down at the head of the bed. And she'd rest her head on my shoulder. And after prayer, we'd always make love so sweet.

Words cannot describe the energy that would be generated from this simple yet powerful gesture together. I could feel the very throne of God shaking and the universe itself vibrating sometimes during those precious moments. I'd feel so connected to my woman, and so in love with her as our prayers would go up like feathers to the cosmos. And I'd feel so much closer to her and to God than I had at any other time before that season.

Those precious moments were incomparable to any other. These moments are the ones that I'll always cherish, and are ones where I was intentionally engaged in the **spiritual health of my family**. Wonderful things transpire within your life when you promote and cultivate the spiritual health of your family.

