



The Real Lives of Strong Black Women: Transcending Myths, Reclaiming Joy

Toby Thompson

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In this warm, sensitive and straightforward self-help guide for African American women, Toby Thompkins explores the triumphs, struggles and lessons necessary to transcend the stereotypes and overcome the consequences of being a "strong black woman." Culled from interviews with both black women and black men from all walks of life, the personal stories Thompkins uses to illustrate his ideas and communicate his healing message illustrate the costs involved in measuring up to this archetypal image, one of the most powerful and enduring in American society.

In reality, as Thompkins demonstrates, despite the almost universal respect and deference afforded the strong black women ideal, it can be more limiting than it is empowering. Too often, women of color feel compelled to become "chronic caregivers," sacrificing their ability to become truly free and fulfilled individuals-at great emotional and physical cost. Thompkins makes the case for the need to supplant the myth of the strong black woman, particularly so that women can better understand and respond to their urgent need to care for themselves. He offers effective strategies by which women of any color can reclaim themselves and create lives characterized by new dimensions of fulfillment, love and joy.

The Real Lives of Strong Black Women: Transcending Myths, Reclaiming Joy Details

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Angela says

An excellent book!

Monique says

It is a fact there are strong black women. The essence of our strength comes from our African heritage along with the trials and lessons learned crossing the Middle Passage, enduring slavery, holding the family together, and at times living life without a safety net. The myth: all black women are strong all of the time. As I begin to read, a wave of pride washed over me as I realized that finally a black man is starting to seek out the opinions from "strong black women".

Thompkin's spent over a year interviewing hundreds of women and men documenting their ideas and feelings about "strong black women". His study was driven by his desire to uplift and acknowledge black women, as they are too often misunderstood and undercelebrated. Amen to that! The chapters are structured around the different types of love - romantic, platonic and self-love. The reader is asked to reexamine their lives according to the questions from the different types of love that make up a love pie. Thompkins suggests that by shifting your reality from "wonder women" to "woman of faith, love and joy" you can cut a bigger piece of love pie.

THE REAL LIVES OF STRONG BLACK WOMEN explores several topics central to black women's lives. Thompkins organizes his findings across key areas: emotional abandonment, spirituality as a source of strength, creating a meaningful life, straight and lesbian relationships and dating. An entire chapter is devoted to the male perspective on strong black women. Attention-grabbing tips are presented for improving mother/daughter relationships, which offer simple ideas to mend the bond and erase generational curses. Each chapter has personal testimonies to illustrate healing can occur if black women start to care for themselves. Every chapter ends with an affirmation and questions to consider before reading further.

Thompkins has compiled a superb resource for readers who are attempting to understand the "strong black women". The reading is interesting and easy to comprehend. The strategies, concepts, and ideas cross all gender and socioeconomic boundaries while providing simple ways to apply to your life. Thanks Toby Thompkins for reaffirming the positive aspects of "strong black women".

Mocha Girl says

Toby Thompkin's release The Real Lives of Strong Black Women: Transcending Myths, Reclaiming Joy opens with a foreword, from Victoria Rowell, calling black women of the world to lean upon their courage to accept love and joy into their lives. Thompkins goes on to explain that preexisting myths of "the strong black woman" have possibly done more harm than good by creating generations of problem-solvers, self-sacrificing nurturers, and steel magnolias. These are women who often forfeit true love, peace, and happiness

while caring for, working for, and/or bearing the burdens of others. The author encourages self-examination, self-love, and self-preservation by dissecting the psyche and offering candid views into the essence of self-described strong black women.

After interviewing hundreds of women and a few men, Thompkins organizes his findings and observations across key areas such as: mother-daughter relationships, dating, straight and lesbian relationships, emotional abandonment, and even a male perspective commenting on what men want from and for strong black women. He also defines the myth of the "strong black woman" and references legacies of the slave trade, racism, and classism that helped fuel the myth of the black 'Wonder Woman.' He comments on how the fallacy is often and easily repeated in every generation. Each chapter includes soul-baring life experiences, lessons learned, and words of wisdom from women of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds. The chapters close with heartfelt, positive affirmations which promote spiritual healing and behavior awareness. This is a worthwhile and educational body of work that can be read in its entirety or selectively as it addresses a specific life situation.

Global says

An amazing book the cuts to the core of black women , culture , and the very essence of what we as women of color deal with in regards to society, relationships , and sheer brute strength

Chanel says

Excellent book. It was just what I needed at the right time.

Rita Reinhardt says

Interesting "self-help" book. This little gem has definitely given me some points to ponder, however, I don't know if it has changed the person that I am or will shape the person I will be. I find it informative and will continue to read.

Side note: I find it interesting that black women "supposedly" have all of these "issues." Hmmmpphhh, pondering... where would the world be if African-American women were no longer allowed to be the underdog in which society seems to kick when it's down. I'm just wondering...
