

The book offers sisters advice, hope, and awareness on the issues they face in a world of uncertainty regarding finding the ideal partner and the lessons learned as they look within their souls and come to terms with who they are.

More Than Just Sex: It's The Art of The Chase

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**MORE THAN JUST SEX:
IT'S THE ART OF THE CHASE -**

**African American Women Defining Themselves,
Black Men, Each Other, Relationships and Secrets
To Love and Happiness**

Gisele Haralson

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Chapter 3

Stuck on Money, Stuck on Status

Sociological studies support the theory that while black men choose women by their degree of attractiveness, black women choose men by their degree of status. Many black women dream of meeting and marrying a man with money. But for the majority of black women, the reality of this is probably just that, “a dream.” The fact is that black women now earn nearly two thirds of all the bachelor’s and master’s degrees that are awarded to African Americans as well as achieve occupational status and positions that carry prestige. With this in mind many sisters who have made it professionally are looking for brothers with prestige, status, and money. Many of these sisters have had to work very hard and made lots of sacrifices to get to where they are, and they feel they deserve a brother who has done the same.

Now, I can understand a sister feeling this way, but the reality is although there are good and eligible brothers out there the truth is that professional black women greatly outnumber professional black men. There are simply not enough of these kinds of black men to go around and this relentless quest of finding brothers with big money and status has led many sisters to a life of loneliness and unhappiness. In my opinion, too many sisters are judging brothers solely on what kind of work they are doing, or what kind of car they are driving. This is a big mistake! What is actually happening is some

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sisters are overlooking good blue collar working brothers who are sometimes making twice as much money as some white collar workers, thus denying themselves an opportunity of possibly finding true love.

Let me say this, before going on. I am not saying for sisters to overlook professional brothers and just set their sights on blue collar men only. That is not what I am saying, but you have to be realistic and aware of what is going on within the dating game. First, there are some well-to-do brothers out there, and all of them are not rappers, playing sports, or entertainers, but let's face it, the competition for these brothers is great. The really rich brothers are often looking for trophy wives to add glamour to their impressive lifestyles. Usually these brothers are often interested in women who are extremely beautiful, possess great talent or fame, are a part of the black elite, or are white. But, for the record, not all brothers go this route, but I must admit, a lot of them do. It is really nice to see brothers who make the decision to stay with the sisters who were with them before the money.

This falls in line with what a good friend of mine shared with a group about a conversation she had with her pastor before getting married. She said, "This could be where some black women miss out" She continued by saying, "We all have a vision; who doesn't want to have a man that has money? Everybody wants to have the money. But usually that's not how it goes; usually we live in a society where you need two salaries." But what her pastor had said was that this could be where sisters miss out sometimes on a great guy who has a good blue collar job and we overlook them." Here is where she hit the bulls-eye, saying "The main focus in regards to finances

or money is that if the brother has a vision or a goal, then you have something to work with, but if he doesn't have a vision, or doesn't have a goal for his life, then you have a problem." She concluded by stating, "Sure a guy should have a job when you get married. Maybe he doesn't have the kind of job you would like for him to have; maybe he is not making the amount of money you would like for him to make, but if you all work out a plan and he has a vision for greater things, then that shouldn't be minimized."

I totally agree with this sister, and realize that everyone doesn't always get to the top at the same pace. I was in my late twenties before I received my first degree, which was great for me because until that time I was not serious about school. But once I made up my mind about the direction I wanted my life to go, I knew what needed to be done to make it happen.

I am fully aware of the importance of being supportive of your partner's dreams, but I also understand how some sisters feel when they have assisted and aided a brother in his vision and the dream doesn't quite turn out the way they had planned. One thing that we all know is that life has no guarantees. We all take chances; sometimes we win sometimes we lose. This topic of discussion prompted a huge debate among the group. After listening to this intense exchange, one sister countered with her reservations about supporting some brother's visions. Her concern was this idea of your mate having a vision which may or may not include you. She proceeded by saying, "You might have initially been a part of his vision, but after the money and success begins; he gradually eliminates you from the vision." That is why she refuses to depend upon any man for money; she

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always believed in having her own money and realized that it is important that relationships are built on a strong and solid foundation, not on material possessions.

So what you have going on is brothers and sisters at odds with each other. Sisters are saying that brothers select mates based on looks, or the way women are shaped. Brothers, on the other hand, claim that sisters choose mates based on money and how much they have. As a sociologist, who has studied relationships I know this is very true, but the message that must be transmitted to brothers and sisters is that it really isn't about how much money a man has or how fine a sister is or how good she looks; the real concern is the connection you and he feel with each other and the trust that must be present if any relationship is expected to move forward in a productive and positive way. So my question is:

Are sisters looking for a good man or fat pockets?

I am sure everyone has heard sisters griping about the fact that there are no good men available. But the questions I immediately ask is where are you looking for these men and what do you consider a good man? Are you truly looking for a good, hardworking man, or are you looking for someone from whom to milk money? It is certainly no secret that, a lot women are looking for a man to take care of them. As I have said before I believe that there is nothing wrong with wanting to have someone to do nice things for you but it should go both ways. A good relationship is built on give and take. So many sisters, despite of their own accomplishments, feel that they must catch a brother with fat pockets, often with little or no regard for how he is making the money. I

think you know where I am going here. These women are setting themselves up for a terrible misfortune.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with having some of the finer things in life and being pampered. I am a true believer that sisters should be pampered and treated to the best. But what I do find disturbing is sisters selling themselves to the highest bidder, and what often comes along with the deal are sisters not being respected and treated with no dignity. What gradually happens is that they become controlled and weakened by money. Women like this will use their bodies to entrap a man in exchange for things. As time passes on, they may begin to believe the man is falling in love with them. Then, when the brother makes her aware that the relationship was nothing more than sexual, she is often hurt and disappointed. Of course, you know a sister wants to know:

Does his money and his status equal happiness?

There is this big misconception that social status and money equal happiness. There is nothing farther from the truth. In fact, some research shows that the divorce rates are higher among high-status African American men. It is my opinion that some successful, educated, middle-class brothers consider themselves as “the catch” are using this as an avenue to sleep with as many women as heavenly possible that will allow them. But this is where sisters often get the game twisted. They think if they hooking up with a brother of high social standing and money their relationship come with a guarantee of instant happiness. That is what we have been conditioned to think. Money, power, status, and prestige bring great happiness. But as a friend of mine who played an influential role in my

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writing this book expressed in regard to having a brother with big money. She firmly talked about not caring if a brother had a million dollars in his account, because as she so bluntly put it, “What good is money when you are with someone who is controlling, closed minded, selfish, and has no morals or values?”

I am sure everyone has heard the old saying, that everything that shines is not gold. The people in magazines and on the movie screens make it look so easy- riding around town in their luxury cars, spending their husband’s money, vacationing in the south of France- all give the illusion that their lives are filled with joy. What a life, but let me let you in on a little secret-relationships take work, and there are no guarantees.

COMMENTS:

Having financial stability is very important when it comes to finding a mate. Love and respect are challenged by lack of financial stability. Some relationships suffer because partners are not honest with each other about the importance of a steady and stable income. It is a shared responsibility and should be planned and agreed on. Lack of financial stability can lead to resentment and negative feelings in a relationship.

-----*Trisha*

It is extremely important to me that a brother have a college degree. Both my grandmothers

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have college degrees. When I graduated from high school the question was not *whether* I was going to college but *where* I was going to college. I desire a mate who believes a college degree is equally important so we can instill the same value in our children and grandchildren.

-----*Tonya*

Money does not make a relationship better, but it does make it easier when it's not an issue. In any relationship, finances will cause it to fail if there is not enough there, or is not budgeted correctly. It's important to make sure that in a relationship, certainly before marriage, that discussions have taken place about who will handle the check book and what will the monthly budget be in the household.

-----*Monique*

Financial stability is extremely important. Two people together should not be financially worse off than one of the parties before the union.

----*Dana*

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Financial stability is also important in the scheme of things, but there again GOD, love and honor are more important.

-----Shelia

Education is important when I become involved with someone, however all people with an education doesn't make them a better person than someone without an education. I want my mate to be knowledgeable, intelligent, and willing to be open to learning new things. He must be able to maintain employment, pay his bills, and know how to budget. Also have a vision for our future, investments/ opening a business, etc. This is important to know how he will handle our household in the future.

-----Dawn

A lot of sisters are dependent. I am not talking about all women, but a lot of women depend on men for happiness and finances. Get out and find you a job and work to take care of yourself and your children, if you have any.

-----Nicole

Financial stability is very important. I don't need any help to spend my salary. The addition of

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a mate should increase your earnings or allow you to save more money or make more investments.

-----*Shonda*

Having a degree is not as important as a brother following his dreams and with those dreams, having financial independence. As long as he is able to support the household and there aren't any hang-ups, the relationship should survive. I would rather you own your own company without a degree, than have a degree and not have a job.

-----*Toi*

The younger sisters, I feel are "get over-s". However, my perception is changing because many are beginning to do things for themselves.

-----*Tasha*

I believe the importance of education depend on the individual. I think that mates/spouses should be in sync with each other according to the things they have in common. That's what's important. If one person is more educated than the other, this can cause the couple to be very unequal

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in more ways than one. I think it's important for couples to find common element between each other, and education does not have to be the answer.

-----*Brianna*

I believe financial stability depends on the individual. Each person should be financially stable within themselves. That way no one person is dependent on the other. This causes less confusion in a relationship.

-----*Jordan*

GH Final Thoughts:

These sisters each feel strongly that financial stability is very important in a relationship. Financial issues are among the leading causes of divorce in the United States, and given the fact that African American males earn substantially less than white males one can understand the pressure on a brother who has the desire to provide for his family but feels that the burdens and inequities seem too great to bear.

When one person (it could be a brother or a sister) has to carry the entire load of a household, on their back it could lead to resentment and negative feelings which could cause tension within the relationship, as Trisha stated. In my opinion, brothers and sisters both should contribute financially, given the fact that in the average American households it takes two incomes to make ends meet. With this said, I am aware that there are some brothers who are making enough money to allow their wives to stay at home and live a life of leisure or take on that very important job of raising their children, and if this is your case then, go for it!! But the only advice I would give sisters would be to make sure to think about a few things before taking on this position. First, if you noticed, I did say wives, not girlfriends or babies' mama; that word "WIFE" could come with benefits. It is my hope that a sister would not just put her life on hold and think that a brother is going to stay content with giving her money for her every need. Secondly, it is wise for sisters to have some kind of educational background, vocational training, or credentials, like, an associate, bachelor or master's degree, etc... Finally, they need to have some kind of work experience. Sisters need to know

what it feels like to have been in the work force just in case they find themselves separated or divorced and having to take care of themselves again.

It has been proven that after a divorce or separation women and their children often struggle financially. Single-parent family structures are frequently accompanied by conditions of economic instability and high poverty rates. As stated in chapter 8, of all major demographic groups, African American single-mother and their children are the worst off economically. Given this information it is imperative that sisters are vigilant in regard to their financial well being. Nicole and Tasha both feel that some sisters need to stop trying to use brothers and start paving their own way in life. There is nothing worse than a sister being in a position of not being able to support herself and feeling that every man that she comes across is obligated to provide for her.

Although Tasha felt that some sisters are “get over-s” she has come to discover that more are beginning to understand the importance of taking care of themselves. My observation is that very few brothers these days are willing to support a sister who is not bringing anything to the table. Then of course, there are also a number of brothers who are looking for sisters to take care of them. Believe me when I say life can be so much better if a sister and her man both have social status, education, and money. There is nothing like a sister having her own financial independence and understanding that in order to enjoy a higher quality of life she and her partner need to be productive members of society, which will enhance, enrich, and increase their fulfillment in life.

Chapter 5

What Do Sisters Really Want?

Regardless of race or ethnicity, women in general when asked what they want in a mate the answer remains the same: to be loved in a relationship of joint empowerment, instead of struggling for control and ongoing conflict. Sisters want someone to listen to them and accept them for who they are. Not only do they want their thoughts and feelings to matter, they want to enjoy an emotional and spiritual connection, not just a sexual one, with their mate. Sisters want sensitive and caring brothers and the opportunity to experience life and the world around them with a man they can trust and love.

Loving relationships between brothers and sisters do not have to consist of a power struggle. A relationship is really about accomplishing the same goals and working together to reach them, which is what many sisters are looking for. Sisters are smart, clever, witty, and would love to be able to share their life with someone who equally shares their mission for happiness and companionship.

Even though many sisters would love to have a man who is ready to make a commitment, there are segments of women who, for whatever reason, choose not to commit to a relationship. I remember my mother saying that she never wanted to marry because of how mean and jealous her father was toward her mother. My mother talked about how afraid she was when her parents would argue; she described feeling that her heart was going to

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jump out of her chest because it was beating so hard. These fears and experiences were engraved in my mother's mind, and they shaped the course of her life as a single mother and African American woman. Although these were my mother's experiences, she never pushed them on me and often reminded me that the vows I took in matrimony were very important.

COMMENTS:

From a relationship, I want a godly man who loves me as God loves the church. I want a man who knows how to treat me like the queen I am and to be loving, kind, patient, giving, responsible, and outgoing. I want him to be my best friend.

-----*Dawn*

There is nothing better than being in a loving, committed relationship; that is what I want.

-----*Ashley*

I want a lifelong commitment of open communication, loyalty, friendship, laughter, support, lots of hugs, kisses, I Love You, and intimacy.

-----*Tasha*

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What I want first of all, is someone who loves me as much as I love him; that person needs to give me respect as well. This would not be for the sake of my fulfillment, but because I could accept nothing less.

-----*Shelia*

I want honesty, trust, sincerity, open and nonjudgmental communication; a man who has a genuine love for me.

-----*Brenda*

In my relationship, I want me and my spouse to adventure to another level in Christ (growing together). I want us to show love towards each other as though there were no tomorrow. And lastly, I want us to be able to communicate with an open heart (without judgment)

-----*Jordan*

I want friendship that slowly grows into a mutual love and commitment. I want a man who is committed to me and ready to settle down with me only. Infidelity hurts and creates an unhealthy

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relationship. It sometimes takes a lifetime to recover from its effects.

-----*Trisha*

I want peace from a relationship. Peace is necessary to enjoy and appreciate life to its fullest.

-----*Dana*

Love, communication, and most of all trust is what I want. It's the best feeling when you can be free in every sense of the way with your spouse.

-----*Rena*

GH Final Thoughts:

There is a natural desire for individuals to want to be loved and cared for by someone. Although some sisters may not want to admit it, bad relationships have led many women to refuse to open up their hearts and emotions to brothers out of fear of being hurt or rejected.

These sisters in this chapter know exactly what they want from a relationship and wasted no time getting right to the point. They talk about godliness, commitment, trust, honesty, mutual love, open communication, friendship, respect, and most of all peace. There is no better feeling than the feeling of peace and happiness. But the key to fulfillment within a relationship is fulfillment of self. I have heard people say the way you start a relationship is often what becomes the foundation; therefore, if you enter a relationship displaying no self love, demanding no respect, and settling for whatever a brother gives you, then how could you possibly think that your relationship is going to blossom into something beautiful. Love is understanding that everyday will not be filled with happiness and joy, but realizing that there is a comfort in knowing that you have a partner that is yours and who loves and respects you for who you are.

The book offers sisters advice, hope, and awareness on the issues they face in a world of uncertainty regarding finding the ideal partner and the lessons learned as they look within their souls and come to terms with who they are.

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