



Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males

Freeman A. Hrabowski, Kenneth I. Maton, Geoffrey L. Greif

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Today, young Black men are more likely to be killed or sent to prison than to graduate from college. Yet, despite all the obstacles, some are achieving at the highest academic and professional levels.

Beating the Odds tells their remarkable stories and shows us what African American families have done to raise academically successful sons, sons who are among the top two percent of African American males in terms of SAT scores and grades. The result of extensive and innovative research, *Beating the Odds* goes beyond mere analysis--and beyond the relentlessly negative media images--to show us precisely how young Black men can succeed despite the roadblocks of racism, the temptations of crime and drugs, and a popular culture that values being "cool" over being educated. By interviewing parents and children from a range of economic and educational backgrounds and from both single and two-parent homes, the authors identify those constants that contribute to academic achievement and offer step-by-step guidance on six essential strategies for effective parenting: child-focused love; strong limit-setting and discipline; continually high expectations; open, consistent, and strong communication; positive racial identity and positive male identity; and full use of community resources. The proof of the effectiveness of such strategies is in the sons themselves, who speak eloquently in these pages about their struggles and successes in both the classroom and the often hostile world that surrounds it.

Essential reading for parents, teachers, and school administrators, *Beating the Odds* offers insight, guidance, and hope for anyone concerned about the plight of young African American men and the society they live in.

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