



Many Blessings: A Tapestry of Accomplished African American Women

Sonnee Weedn

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Many Blessings: A Tapestry of Accomplished African American Women by Sonnee Weedn, Ph.D. Ten years ago, Marin County psychologist, Dr. Sonnee Weedn, was asked to treat a young, urban, African American woman. Believing that as a white woman living in the reality of de facto segregation, she was not knowledgeable enough to treat this woman in psychotherapy, she set about to learn more about African American culture. This stimulated her thinking about African American women. What was it that allowed them to survive and thrive despite the double prejudice of racism and sexism. She wondered about the historical implications of the confluence of the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement on this particular cohort of women, most who had come of age during law-enforced segregation. She traveled the country for three years, interviewing many African American women, some famous and others unknown except in their own particular circles of influence. She studied these women to determine what encouraged them to transcend discrimination and other obstacles they faced in order to rise up and claim their destinies as powerful and altruistic women. Ultimately, she chose thirty-one of the women she interviewed to represent the seven strengths she identified as having sustained them and allowed them to flourish. She believes that these seven strengths are the historical legacy of all African American women today, and encourages all women, regardless of ethnicity to learn from their example to increase their own resilience and determination.

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