

R₂A. Answer For Jobs, Government, Education and Mental Health

By Fabem C. Ashanti, Ph.D.

So that you will not waste your time reading this long article, I will tell you now that it deals only with personal and group success (WINNING).

Winners are always "simple" people. They understand the basics. Once they understand the basics, they cover their "tracks" and convince others to be complex (miseducated) and other-directed. They convince you to be more concerned with others than yourself and your own community.

It is now time for you to become "simple". It is time to understand R₂A. To the simple mind, R₁ is (recognize), R₂ is (relate), A₁ is (assimilate) and A₂ is (apply). When R₂A₂ is used correctly, you can do anything you want to do, when, where and how you want to do it — as long as your goals are realistic. Also your body and mind must be physically and mentally TONED to do A₂ (apply).

There are those who believe that you and the group you represent can never make any advances, never influence your fates, and can only achieve positions as tokens. If you believe that all problems within our communities are the fault of the system and it is the responsibility of the system to solve, then you believe, perhaps unknowingly, in treating yourself as a child waiting for your big father to make things right (paternalism) and complex thinking. Keep it simple: R₂A.

Slavery (never forget it), racism, discrimination and miseducation produced self and group destructive apathy: accepting criminal activity in our communities, not voting in elections, not supporting our businesses and organizations, not supporting private education and trades, and not demanding accountability from appointed and elected representatives.

You must not ignore the fact 45 per cent of Durham (you) makes for a potential of political, educational and economic power (if only through boycott) that could easily equal the influence of other ethnic groups. It is the mobilization of this force which is the issue, not its helplessness, not its victimization.

The major problems facing Durham are 1) economic development, 2) representation, and 3) education.

You should have no sympathy for a vision of helplessness, trained or learned. Your goal should be to work your way into positions where you can see and influence policy from within the structure — church, social club, work, political

organization, school — rather than talking and theorizing from the outside, expressing bootlegged radical or conservative ideas that work better in classrooms, street corners, and bars than they do in the halls, offices and clubs where policies are actually set.

We have not accepted the fact that we are also responsible for some of the conditions in which we live in this society. Because of the way we came to this country, we have a greater feeling that somebody else is responsible for our condition, that somebody else did it to us. We can shift the total perception of us, to us and others, when we acknowledge that we are also responsible and don't intend to look to somebody else to do it for us. We used to be producers when we thought simple and now are only consumers thinking complex. R₂A₂ (review again above).

When we change the perception of ourselves, we will then align ourselves with people and organizations that speak to our interests. It will mean that we will be aligned with people who are seen as conservatives on one day and people who are thought of as liberals on another day. It is not politically intelligent to automatically assume that a liberal solution is the best one for us and a conservative solution is opposed to our interests. We should become conservative again. In our early history, when we did for ourselves, we looked out for our own first (conservative, remember?).

When we became liberal and "complex" we accepted social programs — Head Start, welfare, etc. — which created greater rather than lesser dependence (helplessness) on the government and "liberal" spirit. These social programs depended on economic prosperity in the nation at large, the moods of moral obligation and guilt, or the wake of riots or fear. Although these programs did make it possible for many of us to break new ground, this game plan made more of an elaborate traction rather than getting us, the patient, out of the hospital.

The declining quality of our public education was sidestepped by preferential programs and token paraprofessional positions. The power of economic support of our businesses or economic boycott of hostile businesses was put aside in favor of demanding that the federal government redress prejudicial hiring and promotion practices of public and private businesses. In effect, the thrust and drive of the Civil Rights Movement was handed over

to the national and state government and our leadership was able to duck the responsibility they asked for.

Less predictable political allegiances on our part should make it more likely that both major political parties would compete for our vote and financial support. Political solutions will come from deals or pressures based on group interest, and the people most influential will be those of us who can best speak and orchestrate that interest and expand its applicability (A₁) to include risk and sacrifice when and how necessary.

We want you up at City Hall saying that we don't like dirty streets, at the school board saying we want quality education now.

We should say clearly to people who supposedly represent us that we don't like the way things are, so those who govern and administer will not assume that we will accept crumbs and poor performance.

It is no longer effective to present our problems as exclusive and connected only to the condition of our color. The fact of the matter is that whoever is in position or power is the person or group we have to deal with. We have to learn their language, their ideas, and shape our politics and business in a way that we can make it clear that our interests are the interests of everyone.

I must make it clear that I'm not saying that we should make deals and not have any position or integrity. I mean that we should broaden our constituency rather than narrow it. In the process, we should also make it very clear to our own leaders, that we won't allow them to trade away the interests of our community in order to protect themselves.

We as a group could benefit far more from leaders and representatives who have the courage to tell the truth and take the heat for unpopular positions, rather than having to speak double talk.

In terms of our politics, the routes to political office and their strategies have changed drastically. The traditional way has greatly declined in importance — the clubhouse, the patronage system, the boss system, and the party apparatus. So it is now possible to bypass the traditional routes to power and yet achieve it.

However, we don't have many professionals who will go out and work to get political experience so that they know how public policy is shaped, how things are done. Political experience is what

ultimately shapes public policy. Through working in a campaign you get experience and a sense of the things necessary to develop policy issues, and you also get to know what the public will and will not support.

Those areas of experience and judgement still are frontiers for us and, as we could see in the recent election, we put our candidates in office. Thanks to the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People's (DCABP) organizing effort and you — R₂A₂ won. The DCABP is the place to learn.

The new mayor and council should support full representation of the city's population on the governing councils. The mayor and school superintendents (city and county) have to show precise concern about what our public school investment is producing in returns of functional people in our city and county, not just the improvement of reading scores by a few percentage points. The Research Triangle Area has become less of a service economy, but the educational system is producing, with our children, people who are incapable of competing in the market place. They are being trained, instead of educated, for unemployment, and as long as that continues, the public pays for inadequacy and suffers economically as a result. There are also enough brains and degrees among us to start and support private schools to address this issue. There is strong interest and demand for this supply (private school). Think simple — R₂A.

It is of equal importance that the mayor bring together the best approaches developed by our people in community economic development, so that neighborhood stabilization and redevelopment can be extended, which would produce jobs in cooperation with the private sector. The Durham Business and Professional Chain would be such a group to assist in this. Hayti, a once thriving business district of the city of Durham, must be reborn stronger and share in the revitalization of the Bull — the City of Medicine, Education, Technology and Cultural Diversity.

This is not a hopeless condition. It is an enormous opportunity for the mayor, the council and us to mobilize the resources of leadership within the public and private sectors.

The past and present city and county leadership in public and private institutions have little experience with us and know less about our problems and how they are interwoven with those of the business community. Once these issues are presently clearly recognized as dangers and pitfalls to the entire city of Durham, those in power will see the importance of fair dealing to protect their own interests. R₂A₂ (review again).

The formula R₂A₂ was invented by our ancestors, BEFORE American slavery and kept alive by free minds throughout the world. There has never been a problem among us with R₁ (recognition), R₂ (relating) and A₁ (assimilating). However, the most important and final step of A₂ (application) is the problem. This step has almost been bred out of us as a result of miseducation, flim-flam religions, concentrated stress, governmental social programs, and mind-control techniques.

The first three steps — R₂A₁ — are a dime a dozen. Durham is full of frustrated dreamers, could have been's, and if I had's. It is also full of people who have never heard of or understood systems (R₂A₂). If you would only take situations that seem to be so complex and make them simple (steps R₁, R₂ and A₁) and then DO SOMETHING (A₂) most of your problems would be solved or at least you would understand what is making you self-destructive. You would either deal with the situation, accept it, or leave it.

Now is the start of the rest of your life.

Oh, I forget to tell you, you must first know yourself before you can use R₂A₂. Work at it — in the mirror.

If you think this article is useful, save it, and buy another one for a friend — as a gift.

R₂A₂
Earth Wars Mission Control Sign Off

Tests and Testing Issues Explained

ACRE, the consumer-oriented educational research group has just made available a parent, teacher and consumer guide to tests used in the North Carolina schools. The guide is titled *Testing Our Children: A Parent and Consumer Handbook on Tests and Testing in the North Carolina Schools*.

The handbook tells parents and teachers reasons a child may not score well on tests and how to understand test scores. It also tells parents how to get more information about their

children's tests and how to protect their children's rights in school testing.

"Parents have not traditionally been involved in the school testing process," comments Dr. Pamela George, the author of the testing handbook and ACRE director.

"Because parents have the right to know and participate in the educational decisions affecting their children, parents now want to be better informed about standardized tests and how they are used, wisely and unwisely, in our

schools," she stressed.

The staff of ACRE, the Atlantic Center for Research in Education, has been gathering information about achieve-

ment, IQ, diagnostic, competency and college entrance tests in North Carolina for four years. A major reason the work was undertaken, according to Dr. Ellen Bacon of the Duke Developmental Evalua-

tion Clinic and an ACRE Board member, was to "underscore the increased power of tests in our children's future. Standardized tests in our schools are used to make important educational decisions — and will be for many years to come."

At the present time in North Carolina, a typical child will take, according to the ACRE test handbook, anywhere from eight major standardized tests upwards to more than twenty in his or her school career, grades K-12. Those tests include the California Achievement Tests given in grades 3, 6 and 9, the Mathematics and Reading Inventories given in grades 1 and 2, and the Competency Test given in grade 11. This list may, and usually does, include other achievement, IQ, diagnostic or entrance tests, the handbook reports.

Fourth grade teacher, Ms. Kathleen Gilbert, in the Durham County school system, added, "I feel, as do many teachers and parents across our state, that understanding of standardized tests and testing issues in the schools is vital for better education of our children in North Carolina."

Parents, teachers and consumer groups interested in obtaining a copy of *Testing Our Children: A Parent and Consumer Handbook on Tests and Testing in the North Carolina Schools* should write the ACRE Test Project, 604 W. Chapel Hill St., Durham, NC 27701.



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Dr. Billy C. Black (l) following his investiture as the sixth president of Albany (Ga.) State College, is presented with the symbolic Presidential Medallion by Davey Gibson of Atlanta (r), vice president of the College's National Alumni Association.

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