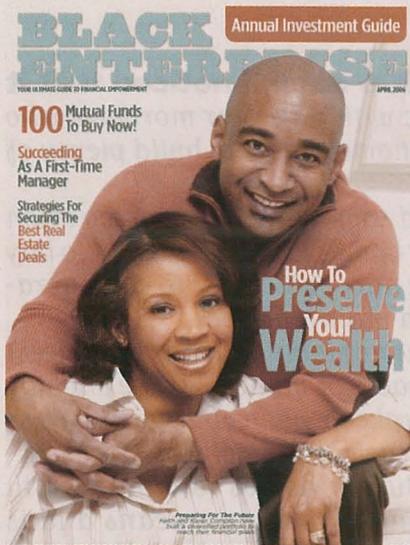


Letters



A BETTER PERSPECTIVE

I commend BE on providing insight into mental illness with Back Talk in the April 2006 issue. Bebe Moore Campbell's responses hit home. My 12-year-old son is currently an in-patient in a psychiatric hospital. He has bipolar disorder.

Mental illness does not affect only the victim of the disease, but also the siblings, the parents, and the greater community. It is vital that people who suffer from this illness receive an accurate diagnosis and appropriate medical care, and that families and communities talk about this illness and seek and offer support to each other. Let us work together to remove the stigma of mental illness and show the world that it isn't a shameful secret but a medical condition that can be effectively treated.

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STAMPING OUT IGNORANCE

IT IS ESPECIALLY NOTABLE THAT A business magazine is discussing the issue of mental illness, as it constitutes half of the top 10 causes of disability worldwide (Back Talk, April 2006).

I am a social work professor (and single parent) with a successful career, and I have manic depression (bipolar disorder). I have been hospitalized and have taken a wide range of medications. And I have felt anger, frustration, resignation, and shame.

Letting go of the shame and stigma, and accepting that I had a mental illness, was (and still is) hard work, but it freed me to focus on getting better. More importantly, I learned to ask for help when I needed it (including at work), and to accept help when it was offered.

Employers and employees need to understand their responsibilities and rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, as it also applies to mental illness. One of the main ways in which employers can be supportive is to offer health insurance that covers mental health and to advocate for mental health parity (coverage equal to that of physical illness). Limited access to treatment results in employer disability and lost productivity.

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KEEPING US WELL-EQUIPPED

AS A PROUD SUBSCRIBER TO BLACK ENTERPRISE MAGAZINE, I JUST HAD TO give credit where it's due. I have been reading BE for years and have acquired a lot of vital information from it. I'm the owner of a successful independent record label in Augusta, Georgia, and the information I've obtained from the magazine's pages has been enlightening.

I love the fact that BE stresses the importance of family. In my opinion, every young black man and woman should read the magazine as a guide not only to financial empowerment but also family values. I've often heard wealthy people say, "You can have all the money in the world but if you don't have loved ones to share it with, you have nothing."

I was also very pleased and especially proud to read BE's tribute to the life of the beautiful Coretta Scott King (Newspoints, April 2006). She should be an inspiration to us all. I hope that everyone, especially young ladies, study the lives of Mrs. King, Mrs. Betty Shabazz, and Mrs. Rosa Parks, and embrace the concept that with courage and dedication, the sky's the limit. Black America, we have a lot to be proud of. Thanks to magazines like BLACK ENTERPRISE, we have all the information we need to be successes in life.

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KEEP MAKING CAREER MOVES

IT WAS VERY INTERESTING AND ENLIGHTENING TO READ THE PERSPECTIVES and experiences of the new managers regarding their new responsibilities ("Congratulations, You're a Manager! Now What?" April 2006). In the future, would it be possible to highlight constant promotions to acclimate young readers to continually moving upward in their jobs rather than becoming stagnant in their careers? It would be a wonderful way to share with BE readers that employment on any level should be upwardly mobile or, at the very least, get you to a place where you're content to hang your hat.

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BE welcomes comments from our readers. Address all correspondence to: Letters, BLACK ENTERPRISE, 130 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011. Fax: 212-886-9610; e-mail: beletters@blackenterprise.com. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and daytime telephone, and may be edited for clarity or space.