

Endsights:

"Set realistic goals and plans in motion to achieve them...Push yourself to reach the apex of your abilities."



Making A Positive Impact Upon Our World

By Laura Anderson
Contributor

The 90's will truly represent a decade of turmoil as a transition into a new century. Think about it. Look at our world in the past decade—the erosion of civil rights laws and the increase in the numbers of homeless people characterize this. But at the same time we should not be fraught with pessimism. Germany has unified now that the Berlin Wall no longer exists and the leader of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, has been released after 27 years of political imprisonment.

With about three-fourths of the year under our belts, we have a number of accomplishments worthy of praise. Enough of the "big" picture right now though, let's look at our lives in a snapshot. We are students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and whether we are in professional school or a member of the Class of 1994, each of us has a responsibility to our community and ourselves. Together, we can have a positive impact upon what happens in our corner of the world. "How?" you ask. An initial step would be to engage in a search of your strengths and develop them to their fullest—and then go a step farther. Because each person has been blessed with unique strong points, it is vital that these special characteristics be shared. Like anything else, it will take time to find your niche, but in the long run, nothing will provide a more rewarding feeling than sharing (or passing on) your talents with another individual. Remember, as you rise, help someone behind you do the same.

"Where?" perhaps is your next question. A myriad of opportunities await and the ranges are wide—from forensics and Spanish to dance and sign language. But while in pursuit, please remember two things. First, never limit yourself; an individual does not have to fall victim to "traditional" patterns. Secondly, when you work, work hard; when you play, play hard; but, when you work don't play at all! By doing this, one can effectively nurture their own

talents and at the same time significantly contribute to the community we all live in.

As a secondary measure to have an impact upon the world around you, always keep your priorities strictly aligned. As students, our primary purpose at the university is to prepare for our futures by earning an undergraduate degree in the academic major of our choice. The extracurriculars mentioned above are important, but those activities are not the sole purpose of your attendance. To extend my point, understand that although the level of grades earned is important; what one should first strive for is a high level of effort. For example, if a student has performed to the best of his or her ability and received a "C", I would respect that individual a great deal more than an "A" student who does not have to study at all. As a rising senior, I have sadly witnessed far too many students kid themselves about their grades—I am no exception. More positively, I would like to offer a shimmer of hope. Regardless of where you are in your course of studies—a first-year or a fifth-year student—or where you started from GPA-wise your first semester. Do not cease your efforts to continuously increase your cumulative GPA. Set realistic goals and plans in motion to achieve them. To provide some incentive, take my words as a personal challenge; push yourself to reach the apex of your abilities. Even if these challenges are met by only half of those reading this article, one can say that our corner of the world has "moved in" a step closer to being a part of the "big" picture.

THE IDEAL: For every individual to meet the challenges above.

THE REALITY: Change happens slowly—one corner of the world at a time.

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Express yourself about the issues that concern Black Ink readers. Articles should be three pages long, typed double spaced (include year, major, and hometown). Drop your article by Suite 108-D Student Union, or mail to Black Ink, CB#5210, Student Union, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

Constructive Criticism, Not Racism (In Most Cases)

As a member of the Black Student Movement, and as the co-president of one of the four BSM sub-groups (*Black Ink* Editor), I write this not to discredit the BSM, but to try and make people realize something that I feel is very true, pertinent, and essential to the successful continuance of the ideas of the BSM.

Black Ink, the official newspaper of the BSM, has had its fair share of problems just as every student organization on this campus has its fair share of problems to deal with as an academic year progresses. These problems can eventually be solved, or slowly improved upon with the help of constructive criticism from all students, faculty and staff on this campus. Theoretically this is absolutely sound, but in reality, in the case of the Black Student Movement, it (constructive criticism) is a very dangerous concept for many.

The BSM is an organization riddled with problems (not unlike other organizations on campus) that could easily be solved with a few minor suggestions from the campus community at large. Many do not criticize the BSM for fear of being labelled racist, or of being made an outcast. In most cases the call of the campus community is not racism or an outright attack, but instead is a sincere effort to try and give some healthy, much needed advice.

I would risk being labelled a racist if I were Caucasian, I simply risk being labelled a "sell-out" because I am African-American.

In order for the BSM to efficiently strive for and attain some of its prescribed goals, incessant problems such as inaccessibility of all prominent BSM officers, poor financial management, poor and outdated constitutional laws and poor adherence to the publication of the official newspaper must all be dealt with.

All of these transgressions made by the BSM are absolutely inexcusable and must be remedied, but no one dares to say this or anything else that might upset the flow of things. It does not matter that a lot of other campus organizations deal with the same problems that the BSM does; another group's "slackness" does not give us license to be the same way—we must set our own ideals and strive for them.

BSM sub-groups like the Gospel Choir, the Ebony Readers, and the Opeyo dancers are excellent examples of student organizations that are well very well run; these sub-groups have a staff that is committed, books that are not perpetually plagued with problems and people that are highly accessible and dedicated—perhaps the main branch of the BSM can take example.

Just because the members of an organization are predominantly African-American, does not excuse them from constructive criticism (and in turn, improvement). The BSM does a many, many great things for all students on this campus, but also is not perfect and should not be invulnerable.

Yes, racism and attacks are indeed a definite problem that we as African-Americans must deal with in all aspects of our daily lives, but this does not mean that all who criticize us mean us harm.

Without improvement through constructive criticism, the Black Student Movement will move nowhere — Akinwale N'Gai Wright, *Black Ink* Editor

The opinions expressed here are not necessarily the opinions of the entire *Black Ink* staff. All letters are welcome and should be typed double spaced (include year, major, hometown and telephone number). Drop your article by Suite 108-D Student Union, or mail to Black Ink, CB#5210, Student Union, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

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