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Injecting Success & Positivity

OVERCOMING THE ODDS: A BRONX WOMAN'S INCREDIBLE STORY OF SUCCESS PART 1

By Dr. Daphne Mobley

What comes to your mind when you hear the words, “The Bronx”? Does this New York City borough evoke images of violent crimes and crumbling homes where impoverished people reside? Well there are other Bronx images, many that are positive and rarely portrayed as being representative of the Bronx. Some notable examples are the Bronx Zoo, City Island or even the New York Botanical Garden with its unmatched, exclusive collection of exotic flowers from all over the world.

There is yet another positive Bronx image – one that is of a Bronx native who achieved accomplishments that many said were impossible to attain. This African American woman was raised in the Bronx and rose to speak in the Board room of a Fortune 500 company. The African American woman that I am referring to is me. The experiences that I had were ones that many dream of. I still find myself reviewing events in my life with utter amazement and wondering how they all happened to me.

My experiences did not occur because I possess some athletic, superwoman prowess or a melodic voice that may be commonly associated with successful inner city natives. They occurred because of decisions I made when I decided not to hang out in the streets until the wee hours of the morning and my neighbor Bobby did. Now Bobby is in jail serving a life sentence for a foiled robbery attempt that resulted in the murder of a cab driver. These experiences occurred because I did not experiment with crack cocaine and my classmate Tito did. The last time that I saw Tito was on a New York City bus when he was walking up and down the aisle speaking aloud about something that only he understood. These experiences occurred because I chose to abstain from having sex in junior high school and Gigi didn't. She became strapped with adult responsibilities and was stripped of her freedom to enjoy her teenage years.

You see, I do not want to be the only exception of what the general population may believe about Bronx natives, or women, or people of color or African Americans. I want a continuum of others to join me so that we all have success stories that will be used to inspire others. Telling these stories will become the norm and replace the sorrowful, depressing tales we are inundated with on the news today. Telling these stories will change the views that people have about Bronx natives. Telling these stories will have a favorable impact on Bronx residents so that they will believe that they can also

accomplish phenomenal achievements. This was not the case for a young graduate at a graduation ceremony that I had the privilege to speak at. The elementary school was located approximately ten blocks away from the street that I lived on when I was her age. During the ceremony I informed the students that I grew up in that very same neighborhood and told them about my successful experiences. At the end of my speech the young girl said, "She doesn't look like she is from here." Why did she make that statement - was it the business suit that I wore that confused her? I am not certain, but I hope that I planted a seed of belief in each graduate, parent and others in attendance at the graduation. When the seed blossoms to become a flower within them, I want them to believe that they can be anything they want to be and achieve anything in the world that they want to. It is my sincere hope that they will tell stories of success that will become the norm for the Bronx and replace the negative images that do not truly represent the vivacious, victorious spirit of Bronx natives.