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“Seven Steps to Personal Media Atonement”

This mini-Report Brief is in fulfillment of a commitment conveyed in an April 18, 2025 BlackEconomics.org release entitled, “Headline Thoughts No. 7.” It may prove to be one of Black Americans’ (Afrodescendants’) important tools for moving forward toward liberty. The previous statement may appear anomalous because, influenced by a Western mentality drenched in materialism, many Black Americans engaged in the fight for liberty rely on materialistic metrics to assess our progress toward that thus far elusive liberty. However, those who are avid readers of BlackEconomics.org submissions will know our definition of liberty well: “Without constraints, doing what we want, when we want, the way we want.” Realize that the display of such behavior is not controversial at all when our opposers shape our “wants.” However, it becomes a major cause for concern and elicits tremendous opposition when we perform ever so slight actions that signal self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and self-determination of our “wants.” Of course, these points are relevant and applicable whether we are concerned with individual Black Americans (Afrodescendants) or our collective.

The connection between Personal Media Atonement (PMA) and liberty is straight forward. PMA is a set of protocols that can enable individual attainment of a state of unconstrained and independent thinking and decision-making about “wants.” By extension, if we all complete PMA Protocols, then as a People we will have the capability of arriving at our joint “wants” freely, independently, and without constraint or undesired influence.

Completing PMA Protocols is one in the first set of steps that can help ensure that Black Americans (Afrodescendants) can envision and execute an independent and self-directed strategic path to liberty that has a reasonable probability of success.ⁱ As a first step on this journey, we must become convinced that our current media consumption is a very important component of the Black American side of the “Black American Problem.”

Consider that the “volume” of media consumption is problematic (i.e., we should not over-consume media); however, the most harmful element of the media consumption equation is “content.”ⁱⁱⁱ That is, Black scholars and laypersons alike have long recognized that media can embody healthful and poisonous content, which are sufficiently powerful to produce their intended results. We cannot take up fully here why media content assumes healthful or poisonous forms. However, Endnote “iii” includes a selected list of sources that can fill this void should there be unawareness concerning the generally poisonous nature of media produced by Europeans and its adverse effects on Black Americans (Afrodescendants).ⁱⁱⁱ As logic would have it, media produced by Europeans is overly favorable for descendants of Europe. It is critical that we all realize not the

idea or notion, but the fact, that most media produced by Europeans conveys adverse stereotypical images of Black People, which conditions non-Blacks and Blacks alike to exhibit racist and racial discriminatory behaviors toward Blacks. However, the most pernicious outcomes produced by European-made media materialize when our imbibing of that media causes us to form severely adverse and harmful attitudes and perceptions about ourselves that then come to life in our world. If we conclude that media affects us, if we concur that the most prevalent media in the Western world is produced by Europeans, and if we concede that European media has the power to produce the above-described outcomes, then we have drawn a straight line to at least a partial, but very important explanation for the socioeconomic conditions that we observe in the Western world and elsewhere: Europeans at the pinnacle and all else below with Blacks generally at the bottom.

Therefore, as a method for transforming the *status quo* in favor of Black Americans (Afrodescendants), we offer PMA Protocols and commence with the assumption that those seeking to perform the protocols are generally aware of the widespread harmful media effects on Black Americans (Afrodescendants).^{iv} We believe that completion of these protocols can create a state in which individuals and/or a People have obliterated—or nearly so—the adverse psychological/mental and physical effects of European-produced media, and have generated a clean slate that can be properly populated with content from favorable media sources that can help motivate and sustain movement forward toward liberty. The 7-Step Protocols—including goals, objectives, and indicators of success—are presented below:

Step 1.—Learn to **identify features** within media that generate/promote self-harm by penetrating to the deepest, most subtle levels of our mind/cognition and inducing deep self-hate, self-doubt, and an absence of self-respect. This is a psychological/mental state that inhibits the formation of a desire and efforts to produce achievements that are valued. It also reinforces a powerful sense of unworthiness that engenders mental and physical behaviors that are self-injurious and that are akin to those associated with the “imposter syndrome” mindset, or worse.

Indicators of success for this step include written or recorded verbal analyses of selected formerly favorite media content that confirms: (1) Recognition of the harm caused by media (i.e., expressions of ownership of self-hate, self-doubt, and an absence of self-respect caused in large measure by consumption of adverse media); (2) written or verbal delineation of standard media techniques that help produce the harm outlined in part 1; and (3) acknowledgement of thoughts about, or the performance of, self-injurious behaviors that were motivated, in least in part, by consumption of adverse media.

Step 2.—**Determine** that, for example, the harm imposed by the adverse nature of European produced media can carry multipronged implications: Physical (physical self-injury, overeating, or lack of self-care that results from self-hate); economic (wasteful and/or unconstrained consumption spending to transform the self to respond to discomfort with the mental and physical self); and social (an inability to function well in social environments due to an absence of self-confidence—there is a related economic component here because our performance can be affected by our social disfunction, which shoehorns us into underachievement, which suppresses our productivity and precludes our realization of the most favorable economic outcomes).

Indicators of success for this step include written or recorded verbal delineation of the various adverse physical, economic, and social outcomes that are believed to be directly linked to the effects produced by consumption of adverse media content.

Step 3.—Benefit from Steps 1 and 2 **and adopt an affirmative decision** to prevent and avoid the harm/injury that is caused by consumption of adverse media. Such a decision does not necessarily have to be a proclamation of complete abstinence from media, but it should imply an intent to significantly reduce the volume of media that is to be consumed in the future.

Required indicators of success for this step are written or verbally recorded baseline statistics on the volume of adverse media being consumed at this (Step 3) decision point.

Step 4.—Adopt self-determined methods that enable a major modification (reduction) in the consumption of adverse media and that reinforce sustainment of the modified behavior. This step is akin to fighting any addiction. It can reflect any combination of the menu of techniques/strategies that are used to successfully break addictions.

Indicators of success for this step include statistics concerning the volume of adverse media consumption prior to and after embarking upon completion of PMA Protocols. Importantly, it would be instructive to reflect a demarcation of the before and after media consumption statistics by differentiating between media content that was and is considered adverse versus media content that was and is considered balanced or favorable. These differentiated statistics should reveal a complete or near complete elimination of media consumption of the adverse variety.

Step 5.—Development and operationalization of personal deprogramming methods/protocols that can enable a reversal of negative impacts from adverse media consumption: e.g., private and/or public self-affirming declarations (written or verbal); the identification and consumption of media especially designed for self-upliftment in a powerfully positive way; meditation practices that enhance self-awareness/awakeness and that point to increases in awareness and awakeness as strong and positive evidence of improved/increased self-esteem, self-care, and self-respect; and participation in activities, such as local social (educational, religious, cultural, or sports) events that help build and sustain uncompromised self-confidence.

Indicators of success for this step include a written or verbally recorded list of proposed deprogramming methods/protocols and a tentative calendar for performing these deprogramming methods/protocols.

Step 6.—Identification of what are perceived as the best methods/protocols for ensuring optimal favorable self-perceptions in environments where media is ubiquitous. Results from such an identification exercise might include: (A) Complete or near complete abstinence from consumption of most or selected media genres and producers; (B) consumption of mixed (adverse and favorable) media content; (C) consumption of only favorable or positive media content; (D) systematic or idiosyncratic media consumption in “B” and “C” forms using an irregular or periodic schedule; and (E) relocating to a favorable self-affirming environment—with or without regard to media content while residing in that environment. This PMA Protocol is not so much concerned with the nature of consumed media content as it is concerned with media consumption patterns

and environments in which media is consumed. It infers that there is a combination of media content type, the pattern of consumption, and environments in which media is consumed that best enable preservation of positive self-perception and prevents the formation of an adverse self-perception and the potential follow-on harm/injury.

Indicators of success for this step include a written or verbally recorded sketch of an informal “experiment” that has been performed under at least two or three of the five (A, B, C, D, and E) conditions identified in this step, and that provides qualitative self-assessment measures of self-perception under each of the conditions tested.

Step 7.—Consistent with traditional atonement processes, when the seventh stage is reached, those engaged in the atonement process have been able to **reconcile** themselves with what precipitated the atonement effort and have reached a higher state of comprehension concerning the events and circumstances that had formerly portended and induced their harm/injury or demise/destruction. For 7-Step PMA Protocols, the intent is to enable an undoing of artificially induced adverse or negative outcomes. The expectation is that the protocols will assist those who undertake them to wipe their mental slate clean to the greatest extent possible and to place their entire mental and physical being in a state that permits them to function in a manner that is neither encumbered nor bolstered excessively by media consumption. They should be able to enjoy lives that are balanced and that enable an optimization of their human potential.

The primary indicator of success for this step is that the adverse states or conditions that are identified in Steps 1 and 2 no longer affect those who have successfully completed the 7-Step PMA Protocols.

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Endnotes

ⁱ Paths to liberty that reflect the thinking and vision of others (our opposers) are not likely to be successful for us.

ⁱⁱ It is common knowledge among those who are familiar with the *American Time Use Survey (ATUS)* that is conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, that over the ATUS’s life, Black Americans have been the most prolific consumers of media among all racial and ethnic groups. The *ATUS* is widely recognized as a high-quality source of statistics concerning how Americans expend their time.

ⁱⁱⁱ The following is a selected short list of sources that explore media’s impact on Black Americans’ (Afrodescendants’) outcomes:

Donald Bogles (1989). *Toms, Coon, Mulattoes, Mammies, Bucks, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Black in American Films*. New York: Continuum.

Camile Cosby (1994). *Television Imageable Influences: The Self-Perceptions of Young African-Americans*. Lanham: University Press of America.

Darnell Hunt (2022). *The Black Executive: A Partial Solution to Psycho-Social Consequences of Media Distortions*. NAACP Bureau: MEE Productions, Inc. Hollywood.
<https://naacp.org/sites/default/files/documents/NAACP%20MEE%20FINAL%20MERGED%20REPORT.pdf> (Ret. 042125).

Jerry Kang (2005). “Trojan Horses of Race.” *Harvard Law Review*: Vol. 118, February, pp. 1489-593.

Brooks Robinson (2009). “Black Unemployment and Infotainment.” *Economic Inquiry*: Vol. 47; No. 4 pp. 98-117.

^{iv} PMA Protocols include concepts and terms that are most common to and comprehended by psychologists. It is reasonable to expect that psychologists may incorporate refinements, improvements, and augmentations to this min-Report Brief.