Education for Liberation: The Top 20 Questions and Answers for Black Homeschoolers

By Samori Camara, PhD
Education for Liberation
Copyright: Samori Camara
Published: February 2013

© 2013 by Samori Camara
All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of Samori Camara.
To the ancestors who have come before, the children here now, those yet unborn, and all those who support Kamali Academy.
Table of Contents

Introduction

Question 1:  
What is Afrikan-centered Education?

Question 2:  
Am I required to teach the same curriculum as a local school?

Question 3:  
Where should I homeschool?

Question 4:  
What are the laws governing homeschool?

Question 5:  
What are the costs of homeschooling?

Question 6:  
What educational materials/resources are available?

Question 7:  
What kind of curriculum should I use?

Question 8:  
How is one person supposed to be an expert in everything?

Question 9:  
Will my child be able to go to college?

Question 10:  
How much time should I devote or what should the schedule look like?

Question 11:  
What about socialization?

Question 12:  
How will they learn to navigate a eurocentric or diverse society?
Question 13:
Do they have to take standardized tests?

Question 14:
Are there any problems when the home schooled child returns to school?

Question 15:
My child has discipline problems at school. Can home schooling help?

Question 16:
Why should I homeschool my child when I'm paying taxes for the same public schools I attended?

Question 17:
Is it hard for single parents to homeschool?

Question 18:
How do I deal with family members who just don't understand?

Question 19:
How do I meet the educational needs of several children of different ages at the same time?

Question 20:
My relationship with my child is strained. Can it be repaired through homeschooling?

Conclusion
Introduction

Wherever Afrikan people reside in the world, the majority of our children are not receiving the kind of liberating education that is a prerequisite for Afrikan people to reclaim their natural power, their natural mind, and their natural self. Indeed, we are losing our children by the millions with the help of public, private, and charters school systems and there seems to be no end in sight. The culture of many schools promote disrespect for Afrikan traditions, rampant individualism, blind obedience to authority, and shallow thought.

Before they can slip into a cap and gown and listen to a dry commencement speaker, over 50% of “Afrikan-American” ninth grade students will dropout of America’s high schools. In some places it is as high as 75%. So I ask you these questions: would you get on a plane that takes off and lands safely only 50% of the time? Would you go to a restaurant that only gets your meal correct 50% of the time? For the ladies, would you go to a hairdresser who only gets your hair right 50% of the time? You would not do that. So why do we send our children to schools that are only getting it right 50% of the time?

Because of a blatantly Eurocentric curriculum, on the grade school and university level, and an insanely aggressive push for better scores on standardized tests, millions of Afrikan children, who do graduate, leave schools with very little knowledge of self and too much miseducation. Carter G. Woodson warns us that “the large majority of the Negroes who have put on the finishing touches of our best colleges are all but worthless
in the development of their people.”¹ We must train our young for our collective purposes.

Steve Biko told us long ago, “the most power weapon in the hand of the oppressor…is the mind of the oppressed.” Our historical and contemporary oppressor has twelve years to do whatever he pleases with our children’s mind. That arrangement has caused untold death and destruction in our communities as the school system has trained legions of our young into self-destructive behaviors. Even worse, we have allowed it, raising only faint protest here and there.

Now, we could allow the decimation of our communities to continue. We could continue to hope that something or someone is going to save us from this wretched condition. We could turn a blind eye and hope our families are spared while our neighbors are drowning. We could work as hard as we can to get away from those who look just like us. We could do those things; but I know you will not allow it.

As we grow in consciousness and seriousness about the education of our children, only one solution remains clear: we must build our own schools equipped with loving and demanding educators and an engaging, yet rigorous Afrikan-centered curriculum. We must take this challenge with joy, for this is why we are here. Fighting our purpose leads to uninspiring lives.

At twenty-one, I knew my calling was to build educational institutions that served Afrikan people from a cultural perspective, but I procrastinated and found excuse after excuse in order to put it off. I said to myself, “after I leave school, then I will build it; after I get a good job, then I will build it; after I find a wife and settle down, then I will

build it.” In truth, those were only excuses to mask my fears about starting a school from scratch. I had no guides. I had no one in my corner motivating and inspiring me to follow my passion. It was a struggle to get through all those limiting thoughts and self-doubts. But finally, I did it. With a friend, I started the BlackStar Educational Cooperative, which would become Kamali Academy a year later, in 2009. We had no money or direction only a vision for the mental liberation of Afrikan people. Only two parents entrusted us with their children that first year. Parents around the city, however, noticed my commitment, knowledge, drive, and insatiable love for Afrikan people. Consequently, in the second year, christened with a new name: Kamali Academy, my school’s enrollment jumped from two to fifteen. Because I took that jump, I am now living my purpose and passing on the wisdom of elders and ancestors to our children.

**It's Possible**

Listen, it is possible for you to take your child’s education into your own hands. As parents you are the first teachers, so why not continue that natural process? You can teach your child using a culturally relevant curriculum, cultivate their minds, grow their spirits, and help bring out the natural genius already within them. You can find the time, resources, and faith to give your child the greatest gifts: self-love, self-awareness, and self-determination. You can establish that educational institution or cooperative that you have been dreaming of building.

If you read this book and go on to educate your own children or build a school, your community will begin to change. You will not solve all the problems, but you will
be a part of the solution. Too many people wax eloquently about the crises in our community and never make any concerted effort to work towards a solution. In order for us to move forward, we must strengthen the body of our community.

There are several types of bones that exist in our communal body. There is the Wishbone: the person who is always wishing someone else would do for them what they should do for themselves. There is the Jawbone: the person who talks and talks, but never gets around to doing any work. There is the Knucklebone: the person who only comes around to tear down the ideas of others without ever offering viable solutions. The Knucklebone plays the devil’s advocate, but you all know the devil does not need any more advocates. Then, there is the Backbone: the person who makes an observation and honors her obligation to do something about the issue at hand. I hope you are a Backbone. If not, reading this book will give you the tools to strengthen your back. By educating your own, you honor your ancestors and continue their work of freeing Afrikan people of the mental slavery so prevalent in our communities. Do not let them down.

Book Overview

The process of educating our own frightens many of us and stirs-up feelings of inadequacy and incompetence. Though the idea seems ideal, even necessary, practical ways of implementation escape us. We feel helpless as our children languish in schools that are unable and unwilling to tap into their passion and purpose. We argue that we can provide them with the cultural education they need at home after they receive eight hours of indoctrination and European socialization.
The truth is that we can educate our children ourselves. This book will show you the practical steps needed and provide the motivation required for you to begin educating for liberation. You will learn how to find your state’s homeschooling regulations, where you should homeschool, and what hours. You will also learn where to find help and resources to assist you on your journey. In addition, I will provide you with proven strategies for curriculum development and ways to deal with the adversity you will experience.

Reading this book will provide you with all that you need to get started in homeschooling or building an institution. It will not be easy, but it must be done if we are to raise children who will be lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and Afrikan warrior scholars.
AFRIKAN-CENTERED EDUCATION

Afrikan-centered education leads us back to our way, back to who we are. It is the only kind of relevant education for Afrikans across the world. Afrikan-centered education allows us to find ourselves and helps us to develop paths to a better future. Without it, we languish as a people. Our eyes remain closed to our possibilities and power. Without it, we lose ourselves and become eager instruments of someone else's power. Without it, we lose valuable information and wisdom used by our greatest ancestors to solve many of the challenges we face today. Amos Wilson teaches that, "To manipulate history is to manipulate consciousness; to manipulate consciousness is to manipulate possibilities; to manipulate possibilities is to manipulate power." Without Afrikan-centered education, our whole community is manipulated, mentally, spiritually, and economically. Without an education for liberation our consciousness is falsified, our values are distorted, our culture is misrepresented, our commonsense is tampered with, and our minds are altered away from that which is best for our nation.

Afrikan-centered education reconnects us with our power base. Afrikan wisdom teaches us "a tree without roots cannot stand." Afrikan-centered education provides those roots. Not only does it provide the roots, it helps us nourish those roots so that the once sick tree of our community can heal. "The education of our children is too serious for us to leave it in the hands of other people," says Amos Wilson. "We can't just turn our children over at will and give them away. We can't unwittingly take other people's advice about how to rear and deal with our children. They are always going to set things up in

---

2 Amos N. Wilson, The Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness,
ways that work to their advantage, even when they have good intentions."³ Afrikan-centered education is our way of setting things up in a way that works to our advantage. We must be unapologetic about that fact. If something does not work for us, we must, as John Henrik Clarke says, "throw [it] into the dustpan of history." In other words, practicality and usefulness lie at the heart of Afrikan-centered education. Honestly, why shouldn’t our education be centered on who we are, where we have been, and where we are going? To focus otherwise, or to be centered any other place, does violence to our spirit as Afrikans. Eurocentric education prioritizes things that make their culture, their values, their ways, and their wickedness seem normal and something to emulate. Afrikan-centered education, however, leads us away from death and towards the life-giving nature of our ancient wisdom.

Many of our greatest scholars and institutions have offered definitions of Afrikan-centered education. The Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI.org) defines Afrikan-centered education as

...the means by which Afrikan culture — including the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills needed to maintain and perpetuate it throughout the nation building process — is developed and advanced through practice. Its aim, therefore, is to build commitment and competency within present and future generations to support the struggle for liberation and nationhood. We define nation building as the conscious and focused application of our people’s collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. Nation

³ Amos N. Wilson, *Awakening the Natural Genius of the Black Child*, 12.
building encompasses both the reconstruction of Afrikan culture and the development of a progressive and sovereign state structure consistent with that culture.

CIBI's focus on Nation Building brings the seriousness of Afrikan-centered education to the forefront. This is not child's play; it is the very necessary work needed to build a nation of our own.

In *Nationbuilding: The Theory and Practice of Afrikan Centered Education*, Agyei Akoto argues that,

Afrikan centered education is rooted in the unique history and evolved culture of Afrikan people. It is defined in its singular commitment to the elucidation of the history, that culture, and the confirmation, invigoration and perpetuation of the Afrikan collective identity that emanates from that history and culture. Afrikan centered education is concerned with the origins, original status and future of the Afrikan world. Afrikan centered education is committed to correcting the historical distortions born of three millennia of foreign invasion, destruction, enslavement, physical and mental colonialism, cultural disruption, and dependency. Afrikan centered education is committed to rooting or anchoring the spiritual and intellectual energies of Afrikan people in the spiritual, moral, and philosophical traditions of Afrika. Afrikan centered, whether in the several nations of the diaspora or on the motherland, is concerned to fully develop the sense of Afrikan nationality within a broader PanAfrikan world. Afrikan centered education is concerned to sever irrevocably the pathological and slavish linkage of Afrikans to the European or Asian ethos. Afrikan centered education is
concerned to enable the Afrikan person with nation building, nation management, 
and nation maintenance abilities. Afrikan centered education is concerned to 
motivate teacher, student, parent and community to advance the Afrikan 
nation/world by any means necessary.⁴ 

Again, in the eyes of Akoto, nation building occupies the core of Afrikan centered 
education. The nucleus also includes the excavation of Afrika's history, culture, and 
traditions so that going forward, the Afrikan student is equipped with the essential tools 
required to rebuild, revitalize, and reclaim our Afrikan selves. 

From my perspective, several practical elements come to together to amplify CIBI 
and Akoto's definition of Afrikan-centered education. Afrikan-centered education 
concerns itself greatly with the unearthing and nurturing of the child’s purpose, or 
Nkrabea. Of course, in an Afrikan context the child bears a name that signals to others 
the child's purpose in life. We, for the most part, have not continued that tradition so we 
must find other ways to discover the child's purpose. Watch the child at play; notice his 
interests, and what he gravitates towards. Those things can give us clues about what their 
purpose could be. When looking for leaders, John Henrik Clarke tells us to "watch how 
that child handles a fork; watch that child's ability to share with the group; watch that 
child's ability to protect the group and to accept the training that will make that child 
improve."⁵ 

Another hallmark of Afrikan-centered education is self-acceptance. This might 
seem trivial or automatic, but I have seen some Afrikan-centered schools that still 

---

⁵ Quoted from Mwalimu K. Baruti’s *Asafo: The Warrior’s Guide to Manhood*, 111.
struggle with self-acceptance. Amos Wilson teaches us that without acceptance of self, we exist for others and our consciousness is falsified. "To be oppressed is to be forced to exist not for oneself but for the other; to support one's enemies and oppose oneself and one's fellows. To be oppressed is to have one's worthiness and esteem measured in the currency of one's oppressors--to have one's value measured in coin and utility, exclusively. The oppressed are compelled to act not for their own reason; not in order to realize their own god-given potentials or their own self-defined, self-determined values; but for reasons imposed on them, and to realize values defined for them by their oppressors. Oppression requires the dissociation of the oppressed from themselves; that they deny themselves, in service to their oppressors; that they avoid identifying with their original personality and perceive identification with it as detrimental to their survival. The rejection of their authentic selves on the part of the oppressed is a necessary preparatory step to their replacement by artificial, manipulatable selves socially manufactured by their oppressors."6 This manipulation is halted by the power of an Afrikan-centered education centered on self-acceptance. People who accept themselves avoid an adversarial relationship with themselves that plagues too many in our community. Too often we change our hair, our manner of dress, our way of speaking, our way of acting, and our way of seeing the world in order to please or escape the wrath of others. In changing ourselves in those ways, we battle Europeans even when they are not around. When we teach our children self-acceptance, they know to turn away from things that will eventually lead to our destruction. Self-acceptance is accompanied by the understanding that “I am for myself and if anything harms me or my people, I must

6 Wilson, *Falsification*, 133.
become a destroyer of that which brings destruction. Furthermore, I accept the problems and challenges in my community; I do not run away from them and seek refuge in communities that do not want me; I stand and fight to change the environment.” As Khalid Muhammad said, "Black people are divine by nature, wicked by circumstance.”

Everyday in our home schools or co-ops we must help our children develop their self-acceptance. Without it, we will never rise beyond our present condition.

If nothing else, Afrikan-centered education works best when it is holistic. Afrikan Spirituality affirms that everything in the universe shares a connection. Our schools must affirm and practice that idea. The day does not start without a libation to those gone, those here, and those yet to come. Just as everything in the universe is connected, all of our classes must connect and not be divided into separate units as in the public fool system.

A great way to connect our classes is to use a unit study format. For example, if you want your child to learn about the Honorable Marcus Garvey, in Language Arts class you could read a biography of Garvey, you could write a letter to Garvey himself, asking to be apart of the U.N.I.A., you could read the poetry or literature of the time. For Ourstory class, you could simply teach your child about Garvey and the history of his organization. For Math, you could, depending on the level, create a business plan, complete with facts and figures, for a business that would serve the Black community or simply count the numbers of businesses the U.N.I.A. established. The options are endless. Start with a topic and then tie all the subject areas into the topic, for every topic is multidisciplinary.
Afrikan-centered education thrives in a learning to do and doing to learn environment.

For more information about our online classes, visit www.KamaliAcademy.com/online-classes
Question Two: Am I required to teach the same curriculum as a local school?

Absolutely not. The curriculum in the public and private schools are built for the masses. It is built to preserve the status quo. Honestly, if you like their curriculum, keep your child there. However, if you want something different or something that resonates with the core of your child, then your curriculum should not be standardized. It should be customized and Africanized. When I speak of Africanizing the curriculum, I simply mean that preference be given to Afrikan thought, wisdom, and culture as the avenue through which we teach every subject to our children. In terms of customization, I mean starting where our children are, not where state standards say they should be, and leading them on a journey to better academics and a better sense of self.

The flexibility to create your own curriculum sits at the core of why many parents choose homeschooling. That curriculum has to be a curriculum that is based upon your child's interest, based upon your child's learning style, based upon your child's heritage, and not based upon what the state Board of Education believes is important. Also, your curriculum should prioritize your spirituality and values.

Nevertheless, many Afrikan parents look outside themselves and search the web for full curriculums that they could purchase. In some cases, this is fine. But too often, we search for curriculums built by others because we do not believe we can do it for ourselves. So we grope in the dark to find suitable curriculums. Purchasing someone else’s curriculum means that we prioritize what these companies (usually white and
Christian) prioritize.

Feeling they have no other viable options, some parents choose to go with the curriculum of the local district to ensure that their child learns the same information and remains on the same level of his or her peers. The choice is up to you. If you use it, at least you should put your spin on the subject matter. For example, if the curriculum requires that the child know similes, metaphors, and the elements of fiction, do not feel obligated to use the literature suggested. Find our classic fiction and poetry. Delve deeper into the subject matter in order to teach those lessons and your child should be able to recognize those elements in whatever context they find themselves.

While changing and tweaking an Eurocentric curriculum may prove effective, here is what I know: we should be developing our own curriculums that deal with the interest, nature, and culture of our children. A curriculum provides a road map. Only you know the destination. Be sure to guide your children to liberation and not educated servanthood.

Kamali Academy will release its own Afrikan-centered curriculum soon. If it connects with what kind of education you would like your child to have, purchase it. If not, develop your own. You are perfectly capable of that and a lot more.
Question Three: Where should I homeschool?

You can homeschool anywhere. Since, the world is our classroom. Make it a habit to explore the world around you. Math is everywhere. Language is everywhere. Science is everywhere. OurStory or history is everywhere.

When we first started homeschooling, my two students were at my kitchen table and in the living room. I would hook my computer up to the television to serve as a projector, but we spent the vast majority of our time out in the world.

If you have a spare bedroom, a garage, a living room, a tree in the backyard, you can homeschool. Do not be limited by options you see in the schools. Our ancestors only had the earth; they only had a circle around the tree. These things were sufficient because the education they had education was an education for liberation.

If we look to traditional Afrikan societies, we see that school did not take place in a building, per se. Education took place in nature. Education took place among elders. The education was practical. Students learned by watching parents and community members go about their daily routines. Occasionally, the adults being watched would stop to deliver explicit instruction or impart knowledge about the deeper meaning of, or common misconceptions about, the work. The child learned by apprenticeship and rites of passage instead of "formal" schooling. In the apprenticeships, the child would learn from a master in a particular craft. Usually, the master was not apart of the immediate family, but had a definite role in helping with the rearing of the child. Assigned to, let's say, a master craftsman, the child would live with and work for the instructor for several
years until the young student could gain mastery over the skills being taught. During this
time, the child would learn a great deal from direct observation. Explicit instruction only
occurred when the expert feels the novice needs it. In some cases, observational learning
would be all that was needed. The expert represented more than a teacher. The novice
would watch the moral behavior, the character, and integrity of the expert and imitate it.
The teacher was and is the curriculum.

The apprenticeship epitomizes observational learning and is a powerful way to
ensure deep understanding in a given field. There was a young boy wanted to become a
drummer. His father sent him to a master drummer for an apprenticeship. The young boy
lived with the drummer for years and was never allowed to touch a drum. He could only
watch, listen, and learn. After three years, the expert drummer asked the apprentice, "why
are you here?" The young man said, "to learn to play the drum." The teacher told him to
take the drum and play. He played and the sound resonated with beauty. The master
drummer sent the boy home. No explicit teaching was needed in this case. The
experience of the apprenticeship exposed the boy to such great music over the three-year
period that he was ready to be a musician in his own right.\footnote{Healing Drum, 96.}

The location, or the where, of education does not matter as much as the how and
why. The education that you give to your children through homeschool or a homeschool
cooperative or private school can take place any and everywhere. We must not limit
ourselves to buildings and classrooms when knowledge is all around us. Our ancestors
read the book of nature and discovered things still unexplainable today and developed
wisdom that has stood the test of time.
For example, Geometry literally means to measure the earth. Our children can go outside to see, touch, and learn the ancient tongue of geometry. Plus, it is more natural for a child to learn through movement and exploration than sitting quietly in a classroom filled with twenty-nine other students and one overworked teacher with immense pressure to raise test scores and little pressure to actually teach for understanding.

When you homeschool, you must not recreate the industrial environment of traditional American schools. As Afrikan wisdom teaches, “the first step forward is to step back to tradition” and that tradition is ours, not other people. We must go back and assess how our Afrikan ancestors structured the education of their children. We must mine what works, polish our findings, and implement the jewels that they have left to us, the sons and daughters of Afrika.

Initially, Kamali Academy, then called BlackStar Educational Coop, started at my kitchen table. The two students who enrolled came to my home every morning and "did school." Often, we would move to the living room so that I could use the television to project my computer screen. In large part, it looked like a public school at home. We quickly saw the error of our ways and began to take class outside, down the street, to the park, in the library, at the grocery store, on a construction site, in a court house, at museums, and countless other places. We found that the new scenery engaged our students in academic subjects in a far more stimulating way than the kitchen table and the cheap, but effective imitation whiteboard we bought from Home Depot for ten dollars. After reading selected literature, we would sometimes take a walk and discuss the reading on our stroll. These "discussion strolls" seemed to help the students think deeper and more creatively about the subject matter. Molecular biologist John Medina argues that
regular exercise and movement boost brain power. "Exercise gets blood to your brain, bringing it glucose for energy and oxygen to soak up the toxic electrons that are left over," according to Medina. "It also stimulates the protein that keeps neurons connecting."\(^8\) In short, use movement as much as possible when facilitating learning. Modern classrooms, situated as they are, actually suppress brain growth.

In conclusion, do not be afraid to homeschool on the road, at the park, through correspondence, at Big Mama’s house, etc. The world provides a classroom far superior to any school building.

---

Question Four: What are the laws governing homeschool?

I am not a fan of any state regulations when it comes to educating our own children. I cannot think of one state that would sanction and condone the kind of revolutionary education our communities require to elevate us from the economic, educational, and mental pit we find ourselves in. Whether or not my state authorizes homeschooling would not stop me from educating my own child for liberation.

One of the most frequently asked questions about Kamali Academy is whether or not it is accredited. I usually respond with a question of my own, “accredited by who?” I know whom most of us seek validation from, so I let them know clearly that we do not seek confirmation from the state or any other European educational organization. I tell them that the parents accredit our school, our shule, our eko. Study our educational philosophy, study our cultural perspective, observe our classes, review the books we require our students to study from and be familiar with. After that, you will know whether or not you approve or accredit what we are doing. If not, then Kamali Academy is not the place for you.

How many schools hold accreditation from the state, yet fail to adequately educate our children year-in and year-out? I am afraid that would be too many to name. A recent study claims that over sixty percent of high school graduates entering four-year universities must take remedial classes their freshman year. Obviously, state approval, accreditation, and recognition fail to ensure that students will actually be ready for college. In truth, less than half of the Black students who enter this country’s accredited
schools at the ninth grade graduate from high school. Our young seeds are withering and dying in these approved schools. Some argue that the children are unmotivated and are simply not into schools. Booker T. Coleman, however, believes different. He says, “it’s not that Black children are not into school. It’s the school that is not into them.”

I know that taking on this endeavor can be frightening and nerve-wracking. I know many of you want to make sure that what you are doing is legal so that your children will not be hampered in the future. Here it is. Currently about two-thirds of the states have laws authorizing or regulating homeschooling. In the other states, homeschoolers may legally operate as a small private school. The details vary from state to state. Hslda.org is one of the most comprehensive websites on homeschool related laws. Overall, each state requires a family to file basic information with either their state or local education agency. Some states require more from homeschool families.

In Louisiana, for example, a parent must send an application to the state at the beginning of the school year notifying them that their child is now being homeschooled. At the end of each year, the state requires that the parent either send a standardized test score or a letter from a certified teacher saying that the child is on grade level and has been taught a curriculum equivalent to the child's level. Either one is required for renewal.

In Texas, however, homeschooling parents do not have to initiate contact with the school district, submit to home visits, have an approved curriculum or have any teacher certification. Homeschoolers need only to have a written curriculum and conducted it in a bona fide manner. They also do not require that the child take standardized tests.

Things are a bit different in Georgia, where they require that parents submit a
letter of intention to the local superintendent thirty days after the establishment of the homeschool and before September 1st in subsequent years. Each school day must consist of four-and-a-half hours of school time.

If the state only requires four hours, why are our children in school for seven to eight hours? One of the main reasons lay in the fact that the public and private school day is filled with a lot fluff: calling roll, switching classes, class disruptions, etc. Education surely happens all day at home, but this demonstrates that we do not have adhere to someone else’s time clock to teach our children what they need to know. I know of some homeschool families who homeschool from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.. Others get it done in the morning from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and reserve the rest of the day for personal reading, library visits, field trips, chores, movies or documentaries, and developing or maintaining businesses.

In addition, Georgia requires that parents keep attendance records and send them to the local superintendent each month to ensure that the child is indeed receiving an education. Georgia also requires that homeschool children take standardized tests every three years starting at the end of the third grade and the scores must be kept on file by the parents.

In the state of North Carolina, parents must operate their home study program for at least nine months and notify the State Director of the Division of Non-Public Education of their intent before commencing with homeschooling. Parents must also keep attendance records and administer a standardized test to their child once a year. The testing information must be made available to a “duly authorized representative” of the state of North Carolina for annual inspection. This representative can only inspect the test
scores and nothing else.

It is up to you whether or not you adhere to the guidelines set forth by various states. The only thing that truly matters is that you give your children as education for liberation.
Question Five: What are the costs of homeschooling?

The costs of homeschooling are cheaper than most people think. When you take into consideration the fact that you won't be spending as much money on gas and transportation or on work clothes and lunches out, you begin to see that you can actually save money by homeschooling. Not to mention that you won't have the expensive childcare costs that are rising all over the country. Also, if you're homeschooling, your child will not have to deal with all the materialistic pressure from their friends to buy into all the new fads. This is an important consideration because peer groups, unfortunately, often influence the child most than the parents.

You can also save money by buying a used car instead of a new car and maybe even bartering with people in your community for certain resources.

You can certainly make homeschooling work on a budget. Frankly, no matter the cost, our children deserve an education that taps into their genius and not just make them a surrogate carrier of other people’s ideas.

Homeschooling can be expensive if you allow it to be, however. Homeschooling costs add up when parents constantly look outside themselves for curriculum materials, software, and website subscriptions. Companies will gladly sell you their ideas of what you should be doing with your child, but our mindset must change. You know your child better than anyone else. Trust yourself.

I can understand the desire to find step-by-step instructions to make this journey easier and less stressful. In fact, I recently read a story that illustrates this consumer
mindset perfectly. The writer argues that instead of teaching a person to fish, just give them the fish. That is what they want. He gives a scenario where a woman goes to a nice restaurant on a Friday to unwind from a long week. When the server takes her order, she orders the salmon with all the trimmings. The server then went away. Ten minutes later, the chef came to the table with an extra apron and invited the lady to the kitchen so that she could learn how to make her own salmon with all the trimmings. She was taken aback. She just wanted to relax and eat, not work.

The mindset of simply receiving the fish is great for businesses that sell fish because they will always have customers. But that mindset stinks for a people who are the ultimate consumers and produce nothing. We must find the time and esteem to create our own materials and curriculum. Catch your own fish. Save your dollars.
Question Six: What educational materials/resources are available?

Educational resources abound for homeschoolers. At Kamali Academy, we use number of websites: Khan Academy (www.KhanAcademy.com), which is great for Mathematics and Science and they are adding all kinds of subjects everyday. CK12.org offers free online science textbooks that are pretty good. Thatquiz.com is also a very good resource to help our children with geography, math practice, and science as well. For a complete curriculum, although not Afrikan-centered, go to http://allinonehomeschool.wordpress.com.

If you want your child to have a solid understanding of who they are, I would suggest you get a textbook by the name of African-American History: A Journey of Liberation by Molefi Asante. It is simply the best textbook I have seen on Ourstory. That is, of course, until we finish our line of textbooks that will be available on ipad in the near furture. Look out for that. :) Also, check out CIBI.org for leads on where to find resources that speak to our heritage.

Honesty, resources abound for homeschoolers. Google it. But it is unfortunate that there are not many educational resources that are geared towards Afrikan people. We must create them and we are in the process of that now. Stay tuned to www.SamoriCamara.com and www.KamaliAcademy.com for the latest.
Question Seven: What kind of curriculum should I use?

When it comes to curriculum, I like to start with a question that Amos Wilson asked, "What kind of Afrikans do we need to solve the kinds of problems we have?" This question centers my thoughts powerfully. It helps me to hone in on the skills and abilities our children must possess to in order for their education to truly be an education for liberation. This question does not allow our minds to fall back on European notions of education and forces us to stay true to ourselves and our plight.

Many of our answers to this question will vary, because we all have differing thoughts on what we should pull out of our students. However, I am sure we will have many elements in common. I usually answer the question in this way. We need Afrikans who know themselves, who love themselves, who can read well, who understands that Afrikan people taught the world mathematics, science, astronomy, and other important elements of civilization, and with that understanding study our ancestors and modern knowledge to ultimately create new knowledge about the world. We need Afrikans who know how to build businesses and romantic relationships with other Afrikans in order to pool our resources for nationbuilding, who understand and practice Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, and Ujamaa. We need Afrikans who remember their Nia or purpose. One without purpose has no direction and easily swayed by the blowing wind. Afrikan wisdom teaches that, "if you don't know where you are going, any road will do."

Once we understand what kind of Afrikans we need and why, then we get into how are we to teach so that our children embody those traits. Some call it pedagogy.
In order to truly give our children an Afrikan-centered education, we must rid ourselves of the notion that standardized education is a desirable goal to achieve. We do not need standardization. We need Afrikanization and customization. A standard implies a norm and a norm is a standard behavior pattern sanctioned by a given society. If we are honest with ourselves, we can see that in this American society it is the norm for Afrikan people to exhibit self-hating behavior and to generally be totally culturally misoriented in our approach to life. To educate our own simply to fit the "standard" will only maintain a status quo that is very comfortable with the Black man and woman as educated servants of others and owners of nothing.

Following the American standard will not help Afrikan children achieve all their genius will allow. The American public and private fool (school) system finds itself 18th in the world in education. To be sure, it has never been number one, despite what those with a falsified memory would like to believe. What America needs is not what Afrikan people need. America needs to educate its young so that it can maintain some semblance of power. Afrikan people need to educate its young to take and be, as John Henrik Clarke teaches us, responsible handlers of power. Your curriculum is your road map. It keeps you on track and headed in the right direction. The word curriculum is a Latin word that means a "running course" for chariots. In developing curriculum, we must find what educational course we want our children to run and where we want their finish line to be. The curriculum is the "what" of education. Parents who homeschool have a powerful role in that they set the parameters of what should be known by their children. Again, it is best to develop our own ideas about what is worth knowing for Afrikan children.

There was a woman who was headed home from work; however, it was so rainy
and foggy that she could not see very far in front of the car. To her surprise, she could make out the tail lights from another car. She decided to follow that car for a little while and allow that person to do all the work, all the navigating, and all the squinting. She was content to just follow. After about twenty minutes went by, the car she was following abruptly stopped and she collided into the back of it. She was pissed. She stormed out of car and yelled, "why didn't you signal before you stopped?" The driver of the lead car, said, "why should I? I'm in my garage."

We have too often been blindly following other people's ideas through the fog of this life into their garage, into where they want us to be, going by their values, going by their way. The standard, Eurocentric curriculum represents someone else's values and way, so we must develop our own path that leads to the mental, physical, spiritual, and economic liberation of our children and those unborn.

When we develop our own curriculums for different subjects, there are several elements we certainly want to include: essential understandings, essential questions, performance tasks, other evidence, and learning activities. The first element is the essential understandings you want your child to come away with after taking that class. These understandings are what you want the student to remember after the details have faded. For example, the essential understandings for an African-American Literature class I developed were as follow: (1) African-American Literature deals with diverse issues and spans the gamut of genres. (2) African-American writers had varying degrees of consciousness. (3) African-American Literature is classic literature. (4) African-American writers used their writings to advance the plight of Black people. (5) African-
American Literature is not simply about entertainment.\(^9\) To be sure, developing a curriculum before you start, which has a beginning and a revolutionary end denotes only one way to establish a program of study.

Another way is to simply allow the child to lead. Our children learn naturally. They desire to learn. They need not outside motivation. It is the school system that has effectively zapped the motivation to learn in many of our children, but the urge quietly lies dormant until we provide the conditions that enable it to flourish. I heard an interesting story about Death Valley in California. It is one of the driest places in North America. Because it only gets two inches of rain per year, nothing really grows there. However, something peculiar happened in the winter of 2004 and 2005. Death Valley received seven inches of rain. When the spring came, beautiful flowers covered the floor of the valley. Visitors came from across the country to witness the rare occurrence.

As spring faded into summer, the flowers withered back below the ground awaiting the next rains. It has not happened since. However, the flowers in Death Valley prove that given the right environment, things can grow even in the driest of places. It is the same for humans. We respond to our environment or the conditions that surround us. For decades, psychologists have known the importance of environment upon the way we behave and think. It is also clear that the consequences of behavior affect whether we continue or discontinue the behavior. Conventional wisdom tells us that a group will do what they must to ensure their survival. If there is a behavior within that culture that threatens their survival, the culture adapts and discontinues that behavior. Developing our own curriculums and environments by homeschooling can provide the right conditions

\(^9\) A form at the back of the book explains each element.
for our children to flourish. A relevant curriculum will motivate and elevate a student quicker than other educational interventions. A relevant curriculum directly answers the question, why am I learning this? A relevant curriculum puts the child into the picture. For instance, if someone gave you a picture that did not include you, you would probably take a quick look at the picture and pass back to whoever gave it to you. But, if you are given a picture that includes yourself, you take a longer look. You note the way you look, your clothes, and your surroundings. That picture may bring back good or bad memories, but either way, you are interested. You may put this up in your room or even frame it. It is the same way with curriculum. If our children are not in the picture, meaning the curriculum does not include their interest, their culture, or their history, then that curriculum fails to keep their attention.

Have you ever received a notification that someone had tagged you in a picture on facebook only to visit the site and find out that you are not actually in the picture? How did you feel? You probably wondered why they would tag you. You maybe even thought about “unfriending” that person. On the flipside, if you receive that same notification and you are in the picture, you definitely take notice. You check yourself out and maybe get that picture the honor of being your profile picture. That is the power of putting our children in the picture and into the curriculum.

What does it do for a child to only learn of the great deeds of other cultures and people? We must find ways to make their education as relevant as possible. That is not to say that the education should only be practical. It must be highly practical, but it should also be guided by an Afrikan philosophy and theory. Amos Wilson teaches us that there is nothing more valuable than a good theory. It guides your thoughts, attitude, behavior,
and outcomes. The Honorable Marcus Garvey provided us with a profound, but simple philosophy that should lead all of our actions: Race First.

In his excellent book, *Nationbuilding: The Theory and Practice of Afrikan Centered Education*, Kwame Agyei Akoto uses his decades of educational experience to outline some of the core elements that should be apart of any Afrikan-centered curriculum. The elements are as follow:

- **Spiritual Awareness**: To transmit the knowledge of Afrikan spiritual tradition and develop an appreciation for tradition and the ability to apply the major principles to self, family and community.

- **Moral Consciousness**: To foster an understanding and willingness to be guided by those principles that characterize the righteous and just person.

- **Family as Basic Spiritual and Moral Unit**: To develop an understanding and appreciation for the dynamics affecting the Afrikan family and to recognize its centrality to the Afrikan nationality, and work to revitalize it.

- **Self Knowledge/Practice**: To facilitate the achievement of total knowledge of self as a unique extension of the collective, defined by the collective and committed to the collective.

- **Ancestral Veneration**: To facilitate the acquisition and valuing of the wisdom of the ancestors and to foster a commitment to restore their works and make those works even better than before.

- **Afrikan Origin of the Human Species**: To develop and inform a complete and more comprehensive historical consciousness, from antiquity to the contemporary, that will be the basis of Afrikan unity and development.
• **Afrikan Cultural Unity**: To develop an appreciation of the need to foster cultural and political unity among all Afrikan people, and to commit oneself to that task.

• **Beauty and Aesthetics**: To foster the development of a sense of the beautiful and righteous that is Afrikan centered.

• **White supremacy and Racism**: To develop an awareness and sensitivity to the dynamics of white supremacy; to facilitate the development of personal and collective strategies to counteract the effects of racism/white supremacy.

• **Political and Economic Unity**: To instill a commitment to developing Pan Afrikan cultural, political and economic unity and cooperation.

• **Coequality of Women and Men**: To develop a sensitivity and commitment to eliminate any behaviors typical of sexism or sexual exploitation.

The children who learn and practice these precepts will be equipped with the tools to bring Afrikan people back to our original glory. This does not call for every Afrikan-centered school to look the same. However, they should feel the same and produce a similar product: an Afrikan warrior scholar ready to work for our community and battle our enemies on whatever front they may come against us. To illustrate, think of all the Chinese fast food restaurants in your city. They may have different names, different cooks, and different languages, but you know that all of them have similar meals and use similar ingredients to provide you with the typical Chinese flavor and quality. Like those restaurants, our schools must not be carbon copies of each other. Our schools should meet the needs of their communities while using the same basic Afrikan-centered ingredients that foster our intellectual, spiritual, and physical liberation no matter where we are on the planet.
To be sure, your paper and pencil curriculum is important, but the teacher as curriculum is much more important. There is a saying that, "children do a horrible job of listening to what their parents say and a great job listening to what their parents do." In order to have a truly Afrikan-centered curriculum, the parent, facilitator, coach, or teacher must have or be in the process of gaining a thorough knowledge of Afrikan culture, philosophy, and history. Not only must they have the knowledge, but they also must practice their knowledge in everyday existence. According to Akoto, "the mwali [teacher] must not only be involved in the study of the culture, but must be involved in a concrete and ongoing way with advancing the cultural and/or political interests of Afrikan people."\(^{10}\) If the teacher does not practice what he or she preaches, the students usually note the contradiction and may take the Afrikan-centered education less seriously. So if we are teaching the Nguzo Saba, the seven principles of Kwanzaa, we must consciously practice Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). Certainly, it is not easy, but you are already taking steps towards Kujichagulia by even considering taking your children's minds out of the system and educating them yourself. "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

As you develop your curriculum, be sure to continue to develop yourself, so that you can be a walking embodiment of what it means to be an Afrikan. In addition, strive to become as self-determining as possible. Nothing will educate children better.

www.KamaliAcademy.com/curriculum

---

\(^{10}\) Akoto, Nationbuilding, 99.
Question Eight: How is one person supposed to be an expert in everything?

It is a valid question, but the answer is simple: you don’t. You do not have to teach everything. You are there to facilitate the growth of your child. Your child loves to learn, so your major duty is to find resources for that learning and provide motivation if the love weans.

To homeschool, you do not have to be an expert in anything. You are there to help your child learn and discover their purpose. If you do not know something, be willing to go and learn it. In fact, a great bonding experience is to learn together. However, to do this, you must be curious yourself. This past year I was teaching my 9 year-olds about stem and leaf plots. Before the lesson, I had to go and learn about this concept because, honestly, I had never heard of it.

Think of yourself as a coach. Coaches are not the best athletes. They help motivate their players and provide resources and support. If a coach can't dribble, that doesn't mean the coach can't help a player have the best handles. Daniel Coyle tells us that parents must notice what fascinates the child, provide time and encouragement for deep practice, and get them master coaching in a given field. The good news is that master coaches are all around us.

Get rid of the thought that you have to be the only one who teaches your child. Your social circle and community represent a hotbed of talents and abilities. Remember, it takes a village to raise a child. If Math was not your favorite subject in school, look to
your accountant friend or the friend who is good with numbers for help. That friend could
teach your child once a week and provide practice and review for the rest of the week. If
you would like your child to learn to build things, the local carpenter would probably
jump the chance to teach, but also have a helping hand. Recently I met a woman who
makes soap. I thought to myself, "it would be cool if the students learned how to make
their own soap." Not only does it help with Kamali Academy's nation building and self-
determination focus, but the students would learn a serious, practical chemistry lesson.
By the end of the fall, we will all be soap makers. Lookout for my new line called the
“Bubbles of Love Collection.”

One way to meet the educational needs of your child is to join or develop a
homeschooling co-op. A homeschooling co-op brings individual homeschooling families
in a given area into a group, which works towards common educational goals for their
children through classes, field trips, and other activities. Since it is a cooperative, every
parent is expected to help with the education of the children or pay a fee to the group if
they cannot play an active role. Co-ops usually meet once a week, but you can certainly
be flexible and meet greater or fewer times. Some co-ops meet once or twice a week for
the whole day or only a few hours, others meet monthly or bimonthly. Find out what
works best for your crew.

Before you start or join a co-op, be clear on the mission and philosophy of the
group. Most homeschooling cooperatives I know of are religion-based operations. If that
is not your cup of tea, keep looking. Be sure to find or develop a group that has an
Afrikan-centered vision. To do otherwise, will undermine your effort to liberate the
minds of your children. If you are going to start a co-op, make sure you have a
membership packet so that potential members understand what your group plans to achieve. By doing this, you will not have to deal with unwanted teachers or influences on your children.

Next, after finding those like-minded individuals, find out what classes they could teach when the co-op meets. Classes could range from Math and Science to Art and Martial Arts. Do not limit yourself or your group. Some classes Kamali Academy has had have been Rites of Passage, Kemetic Yoga, Music making, Afrikan drumming, Self-Defense, Art, etc.

Once you have the classes, find a location that is inexpensive or free for the classes. The library, community center, or a member's home are all possibilities. Again, the world is our classroom. So, the park or the backyard is as good a place as any. Also, set a time for arrival and dismissal. For example, one brother teaches Math at 10 a.m. and a sister teaches science at 11 a.m. and so on. Use Kuumba when developing your classes and schedule, and always stay flexible. One of the reasons many of us start homeschooling is for the freedom it provides for us and our children.

Now, it is time to get started. You have the parents, the classes, and the location, all you need to do is meet and provide an education for liberation for your children. Your co-op may be small in the beginning, but it will surely grow as more parents pull their children out of the public fool system.

Homeschooling co-ops boast many benefits. One of the main benefits is socialization. We have already dealt with the difference between socializing and socialization earlier in the book to debunk the myth that homeschool children are unsocialized and isolated. However, being a part of a homeschool co-op helps you to
continue socializing your child in a positive way. Children get the chance to be around like-minded children and adults who reinforce the values you are instilling in the home. We cannot say the same for public school. Co-ops, also, offer the possibilities for various competitive events that drive some students to greater achievement.

In addition to socializing, children and parents can make friends within the cooperative. Children gravitate towards other children who share similar interest and so do parents. I have developed lifelong friendships with some parents who have joined the Kamali Academy family.

Learning from different teachers with unique abilities and interests helps children immensely. For one, Mom and Dad are not the only people keeping the child accountable. For two, maybe another teacher can teach a subject in a way that engages the child in a way that you could not. It teaches the child how to deal with different personalities and expectations. It also gives the child another role model or jegna (mentor) outside the family. For some of the single mothers who send their children to Kamali Academy, I am expected to be a father figure. I love the role.

Another benefit revolves around the encouragement homeschooling families receive when they are a part of co-ops. You know you are not alone in trying to shield your child from the miseducation and cultural misorientation rampant in the schools. Many more parents would homeschool if they knew they had the support of a homeschool co-op. Fellowship with other parents, the friendships your children make, and shared responsibility all serve to help you continue teaching your child for liberation and not subornation.

Homeschooling co-ops are also great for field trips. You can get group rates for
field trips and it allows more time for bonding among the students. To be sure, the benefits of joining or developing a homeschool cooperative are many. I am sure when you start your own, you will discover many more.
Question Nine: Will my child be able to go to college?

Yes, your child will be able to attend college after graduating from your homeschool. Homeschoolers have a higher college attendance rate than their public school counterparts. Recently, we have seen several examples in the media Black children at the ages of 12, 13, 14, and 15 going to college and excelling. Most are the products of homeschooling. The public schools would not allow them to accelerate in their growth the way homeschooling did.

Many colleges have admission officers who are totally dedicated to reviewing homeschool applications. North Carolina law mandates that university policy must “not arbitrarily differentiate between applicants based upon whether the applicant attended a public or a lawfully operated nonpublic school.” In addition, homeschool students usually pick up college credits at community colleges in the later years of homeschooling. Three of my students took the History and English classes I taught at a local community college.

In financial terms, homeschoolers fill out the same financial aid forms as other students. Frankly, colleges want to see what your child has learned. They want to know if your child is ready for college level work.

To find more information about your state’s home study laws, go to hslda.org. The site is constantly updated as new laws are passed across the country.
**Question Ten: How much time should I devote or what should the schedule look like?**

The schedule in your homeschool should not mirror the schedule of the public and private schools. You make your own schedule. Get to know your child. Is your child a morning person or an afternoon person? Do you have time in the evening? Do not believe you have to teach from 8am to 3pm. Homeschooling your child eliminates all the fluff of public schools. Public and private schools waste time calling roll, dealing with disciplinary issues, moving from one class to another, etc. Compared with the hours students are in school, "time on task" is very low. Think of it this way. Imagine bringing your child to see the doctor. You wait about an hour in the lobby only to spend about six minutes with the doctor. The same dynamic happens in the schools everyday. A whole lot of waiting and not much learning or individual attention.

Home-schooled children can get their work done in about 3 or 4 hours a day. Plus, if your child is having a great time learning about the wisdom of West Africa or how to build planes it would be rude to stop her because it is time for Language Arts. When that spark of curiosity is there, allow it to be satisfied. There is an Afrikan proverb that says, "If you want to know how fast a child can go, send them where they want to go." Our children learn best when they are interested in the topic or concept.

Whereas it is good to have some structure, overdoing it can defeat the purpose. We must allow our children the freedom to discover and pursue their passions. On the back end, however, we must find a way to incorporate and teach various subjects through
their interests. In this way, the child can learn about something they are interested in while gaining skills in other subjects simultaneously. Listen to your child's interests and structure your time and curriculum around that. Teach her writing by having her write about her interest. Teach him Math by delving into the mathematical elements of the sports he enjoys. At Kamali Academy, we try to tap into why the student feels she or he is alive. We inquire about their purpose in life. We asked one student and he said he wanted to make video games. After thinking about it for a few days, I vowed to get him the best books on video game design and teach him through his interest. But before I could set up any lessons, he delved into the reading of the design books and then, anthropology books, and then Mathematical concepts and Afrikan spiritually, and then, Ourstory, because he wanted to create a game based around Native Americans and Afrikans defending their homelands from European and Arab invaders. Throughout the plot of the game, he incorporated terms and concepts indigenous to Native American and Afrikan culture. In a word, we were proud. His interests took him on an adventure that taught him more than we could have.

For this brother, most of the activities revolved around video game design, but the day was not so narrow. We found a rhythm with this particular student where we worked on the video game in the morning and engaged other activities in the afternoon.

With the acceleration of educational technology, education has expanded tremendously. The addition of online classes, web 2.0, and websites like google and wikipedia open the channels of knowledge for all those who seek it. With an Internet-enabled phone or computer, one has at their fingertips the accumulated wisdom of the ages. Soon, most textbooks of the world will be stored in a device that can fit in your
pocket. Many universities already post its classes online for public consumption. The human interaction suffers in this cyber environment, but using these resources can help parents and teachers successfully homeschool their children and students. Indeed, it is not what our ancestors did. Sure, face to face contact remains the best way to facilitate a child's educational growth. However, online education can be Afrikan-centered and bring that perspective to places where Afrikan-centered individuals are isolated or where brick and mortar schools are not available. An Afrikan-centered approach to education has been and will need to continue to be flexible and creative. Again, the purpose, curriculum, and delivery of the education are infinitely more important than the location. Remember, the world is our classroom and we can make our own schedule. "We do not look at another man's clock in order to work." Take heed of this Afrikan wisdom.
Question Eleven: What about socialization?

I'd rather civilization than socialization any day. First of all, there is a difference between socializing and socialization. Socializing is about talking, playing, and interacting with other children and people. That does not only happen at school. In truth, it does not happen that often in schools. Most schools do not allow students to talk and interact with each other in classes. Some schools require that student remain quiet at lunch. You know Black folk socialize over food.

Socialization, on the other hand, means to make one behave in a way that is acceptable to their society. Socialization deals chiefly with the transference of culture and values. The only "appropriate" way for Afrikans to behave in this society is to be servants of others. The only “values” celebrated in the public fool system are European in nature and against our traditional Afrikan ways. Homeschooling your children allows you to introduce and promote your family's values, culture, and morals instead of you trying to undo the eurocentric programming of the schools. In truth, you really don't know how your child is being "socialized" at school or what they are being introduced to as they walk the halls.

Schools are not the real world. Never again will a person be around people of the same age or within one or two years only. Homeschoolers interact with a wide variety of people of diverse ages and interests. Homeschooled children, also, take part in field trips, sports teams, and other activities that bring them into constant contact with the real world. The artificial environment of schools pales in comparison.
Question Twelve: How will they learn to navigate a eurocentric or diverse society?

Often people shun Afrikan-centered education because they wonder how their children will be able to work or interact with those of other races. The simple answer is that our children will deal with anyone from a position of power, not dependence. The education we presently pursue teaches our young ones to be subservient to others, to bow to others, to become what others want as opposed to what we need. Our self-esteem is tied to how well Europeans treat us as if pleasing them remains our only occupation. Children taught from an Afrikan perspective, who are centered in their own cultural values, morés, and wisdom deal with the world from a position of strength. Instead of adapting to someone else’s anti-Afrikan worldview, they live their own. Instead of searching for the field that Europeans are hiring in, they pursue the purpose born within them. They ask no permission to be themselves. They understand that to be otherwise is to be fake and dishonored in the eyes of our ancestors and those yet to come.

Think of it this way: in most major cities across the country, one can find a "Chinatown." In these neighborhoods or business districts, the Asian owns the vast majority of enterprises, celebrates his culture, and speaks his language unapologetically. Others come to them for needed services; others adjust to who they are. In short, they deal with the world from a position of power. They do not ask for or demand respect, it just is, because they are grounded and are not looking for a "people of color" coalition. While not running many politicians for public office, they run the their part of the city by
employing the concept of self-determination.

That Kujichagulia, that self-determination represents the bedrock of Afrikan-centered education. If after being immersed in an Afrikan-centered learning environment, after being introduced to and studying the wisdom of our ancestors, our children are not mentally, spiritually, and physically prepared to take back their communities and join the fight for Pan-Afrikan liberation, we have failed. Again, our education must be an education for liberation. Anything less only serves the status quo, only serves to keep our minds in the dark, our feet moving to the drum beat of oppression, our lips speaking that which is poisonous to our spirit, our ears "taking lies for truth and truth for lies," and our eyes blinded to the epic vision of Afrika's redemption.

Granted, being taught from an Afrikan-centered perspective will not make us free automatically. Yet, without it, our likelihood of getting free is very low. An Afrikan-centered education by itself will not provide a roof over our head, food on the table, and clothes on our back. However, having an Afrikan-centered education increases the likelihood that one will find a way to build a house, grow her own food, and sew her own clothes. An Afrikan-centered education does not guarantee that one will build businesses that serve the community, but it makes it more likely that one will acquire the necessary skills to build businesses and create jobs. An Afrikan-centered education does not solve all of our problems, but it increases the likelihood that will we consider viable solutions and work towards their implementation. It is known that a "mind does not struggle for that which it regards as impossible or undesirable."11 Afrikan-centered education makes our liberation possible. It makes our freedom desirable. It makes it something to work for

11 Nathaniel Branden, *Six Pillars of Self-Esteem.*
and not shun.

If we give them the proper education, our children will walk tall among any men.

If we give them the proper education, our children will have no time to hate, because they are too busy with the work of liberation.
Question Thirteen: Do they have to take standardized tests?

That depends on your state. In Louisiana, a parent can simply have a certified teacher write a letter to the state saying that the child is on grade level and has been through an appropriate curriculum.

Standardized testing, in reality, fails to measure the intellectual capabilities of our children. It does not measure whether or not our children are curious or inquisitive, which are the hallmarks of wisdom. It does not measure whether or not our children have self-awareness, possess tenacity and stick-to-it-iveness. It does not measure whether or not our children can solve the real-life problems that will face them. Real-life does not have a bubble sheet.

The teaching for the test model rampant in public and private schools leads our children to learn something only until they are required to regurgitate it on a test then they forget it. You do not want your child to ask, "is this going to be on the test?" All the students who asked me that question from middle school to college were clearly no longer interested in learning and growing. They were conditioned into laziness and only wanted the answer.

The proliferation of standardized testing pushes many parents into the ranks of homeschooling. Many of us are simply tired of the “high-stakes” talk in the schools. We know that standardized tests cannot and will not measure the competencies that we need our children to have. The focus on basic skills has not lifted America from the bottom of the educational world and will not lift us beyond the position we currently find ourselves
in. Moreover, the standardized tests zap the motivation of many students who do not see raising test scores for their district as a valuable goal. Indeed, the pursuit of testing goals encourages a disdain for learning instead of stoking a fire for knowledge.

The most recent push for standardized testing stems from the election of George W. Bush in 2000. Bush, a Republican, passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in January of 2002. Many teachers call it NCLU (No Child Left Untested). The features of NCLB include:

1. All states were expected to choose their own tests, adopt three performance levels (such as basic, proficient, and advanced), and decide for themselves how to define “proficiency.”

2. All public schools receiving federal funding were required to test all students in grades three through eight annually and once in high school in reading and mathematics and to disaggregate (i.e., separate) their scores by race, ethnicity, low-income status, disability status, and limited English proficiency. Disaggregation of scores would ensure that every group’s progress was monitored, not hidden in an overall average.

3. All states were required to establish timelines showing how 100 percent of their students would reach proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2013-2014.

4. All schools and school districts were expected to make “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) for every subgroup toward the goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2013-2014.

5. Any school that did not make adequate progress for every subgroup toward the goal of 100 percent proficiency would be labeled a school in need of improvement.
(SINI). It would face a series of increasingly onerous sanctions.

6. Schools that were required to restructure had five options: convert to a charter school; replace the principal and staff; relinquish control to private management; turn over control of the school to the state; or “any other major restructuring of the school’s governance.” (Most states and districts ended up choosing the last, most ambiguous alternative, hoping to avoid the other prospects.)

7. NCLB required all states to participate in the federal National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which would henceforth test reading and mathematics in grades four and eight in every state every other year (before NCLB, state participation in NAEP was voluntary, and some states did not participate; also, the NAEP reading and math tests were not administered every other year). The NAEP scores, which had no consequences for any student or school or district, served as an external audit to monitor the progress of the states in meeting their goals.¹²

States scrambled to meet these mandates with more standardized testing and actually left too many Afrikan children behind. In their scramble, states reformed school systems so that test scores are the only measure of quality in schools. Federal dollars pour into districts that meet the grade. If students do not pass state tests at a high enough rate, punishment comes swift. How can our children be truly educated in an environment that places all the emphasis on what one does on one test during the year?

School officials claim that standardized tests are a cheap way to measure the

effectiveness of classroom instruction, keep classroom teachers accountable, and help students know where they stand among their peers. Standardized tests are indeed a cheap assessment that makes millions for testing companies, but the damage they do to the curriculum is far more expensive. These conventional, Eurocentric tests cannot adequately measure the intellectual capabilities of our children.

More and more districts use standardized test scores to determine whether or not teachers will be fired, rewarded, or given pay raises. It is thought that using tests in this way will improve teaching and test scores. Proponents argue that accountability is common in other jobs and that test scores can help teachers tailor their instruction to their students' needs instead of thrashing in the dark. In the last few years, however, the merit system has not worked. Teachers, knowing that their job or raise depends on how well their students do on standardized tests, resort to cheating. Some teachers have been accused of giving students the answers to the test prior to the exam date. Others would stand over their students until they pointed to the correct answer. The pay-for-performance system implemented across the country fails to motivate teachers and students. Instead, it places more pressure on already worn shoulders.\(^{13}\)

The undue emphasis on testing narrows the curriculum tremendously. In order to meet testing goals, schools focus most of the instructional time on Reading and Mathematics. Indeed, these subjects are important. We want our children to read, write, and do math well. But focusing on those classes at the expense of History, Science, Art, Music, etc. leaves a huge chasm in the education of any child. When schools who push testing do cover these subjects, they only deal with the subject in a surface manner, which

deprives the child of a well-rounded educational experience. In truth, the subjects complement each other. Learning, reading, and understanding the great stories of our history help with reading comprehension and using the logic involved with Science contributes to better grades in Math.

When test-taking strategies rule the day, the beauty of education loses its luster for anyone. Learning how to bubble in answers hardly counts for education. Learning how to spot the wrong answer does not say I know anything. Many schools train its students by using old versions of the big test, so some students become very proficient at answering questions on a particular kind of test. Give them the same content in a different format and many are lost. If one cannot adapt knowledge for use in diverse circumstances, does one really know the topic? Proponents of testing say students need to be familiar with the terrain in order to increase their comfort level. The point is well-taken, but if preparation for one terrain fails to help me in another environment, the skills are too narrow. Our children must have revolutionary expertise, not mastery of a bubble sheet.

Not only does over-testing lead schools to push aside other academic subjects that are not tested, including recess, it teaches our children several lessons we would like them not to learn. The test-focused nature of schools teach our children that thinking matters little. What matters is whether or not you got the right answer and that right answer is indisputable. In reality, rarely are problems solved with one neat answer. Instead, complexity exudes from the problems we face. Our children must understand that multiple solutions can be applied. We must try our proposed solutions. If they work, good. If they do not, we try something new. Our children must understand that for every problem or challenge we face, there exist various potential solutions to evaluate, unlike
standardized tests, which offer sterile options.

Over testing also teaches our children that getting a high score represents the pinnacle of learning. Many of us know people who are smart dummies, who received good grades and high scores in academic subjects, but are easily used by others against their communities. Amos Wilson, as said earlier, taught that the purpose of education is "to secure the survival of a people." Fighting for good scores mean little if our communities continue to rot with the stink of miseducation and cultural misorientation, which leads to all manner of self-hatred.

Speaking of self-hatred, what happens to those students who do not pass these tests? The self-esteem of many of these students plummets in the days following the bad news. Because of the testing push, many students have their self-worth tied to the numbers they receive on standardized assessments. At Capitol Middle where I taught in 2004 and 2005, several eighth grade girls came to my classroom crying. They had just taken the eighth grade L.E.A.P. test and were afraid that if they did not score well, their futures would be ruined. These were thirteen year-old, good students, worried to tears about how one test could affect their lives. All of them passed their classes, but if they failed the state test, they would have to repeat the eighth grade. Our children do not deserve that kind of pain. Certainly, the world outside the school is not easy. There will be pain and pressure, for sure. But no longer can we send our children into places that value only one type of intelligence. No longer can we allow school to insinuate to our children that they are not smart because they did not pass a Eurocentric exam. Enough.

Another lesson taught by standardized tests is that after it is taken, nothing else matters. Teachers complain constantly that after testing, students shutdown, indeed the
school shuts down. Our children understand that if we have prepped for this test all year, then, everything we have learned was for the test. Once they make that observation, students ask teachers across the country, "Is this going to be on the test?" When that question takes root, know that the flower of learning is likely dying. Students who only care about the test (because of the testing culture of the public fools system) fail to gain from education what is needed: knowledge that can be used to serve our community. We must not blame them, however. We must build educational environments that values sacred knowledge, not test scores.

I can hear some people asking, “if we do not take part in standardized testing, how will we know our children are learning what they need to learn in the time they need to learn it?” In order to decipher whether or not your child is learning, watch them. Curiosity is foundational for learning. Notice if your child asks questions about the subjects she studies or if she simply attempts to get the right answer and a good grade. In traditional schools, grades fail to tell the whole story about student learning. Two students can receive As in a class but differ greatly in learning. For example, one student received an A in Astronomy class and after the final exam never wants to see another star in his life. Another student received an A in the same class and asks the teacher for additional resources to help with his study of the subject. Who do you think will actually retain the information learned in that class? Interest and curiosity beats rote memorization everyday. Even if the second student received a C in the class, as a teacher, I know whom I would love to teach. I look for the love of learning and an ability to read with fluency and comprehension. I am a firm believer that if the student possesses those two essentials, he can learn anything. Without a love of learning and an ability to read critically,
everything will be a challenge.

If you want to assess your child's learning, provide them with performance tasks and projects that allow them to use, in context, the understandings (over standings), skills, and abilities you have helped them develop. First and foremost, the assessment must be contextualized. Too often schools give our children decontextualized problems and assessment that have little application outside the classroom setting. Can we evaluate a healer simply by her ability to recognize medicinal plants and trees in the wild; or do we evaluate her on those skills and her ability to pick the right plant for the right ailment, to prepare the plants correctly, and so on? Can we evaluate a young basketball player simply on his knowledge of the rules and plays? Can we evaluate a potential leader in our community only on his pleasant sounding rhetoric? Could Afrikan societies evaluate whether or not a boy has indeed become a man by simply asking him to recite his ethnic group's history? Absolutely not. In every case, we would demand that the person in question show us the level of their understanding in a real situation, particularly when they face less than ideal circumstances. In other words, we have to put our children into the game and let them demonstrate their skills and abilities when the lights are on.

School systems use conventional questions: fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, etc, because they save time and money. These questions, however, are not real performance. Imagine sewing a pocket over and over without ever having the chance to sew an entire shirt. Your pocket sewing skills would certainly grow, but who cares if you cannot apply that to a whole shirt. Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, in their book *The Understanding by Design Handbook*, outline the contours of authentic assessment tasks. They argue that authentic assessments are "realistic, require judgment and innovation, ask a student to
‘do’ the subject, simulate the context in which an adult is tested in the workplace, community, and home, assess a student's ability to use their knowledge and skills to complete a complex task, and allow opportunities to practice and consult resources in order to refine performances or products” (140). In short, we must look for real situations and problems and allow our children to use their knowledge, skills, and Kuumba to develop solutions. Learning for learning’s sake has to stop. We are developing the next generation of Afrikan Warrior Scholars who will have to use their mental capacities to better our communities.

Here are a few examples of performance tasks we have used for our students at Kamali Academy. In a unit on the Honorable Marcus Garvey, we had the students write a letter seeking employment with Garvey's *Negro World* newspaper. They took on the persona of a U.N.I.A. member committed to the redemption of Afrika. In this performance task, students used their knowledge of letter writing, Garvey's philosophy, and persuasive skills. In another unit, we challenged the warrior scholars of Kamali Academy to create a new Afrikan community after a natural disaster. Only fifty people survived in their community so they had to decide which institutions they would include and why. They played the role of community members who desired to create a community based upon Afrikan values and culture. The students created models of their proposed communities and gave presentations highlighting important elements included. Their models impressed us. Our children know what we need for our communities to be whole. This performance task allowed them to exercise their minds and thoughts about the perfect Afrikan community.

Along with regular, meaningful performance tasks, keeping a portfolio of your
child's work can show your child's intellectual development over time. Unlike standardized tests, which take a blurry snapshot of your child's ability on one day, on one test, portfolios provide a scrapbook illustrating your child's intellectual mastery in various concepts.

Only you know what is truly important for you child. In many ways, we grade our children on how well they practice the principles of the Nguzo Saba just as much as we grade on academic subjects. What good is it for our children to know facts and figures without a thorough knowledge of self and the ability to face challenges and find solutions? Get away from the notion that our young warriors must receive A's, B's and C's. We must develop our own criteria and grading scales. We must leave behind all that is European and resurrect our ways and create new ones.

At this moment in time we stand before a crossroads. Will we think for ourselves, develop performance tasks, and grading scales appropriate to our present situation and future? Or will we continue to rely on high-stakes testing as a measure to determine whether or not our children make the grade? If you are reading this, you have already divested yourself of many of the foreign concepts that keep Afrikan people intellectually incarcerated. Continue to free your mind. We do not need standardized testing or standardized education. We need customization and Afrikanization of our schools and testing structures. The time is now.
Question Fourteen: Are there any problems when the home schooled child returns to school?

Yes. Immediately, two ways come to mind: (1) if a child was home schooled and allowed to follow his interest and develop a love of learning, the limiting environment of a traditional school can cause great problems for your child and; (2) at the elementary level, schools usually allow the student to enter the school in the age-appropriate grade level. If your child is more advanced, you can certainly negotiate that with the school. On the high school level, they may like to see transcripts, grades, portfolios, or test scores.

The psychological impact of re-entering the school system can be interesting. Our first student was a student who failed the sixth grade twice at a local middle school. His mother, having heard that we were starting a school and looking for any way to save her child from falling further behind, came to us and said, "get him ready for 9th grade." In all honesty, I harbored doubts that we could do it. She challenged us to teach him three years of material in one year so that he could enter high school with his peers.

I'm proud to say, we did it. After being with us for one year, he was ready and entered a local high school at the 9th grade level. It pained me to see him go, for I had seen him grow and blossom under our tutelage. We provided the soil and the nourishment that helped him grow immensely. But once back in the public fool system, he started to have many of the same problems that helped him fail the sixth grade twice, namely uninspiring and boring teachers, a stifling environment, and a curriculum focused on Eurocentric lies when his mind had become accustom to Afrikan centered truth.
Our situation with this young brother taught me a valuable lesson. Many parents will homeschool or send their child into Afrikan centered environments only to prepare their children to re-enter the school system on or above grade level. Don't pull your child out to "fix" them and then put them right back into the same toxic environment. Afrikan wisdom teaching us that “a plant, no matter how healthy, cannot survive in contaminated soil.”
Question Fifteen: My child has discipline problems at school. Can homeschooling help?

Absolutely. Whenever we hear about the rise of Afrikan children acting out in classrooms across the nation, many place the immediate blame on family life, lack of discipline, and a culture of anti-intellectualism. Rarely, do we assess the schools themselves and their role in the problem.

Afrikan children often go into the school system very eager to learn, but by the third or fourth grade, too many of our children have lost that thirst for knowledge. The dumbed down environment of the school eventually zaps their motivation to learn and replaces it with concern about standardized testing.

Here is an interesting story to illustrate the effect of a school environment can have on a student. I once worked at an Afrikan centered charter school. The director was a fiery nationalist who did his best to provide education for liberation for Afrikan children. However, since it was a charter school, he had to accept every student who came to his door. One year, two white, male students enrolled. At the beginning of the year, the students did well. In fact, they were very enthusiastic about their studies. Yet, as the year wore on, the boys realized that the curriculum never painted their ancestors in a positive light, i.e. it told the truth. It was a perfect reversal of the Afrikan proverb, “until the lions have their own historians, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”

Slowly, the two white students began to act out in class and eventually shutdown by sleeping in, or attempting to skip, classes. Before long, they were out of the school,
driven not by overt attacks against their whiteness, but by the Afrikan centered nature of the curriculum. What is most interesting is that these two white students exhibited much of the same behavior as many of our Afrikan boys and girls in Eurocentric schools. Many times the students cannot articulate why they rebel, but it is my contention that Afrikan children unconsciously fight against a system of education that attempts to preserve the status quo. One study found that Black male high school dropouts had higher I.Q. scores than Black male high school graduates. That is something to think about.

Homeschooling can help recover our children’s love of learning. Through Afrikan centered curriculums, interest-based learning, and a loving, encouraging environment, our children can show us their genius.
Question Sixteen: Why should I homeschool my child when I'm paying taxes for the same public schools I attended?

This is a great question. We certainly pay taxes for the public schools. But the reality is that we pay for many things that we either do not use or that do not work for us. We pay for public transportation and roads that many of us do not use. We pay taxes for police officers that constantly kill Afrikan men, women, and children across the country. We pay for wars that exploit the resources of other countries around the world. “Paying” for it is not a good justification for keeping our children in a situation that is obviously not healthy for them or us.

Honestly, no matter how much money we pay the government, they will never adequately educate our children. It is against any oppressor’s best interest to educate a subjugated population for liberation. If you do not believe me, leave them there. As Malcolm would say, "time will tell." In truth, time has already told. We must move on now. Look around at our communities and notice the damaging effects of miseducation on our lives. The Black-on-Black criminal is nothing but a miseducated Black person taught to hate themselves by the system of education in this country, which includes schools, the media, and other institutions.

A fable from Aesop helps us understand the danger of our present behavior. A lion, unable to provide himself with food by force due to old age and infirmities, resolved to do so by trickery. He returned to his den, and lying down there, pretended to be sick, taking care that his sickness should be publicly known. The beasts expressed their sorrow
and came one by one to his den, where the Lion devoured them. After many of the beasts had thus disappeared, the Fox discovered the trick and presenting himself to the Lion, stood on the outside of the cave, at a respectful distance, and asked him how he was. "I am very middling," replied the Lion, "but why do you stand without? Pray enter within to talk with me." "No, thank you," said the Fox. "I notice that there are many prints of feet entering your cave, but I see no trace of any returning."

Too many of our young ones have entered the educational institutions of our enemies and come out ignorant of themselves and/or as surrogate carriers of other people’s culture and ideology. No matter the cost, we must not continue to send our children into the lion’s den and hope they come out as warriors for our people. Indeed their self-esteem will be mangled, their identity severed from their Afrikan selves, and their minds clawed to pieces by European diseducation.
Question Seventeen: Is it hard for single parents to homeschool?

Homeschooling for single parents does not have to be difficult. It requires creativity and flexibility, but it is not impossible. In fact, I personally know many families across the country who make it work beautifully. One sister runs a photography business while homeschooling her three boys during the day. Another sister is an acclaimed author and publisher of children’s books. She homeschools her daughter everywhere they go.

The examples I highlight involve single parents who have established their own businesses, which allow great flexibility. However, one does not have to be self-employed in order to homeschool as single parents. Indeed, if you have a job outside of the home, you will need a solid support system, which can help ease the burden of homeschooling. Some folks lean on family members and friends for help while they work to provide financially for the family. These families are not tied to a “regular” nine to five educational schedule for their children. We can truly teach our children what they need to know in about three to four hours a day. So, if that education happens from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., so be it. Afrikan wisdom teaches us, “we don’t look at another woman’s clock in order to work.” With that said, do not use the public fool system as the standard by which you measure the time you teach your child. Many parents who work outside the home hire a babysitter who does more than sit their children in front of the television (tel-lie-vision) all day. Instead, they monitor the children while they complete their assignments of the day. In the evening, the parent helps the child with any additional questions and
concerns about the lessons.

I certainly do not have all the answers, but I am sure your brain is working to find ways to provide the kind of education your child needs. At Kamali Academy, everyday situations become teachable moments. Grocery shopping becomes health and wellness class. Cooking becomes math and science time. Fixing the car becomes basic auto mechanics. (Sidenote: I learned to change my own brakes and now many of the students can do the same.) Watching commercials become media criticism class. A trip to the gas station becomes a class on decimals and economics. Knowledge is everywhere. The world is our classroom.

Lastly, you must have Imani (faith) that homeschooling your children is the best route to take to insure the educational advancement of your children. It will be hard work; You will have doubts; Sometimes you will be overwhelmed, but as you get started, you will realize that that you could never send your children back into an environment that is antithetical to education for liberation. No matter your circumstance, you possess everything you need to facilitate your child's mental, social, and cultural growth. There are thousands of people out there willing to help you. You are never alone.

For more information on how to get help with your homeschooling efforts, see question eight.
Question Eighteen: How do I deal with family members who just don't understand?

Most folks are afraid of change and the unknown. Even when they can see that continuing on the present path does not bring the desired end, they keep trudging on claiming it is tradition. Do not get bogged down with their objections. They will say you are ruining your children. They will ask, “what about socialization?” They will ask, “will the baby be able to go to prom?”

All I can say is do your work. Let them know of your intentions and start. Arguing with them will not change their minds. Plus, Toni Morrison explains that, “to be constantly answering questions and mounting defenses about things that you know are obvious, keeps you away from doing the work.” Family debate about this topic will drain your energy if you let it.

Teach your children and they will see the results. If they recognize the good you have done, fine. If they do not, fine. Frederick Douglas said, “it is better to build strong boys, than to fix broken men.” In many ways, people will fight your decision because it represents a strength they wish they had. They have complained and complained but never found the courage to actually unplug from the system and provide better.

Remember why you are educating your own child. For me, I know that this work will benefit my children and those yet unborn. If adults, who are here now, cannot overstand, I can live with that. “We must act as if we answer to, and only answer to, our ancestors, our children, and the unborn,” says Amilcar Cabral. Our ancestors certainly
condone the education of our children in our own homes, as they would find it crazy for us to send our children to our enemy for education. Surely, the sheep do not send their babies to the wolves for schooling.

If you feel you owe any explanations, learn their objections and get educated on them. In this way, you can be prepared to answer any of their questions factually. However, be clear on the fact that logical reasoning rarely convinces people converted by long-held emotions and allegiances to foreign traditions. Spend your energy in finding resources and connections that will help you effectively educate your child for liberation.
Question Nineteen: How do I meet the educational needs of several children of different ages at the same time?

Meeting the needs of several students at once may seem difficult, but with a little Kuumba (creativity) things work out fine. I come into this type of situation with the knowledge that every subject has a PhD level and a kindergarten level. This overstanding has helped tremendously at Kamali Academy. We start at two years of age and go all the up to 12th grade. If the older students are learning about Yaa Asantewaa and the Asante Wars against the invading British, for example, the younger students learn about Ghana, adinkra symbols, and a basic biography of Yaa Asantewaa, one of our greatest warriors. In another case, the younger students wanted to create solar ovens. The older students joined in and made their own. In addition, the older students studied solar power extensively and wrote papers on how Afrikans can use this technology to become more self-sufficient here in America. These lessons lead to projects on harvesting rainwater and gardening. Of course, the younger students got into the act by planting their own beans and watching them grow. Furthermore, we give the older students ample opportunity to teach the younger students what they know. The Warrior Scholars at Kamali Academy practice their griot skills by relaying Ourstory to the baby warriors. In this way, they reinforce their own knowledge, practice public speaking, and pass on valuable information. To keep down confusion on your part have each child learn about the same thing at the same time. It could get taxing if one child is learning about Ancient Kemet (Egypt) and the other is doing a science project. When you schedule classes and
want to teach biology, have each age group learn biology on their level. It is the same way with dance, art, vocabulary, and other subjects.

Learning together brings a camaraderie among the students that I have never witnessed in the public school setting. Students truly get to know each other and each other’s interests.

In reading and mathematics, students should learn individually with you (as the parent) playing the role of facilitator. As they work, you answer questions and ensures that they are grasping the material. I relish this role because it allows me to help the students, but also continue to learn and gain mastery over the material.
Question Twenty: My relationship with my child is strained. Can it be repaired through homeschooling?

This is a tough question. Some parents report that the closeness of homeschooling actually harms the relationship with their children. In these cases, they search for others to help them teach their children the requisite subjects. However, other parents report that homeschooling improved their relationship with their child. The nearness, relaxed environment, and common exploring assist families in getting to know each other more thoroughly than if they saw each other before and after school.

My advice to homeschooling mothers and fathers is to focus on developing a loving relationship with your children before and while engaging in academic activities. Every day at Kamali Academy, I attempt to demonstrate to the young warrior scholars that I love them. It does not matter whether or not they grasp concepts quickly or finish all of their homework. I love them. Someone once said, “before you can touch their mind, you must touch their heart.”

In that relationship, Imani (faith) must be at the core. Believing in our children will take them a long way. Our belief is our expectation. Children rise to the level of your expectations. If you harbor low expectations, whether consciously or unconsciously, they will effect how well your children succeed under your care. One school informed four teachers that they were picked as the top teachers in the school and would be given the top students in the school the next year. During that year, the students soared above their counterparts in school-wide and state testing. At the end of the year, the principal called all four teachers into her office. She congratulated them on their successful year in the
classroom. Then, she informed that before that year, none of them were truly considered the best teachers. In fact, they were chosen randomly. The students as well were chosen at random. She explained to them that the only difference this year was their expectations of the students.

This story teaches us that Imani and positive expectations are foundational for student achievement. Without it, our children are unlikely to reach their potential.

Another element in cultivating a positive relationship with our children is listening. I make it a habit to periodically ask the warrior scholars, what they would like to learn about? This question has led to some of our best memories. Listening to our children makes them feel valued and seen. The public fool system rarely takes into consideration the educational desires of students. Instead, the state mandates what is learned in the classroom, how it is taught, and when it is assessed. As a consequence, our children become more and more alienated from the educational process. By contrast, listening to them brings them closer to you.

Lastly, truly attempt to understand your child: who they are, where they want to go or what is their purpose, what do they need, and how can you help. When one feels understood, one feels loved. This understanding also helps you to find the necessary tools to aid your child in achieving his goals. Without this understanding, we may try to push an artist into a career as a lawyer or a veterinarian into a career as a writer. When you know who your children are, it is infinitely easier to coach and navigate for them through the trials and tribulations of life they are sure to experience. However, we must be careful not to place limitations on their growth just because we failed to reach all of our goals. Even for you, it is not too late.
A scrawny Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a strong-looking House-dog who was passing by. "Greetings, Cousin," said the Dog. "Your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?"

"I would have no objection," said the Wolf, "if I could only get a place."

"I will easily arrange that for you," said the Dog; "come with me to my master and you shall share my work."

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together. On the way there, the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

"Oh, it is nothing," said the Dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it."

"Is that all?" said the Wolf. "Then good-bye to you, Master Dog."

During my years in the public fool system, I was the master dog.

Even though I felt confined and restricted in my ability to teach liberating truth to my students, I eventually resigned myself to the cage of teaching for the test and eurocentric indoctrination.

I failed to challenge the system because the meals were steady and the possibility of it not being there terrified me.

Eventually, I removed the chain, left the gated yard behind, and found freedom in Kamali Academy.

Today, I walk with the wolf. What are you waiting for?

Do not wait for the perfect time to take on the challenge of homeschooling your children for liberation. For too long we have allowed our children to eat educational food
that is filling, but laced with the poison of *miseducation* and *cultural misorientation*.

It will be hard. It will be scary. But there is a fast growing community developing to help you on this journey. They are here. I am here. Kamali Academy is here.

You can do it. Just think of the future of our community when we have more of our children living with a great knowledge of self and the drive to become as self-determining as possible.

The time is now. We are the ones we have been waiting for.