

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS PT. 1

## Myth #1: "TWERKING HURTS OUR COMMUNITY"

AKA "RESPECT YOURSELF SO OTHERS WILL RESPECT YOU"



By believing and spreading this message, you're practicing respectability politics: (attempts by marginalized groups to police their own members and show their social values as being continuous and compatible with mainstream values rather than challenging the mainstream for its failure to accept difference.) By doing so, it sends a message that you'd prefer members of your community display and respect the values of the mainstream, while turning their backs on value of their African cultural expressions. What is defined as twerking today is actually an African form of dance found in past and present cultures. Demanding women to align their behavior to suit societal norms is unnecessary and oppressive. This is asking them to try and achieve respect that nobody can give them. Even if they did stop engaging in behaviors that the mainstream society does not approve, there is no place in this society for anyone to go to prove themselves "twerk-free" and worthy of respect.

## Myth #2: "WE DON'T HAVE OUR OWN AWARDS SHOWS."

This myth circulates as the Black Community continues to blame themselves for Hollywood's exclusionary behavior. Despite this repeated myth, there are a variety of Black Award shows including: NAACP Image Awards, All Def Awards, MOBO Awards, Essence's Black Women in Hollywood, Essence's Black Women in Music, Soul Train Awards, BET Awards, American Black Film Fest, the Hoodies, the Ozone Awards, BET Hip Hop Awards, Stellar Awards, Black Reel Awards, and the All Def Awards (which took place for the first time in 2016 at the same time as the Oscars). The truth is, we have many awards shows of all sizes and focuses that recognize us for our contribution to the arts and to culture. Please support them, and more importantly, the individuals nominated. Understand that we deserve recognition everywhere and anytime we produce excellent work.



## Myth #3: "BLACK PEOPLE DON'T HAVE UNITY"



There are plenty of arguments that support this damaging myth and we've all heard them. The truth lies in where you look. There are Black people uniting to support a variety of important causes from farming to education to economics. Recently, we have seen the creation of numerous activist groups like Black Lives Matter, the Dream Defenders, Black Youth Project 100, and the Ferguson Action Network that were created to support the fight for liberation and justice. Millions have supported via social media, given donations, and risked their lives protesting in the streets. Angry over the lack of truthful historical representation, we successfully boycotted the Gods of Egypt film, causing it to fail at the box office. People are coming together in record numbers in a variety of ways not easy to recognize, unless you know where to look. Unity exists.

## Myth #4: "BLACK PEOPLE DON'T OWN ANY BUSINESSES."

The truth is, we do, and they are as dynamic and diverse as we are. There are too many to list here and that's a good thing. We encourage you to seek them out using the lists such as WeBuyBlack.com, EGrassRoots Business, and Black Trade Lines as well the directories listed on our website. Take entrepreneurial inspiration from Black business owners like Myleik Teele of CurlBox, Tristan Walker of Bevel, and Janell Stephens of Camille Rose Naturals. Locally, you can find black entrepreneurs vending at farmer's markets and flea markets. Word of mouth is key; tell people you know about black businesses and support them. This will help to dispel the myth and work toward progress.



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[www.blackawakeningmovement.com](http://www.blackawakeningmovement.com)