

FORUM

Live with greater confidence



Nigel Alston

Motivational Moments

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

My wife recommended that I write about my Dale Carnegie Class graduation she attended recently. One of the many guests at the 12-week session finale, she was moved by the talks.

I have been involved with Dale Carnegie since 1989 as a graduate, then a graduate assistant and, for the last 10 years, as an instructor. Two to three times a year I lead a different class — one night a week for 12 weeks — that encourages and challenges participants to live life intentionally.

"What I saw tonight," my wife told me, "were people living with greater confidence, being more assertive and speaking more effectively."

One participant shared how he had gained more confidence,

courage and now has tools to use for a lifetime.

"Did he really change that much?" my wife asked me later as she listened to him and others talk about how he had changed.

"Yes he did," I told her.

An introvert, he consciously and deliberately applied the principles he learned through the training and gained confidence weekly as he realized results. He never stopped improving or growing and is now more expressive.

"I really enjoyed this class in spite of myself," wrote one participant. "I learned a lot about myself and how I fit into the world. My self-confidence has increased significantly."

Some participants enroll in the class because they have seen firsthand how friends, family members or co-workers benefit from the training in ways that surprise them.

A college junior who was impressed with the changes she saw in a sorority sister who took the course decided to take it too. You actually don't take it, you live it. And she did. Her mother was in attendance as she received her certificate of completion. She

is more assertive now, talking to people she usually would shy away from, developing new friendships, strengthening existing ones and accepting more leadership responsibilities.

"It has prepared me for getting out of school and for interviews," she said, already looking forward to taking the course again as she continues her journey in life.

Others are enrolled because someone thought they should take the course for specific reasons, including improving their communication, people or leadership skills.

A business owner whose wife suggested he take the course couldn't believe how he handled several challenges recently while on vacation. He was surprised at himself and knew then that this was the right course for him. He was also able to make positive changes in his business as well as his personal life and realizes "there are results when one is committed."

Most if not all have a desire to deal with stress and worry — minimize and control it — and increase self-confidence in some area of their lives. A personal objective of

one participant is to return to college and complete her degree. She is excited about what she visualizes for her future: working with youths to help them realize their dreams.

Dr. A. Lawrence Lowell, a former president of Harvard University, once said: "Only one thing will train the human mind and that is the voluntary use of the mind by the person. You may aid, guide, suggest, and above all else, you may inspire him or her, but the only thing worth having is that which the person gets by his or her own exertions, and what is attained is in direct proportion to what is put into it."

It's exciting to see success, wherever it is, in people who voluntarily use their minds to read books, apply what they learn, are willing to be coached, set breakthrough goals and realize they get out of life what they put into it.

What are you willing to put into making the beauty of your dreams a reality?

Nigel Alston is a radio talk show host, columnist and motivational speaker. Visit his Web site at www.motivationalmoments.com.

Is it racial profiling or reckless driving?



Earl Ofari Hutchinson

Guest Columnist

Some New Jersey state troopers were gleeful at the results of a study that purports to show that blacks are twice as likely as whites to speed down their state's highways. This seemed to vindicate the troopers oft-repeated contention that they don't racially profile and are simply doing good police work when they stop more blacks than whites on the open highways. Civil rights leaders furiously denounced the study commissioned by New Jersey state officials. Justice Department officials called the study faulty, flawed, and poorly designed, and quickly moved to block its public release.

But even if the study is not flawed, and more blacks than whites do violate speeding laws, there are two colossal problems with the study. It found that 3 percent of blacks exceeded the 65-mile limit, while half as many white drivers exceeded the speed limit. But this means that 97 percent of black motorists observed the lawful speed limit. If so, how does this explain why a New Jersey judge in 1996 tossed out a slew of drug possession cases because New Jersey troopers illegally targeted black motorists? Or, why a Justice Department study found that blacks account for 70 percent of all routine traffic stops, and a similar review of New Jersey state police practices found that 75 percent of motorists arrested on the New Jersey Turnpike in two months in 1997 were minorities?

New Jersey may be the worst, but it's hardly the only profiling offender. A similar study by the ACLU in 2001 in California found that black and Latino motorists are far more likely than whites to be stopped by the California Highway Patrol and their cars searched.

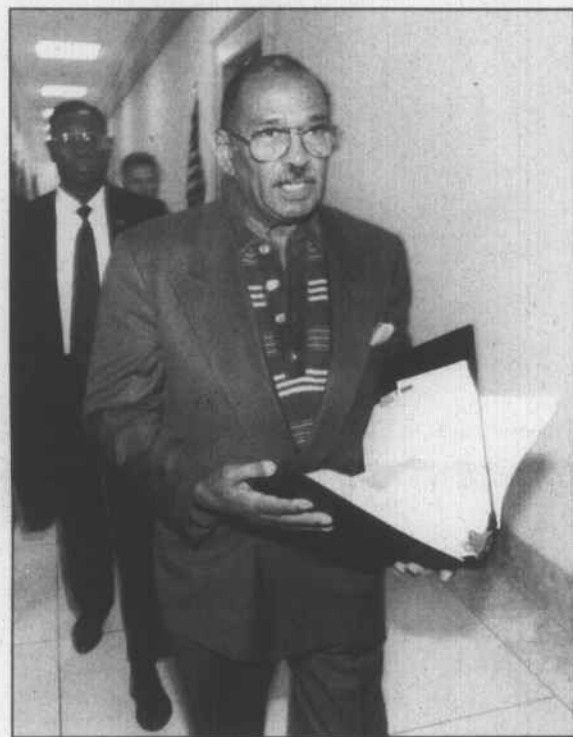
The New Jersey study also doesn't explain why a flock of

prominent black and Latino actors, entertainers, business leaders, and even some state legislators and House representatives complain that police on the roads have racially harassed them. They all surely could not have been hauled over while recklessly speeding to political sessions and business meetings.

The far bigger problem, however, with the study is that it reinforces public suspicions that racial profiling is mostly myth and is a ploy used by black leaders to let black lawbreakers off the hook. This could wreak havoc on the titanic battle civil rights leaders continue to wage to eliminate racial profiling.

Before the Sept. 11 terror attacks, they were making some headway in winning that battle. In its report "Police Practices and Civil Rights in America" issued in 1999, the Civil Rights Commission denounced racial profiling and called on police departments to immediately fire any officer guilty of racial profiling. By then the Justice Department had already initiated investigations of police departments in several cities for civil rights violations, mostly against young black and Latino males. It brokered consent decrees with city officials in Pittsburgh and Los Angeles to rein in the blatant and well documented abusive practices of police departments in those cities. The targets of police misconduct often were mostly blacks and Latinos, and traffic stops were often cited as triggering sometimes-fatal confrontations.

There was even some hope that Congress might finally get off its duff and seriously consider passing the Traffic Stops Statistics Study Act introduced by Michigan Democrat John Conyers in 1999 and 2000. The bill requires the Justice Department to compile figures from local police departments by race on highway traffic stops. The data would document why a driver was stopped and whether an arrest was made or not. The Justice Department could use the figures to determine how pervasive racial profiling is. The bill does not force local police agencies to collect data and



Rep. John Conyers Jr. has proposed legislation to try to reduce incidents of racial profiling.

imposes no sanctions on those that refuse to compile stats. In 2001, Conyers got Senate help from Wisconsin Sen. Russ Feingold, when he introduced a bill that permits alleged victims of racial profiling to sue to get injunctions to halt the practice.

The New Jersey study could do much to torpedo the anti-profiling effort.

Only a handful of states have passed legislation requiring local police agencies to keep racial statistics on traffic stops. Many state legislators have already backedpedaled fast away from introducing or supporting legislation to tackle the problem. In some states, anti-racial profiling bills have either died in legislative committees or been decisively voted down. And with many members of Congress quietly or openly claiming that profiling can be a useful weapon against terrorists, the Feingold-Conyers bills, at

least for now, are hopelessly buried. President Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft probably won't help much here. Despite their much-publicized pre-911 pledges to push and prod Congress and police agencies to end profiling, they are now stone silent on the issue.

The great fear and danger are that the New Jersey study will further embolden the legion of public officials and law enforcement agencies who don't believe that police profile minorities, to foot-drag on, or derail, the anti-profiling fight. No wonder there was glee among some New Jersey troopers.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is an author and columnist. Visit his news and opinion Web site: www.thehutchinsonreport.com. He is the author of "The Crisis in Black and Black" (Middle Passage Press).

The deadline for news articles is Monday 5 p.m.

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