

# **BELIEVING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING** **a FORMULA for SUFFERING**

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## BREADTH OF EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH	CLINICAL	MILITARY/ PARAMILITARY	CORPORATE/ GOVERNMENT	EDUCATION	ISSUES
	Doctors & Psychiatrists	Enlisted Personnel	Executives	Principals	Psych
' spouses	Nurses	State Police	Managers	Teachers	Crisis Interven
	Lab Techs	Correctional officers	Supervisors	Dieticians	Loss/Gri
ship	Administrators	Firewomen	Physicists	College employees	Workpla Bullying
s	Paramedics	Security officers	Nuclear plant employees	Doctoral Interns	Domest Violenc Terrorism
s	Psychologists	Federal Marshall	Sister Circles	School Maint.	Christia Mediat
h's Wit.	Social Workers	Homeland Security	Lawyers/Judges	Students	Couple

## BELIEVING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING: a FORMULA for SUFFERING

- The idea for the title of this talk was inspired by Dr. Stevie Wondolowski, professor of Songs in the Key of Life, who states, “When you believe things that you don’t understand, then you SUFFER...”
- Scripture tells us, “As a woman thinketh in her heart, so is she.” Consider:
  1. If a woman believes mental illness to be a sign of weakness and not strength, then she is predisposed to be ashamed, prone to hide her condition, and reluctant to seek help.
  2. What if a woman believes that a mental illness is “a thorn in her side” or a burden she just has to bear? She is more likely to believe her affliction is noble and a badge of honor, and further be reluctant to seek help.
- We often believe our thoughts and feelings as true without question and get lost in a negative storyline about ourselves or our lives. --Kristin Neff

## BELIEVING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING: a FORMULA for SUFFERING

### ➡ GIRL, YOU NEED A CHANGE OF MIND (Eddie Kendricks)

How many of us are walking around as if life on this earth is a Marvel comic, and as Black women, are Super Wonder Women?

Well, I am here to tell you that life ain't no crystal stair nor is it a Marvel comic. I am here to dispel the Teflon mystique of the Super Wonder Woman or the Strong Black woman hook, which are too costly to our quality of life and our mental health. **Black women are not immune to depression! Nor anxiety. Nor panic Attacks. Headaches and backaches related to family-related matters, grief, workplace bullying, micro-aggressions and systemic racism.**

While the Strong Black Woman hook may be iconic and alluring, denying our vulnerability relieves others of responsibility to recognize our needs, and to learn how to give us comfort.

## **SILENT & LETHAL: KILLERS OF BLACK WOMEN**

- SYSTEMIC RACISM**
- ACCOMMODATING STRESS UNTIL YOU BURN-OUT**  
**Common- Anxiety; Uncommon- COVID-19 Pandemic**
- STRONG BLACK WOMAN HOOK**
- BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE**
- HIGH MAINTENANCE RELATIONSHIPS**
- MICRO-AGGRESSIONS (death by a thousand cuts)**

SILENT & LETHAL

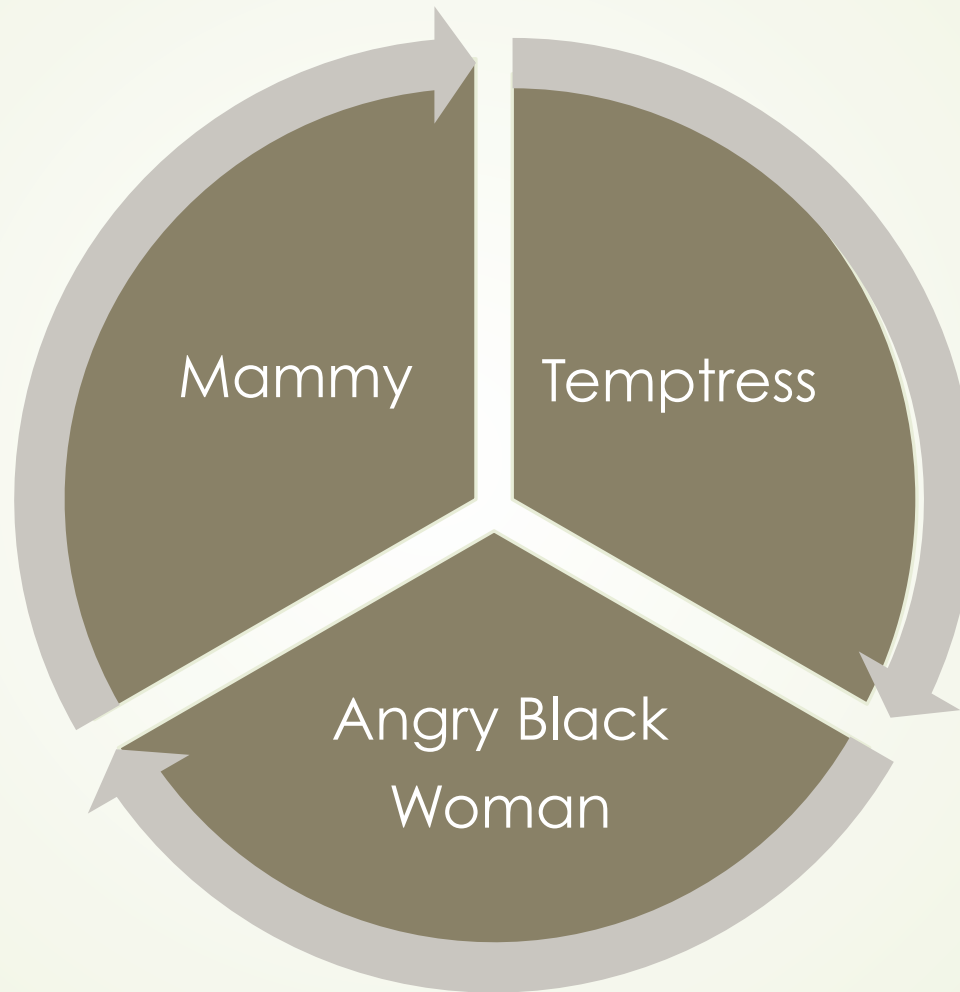
# ACCOMMODATING STRESS UNTIL YOU BURN-OUT



## SILENT & LETHAL: KILLER OF BLACK WOMEN

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Origin of Strong  
Black Woman Hook



**STRONG  
BLACK  
WOMAN**

# SILENT & LETHAL: KILLER OF BLACK WOMEN

## IS YOUR BOSS TOUGH OR A BULLY?

TOUGH BOSSES	BULLY BOSSES
1. Set high standards	1. Demand unattainable results
2. Hold everyone to a high standard	2. Single out one person
3. Are fair	3. Are unfair and irrational
4. Work for the good of the organization or company	4. Thrive on power
5. Are inclusive	5. Isolate and exclude people
6. Are honest and trustworthy	6. Spread rumors and gossip
	IF YOUR BOSS IS A BULLY, IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S HIM!



## SILENT & LETHAL: KILLER OF BLACK WOMAN

### HIGH MAINTENANCE RELATIONSHIPS

are characterized by a high degree of STRESS cause by the high degree of attention that is required. Examples would be substance addicts, hyperchondriacs (fake illnesses or maladies), and someone excessively needy. Very often the person who is the source of stress is a personality disordered individual e.g. narcissistic, histrionic, borderline, etc. You do not have to study a personality disorder to know when you are in relationship with one; you walk away from every encounter with the person feeling exhausted, diminished, demeaned, and mentally taxed about what you did wrong this time? When they gaslight you, you feel uncertain about the reality of what you just saw, heard or experienced.

# SILENT & LETHAL: KILLERS OF BLACK WOMAN

## MICRO-AGGRESSIONS

are brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group.

TYPES	DESCRIPTIONS
1. MICRO-ASSAULT	Conscious and intentional actions or slurs, such as using racial epithets, displaying swastikas or deliberately serving a white person before a person of color who was there first.
2. MICRO-INSULT	Verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity. An example is a white employee who asks a colleague of color how she got her job implying she may have landed it through affirmative action or a quota system vs. merit.
3. MICRO-INVALIDATION	Communications that subtly exclude, negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of color. For instance, white people often ask Asian-Americans where they were born, conveying the message that they are perpetual foreigners in their own land.

## UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES

- AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE THOUGHTS (ANTs)
- EMBRACING NARCISSISTOGENIC CULTURAL INFLUENCES
- CHASING A “NO REGRETS” LIFESTYLE

## UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES

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### EMBRACING NARCISSISTOGENIC CULTURAL INFLUENCES

They are commonplace covert negative influences primarily attributable to social media. They promote a self-centered lifestyle that elevates the mundane activities of daily living to “breaking news” reporting for devotees called “followers.” The number “Likes” a post gets are like oxygen to this system. Prominent influencers gain celebrity to the envy of their followers. The symbiotic relationship between influencers and their followers is intense, but tenuous, and does not facilitate mental hygiene.

*Astra Brantley (2022)*

UNDESIRABLE PRACTICES: Chasing “No Regrets” Lifestyle

## THE POWER OF REGRET: How Looking Backward Moves Us Forward

By Daniel H. Pink

The inability to feel regret is associated with Huntington's and Parkinson's Disease, and also with Schizophrenia

Regret is not dangerous or abnormal, a deviation from the steady path to happiness. It is healthy and universal, an integral part of being human. Regret is also valuable. It clarifies. It instructs. Done right, it needn't drag us down; it can lift us up.

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**Reflecting Resilience in a Different Way:  
Championing Our Mental Hygiene with Self-Compassion**

**~~STRONG~~ BLACK WOMAN**

**SELF-COMPASSIONATE BLACK WOMAN**

## Reflecting Resilience in a Different Way: Championing Our Mental Hygiene with Self-Compassion

### SELF-COMPASSION BENEFITS

LESS	MORE
DEPRESSION	HAPPINESS
ANXIETY	LIFE SATISFACTION
STRESS	SELF-CONFIDENCE
SHAME	PHYSICAL HEALTH

The full Self-Compassion Scale is available at [www.self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are](http://www.self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are).

# RESOURCES

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Nap Ministry	Encourages women to rest (< 4.5-5.5 hours of sleep increases risk of stroke and heart attack)
Girl Trek	Encourages Black women to walk
Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM)	
NTU	A spiritually based Afrocentric approach
Sister Circles	Highlight that you are not alone
The Loveland Foundation	Offers financial assistance to Black women & girls seeking mental health care
Black Mental Wellness	Hosts a library of free fact sheets, coping strategies, podcasts and apps that offer information on mental health, and resources for handling stress
Therapy for Black Girls podcast	Unites Black girls and women and helps reduce the stigma of needing help Black
Kristin.neff@self-compassion.org	Promotes self-compassion practices



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