

12 Things

Every Black Boy Needs to Know

Guaranteed Life Strategies for Coping with Boyhood
and Becoming a Man



Darryll Starks

Clifford Adika Trimble, Jr.

1st Quarter

Thing #1

Thing #2

Thing #3

Thing #4

Thing #5

Thing #6

The World's Best Life-Skills Book for Black Boys, Period!

Dear Bookstore Owner:

Senseless killings - High rates of truancy and dropping out of school - Illegal drug activity - Overrepresentation in juvenile justice systems and under-representation on college campuses - Disproportionate numbers, not to mention the last in gender and ethnicity to be considered for foster care or adoption, in the system. It seems as though society has written off young African American males and forced them to ride the bench, at best, sitting along the sidelines in the game of life while others either play flawlessly, making first downs along the way or play unnoticeably within the shadows of mediocrity.

Designed for boys ages 9-17, **12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know: Guaranteed Life Strategies for Coping with Boyhood and Becoming a Man** develops key social skills, morals, and problem-solving skills that are necessary for developing their character and becoming responsible and productive members of society. As the reader learns the value of teamwork by forming pacts with selected friends/peers who read **12 THINGS**, they gain a better understanding of themselves as well as valuable insight on coping with problems, peer pressure and everyday situations that many African American boys face.

We believe that **12 Things** not only reflects the genre of materials that your store provides to the public but that it will also bring diversity into the repertoire to your selection. As we have found, few books exist that teach social and life skills, enveloped in African/African American history that stress the importance of education. Furthermore, very few are written on a reading level that is comfortable for Black boys who in many instances have not yet developed a fondness for reading. **12 Things** is not an intimidating read, but one that will encourage and challenge the reader to stretch.

12 Things consist of 12 different lessons where the reader receives information on various principles or coping skills. Most lessons consist of roughly two pages of reading, followed by 3 to 4 activities that support the lesson. For instance, one of the chapters is entitled "Hand's Been Dealt" which identifies two imaginary hands of cards that they can play- the hand that life dealt, and the hand that they dealt themselves. The hand that life dealt includes those natural circumstances surrounding their environment-parents' marital status, educational background, housing environment, quality of health, economic status, etc. The other hand is the one they dealt (and continue to deal) themselves, such as their involvement in extracurricular activities, engaging in constructive/destructive behavior, academic performance, use of appropriate/inappropriate language, etc. This well-planned combination of lessons and activities gives the reader an opportunity to practice what he learned by applying the principles to certain situations and scenarios. In doing this, our readers develop and internalize strategies they can use to cope with boyhood that will ultimately transfer into manhood.

Our intent is for the boys to take their time to complete the book and not rush through it. Our aim is for them to complete one lesson per week. We don't want the book to be a chore or something they dread. When all four volumes of **12 Things** are completed, ideally, a boy can read a lesson practically each week of the year.

To appeal to the sports affinity of most boys, **12 Things** incorporates sports themes throughout the book. Entitled "The League," or the intended audience for the book, **12 THINGS** is divided into four potential markets: (1) boys, (2) organizations, (3) adults, and (4) programs. **12 Things** is versatile in that it is written for the individual, the pair/small group, or the entire team of boys. Sports-oriented terms such as the Warm-Up (Introduction), Kick-Off (Book's purpose), and the Boys' Locker Room (Appendices) have been carefully selected in keeping with the originality of the thematic paradigm.

12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know is a fun, educational and highly interactive workbook packed with a comprehensive series of lessons and supported with practical and carefully constructed activities designed to reinforce each lesson and help the reader fully understand the points being made. We have not written African American male adolescents off, so to speak. With your assistance, we can get them back into the game by conditioning them with a daily drill of **12 THINGS**. We thank you for your time and look forward to hearing from you in the very near future.

12 Things.Biz

Mission:

Our mission is to specialize in the development and delivery of innovative and research-based solutions for youth and the youth service industry.

Our client base consists of several agencies including, but not limited to,:

The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)
Black Male Development Symposium – Arcadia University
DeKalb County Department of Children's Services
Martha Glaze Regional Youth Detention Center (Clayton County RYDC)
Fertile Ground Empowering Women
The Single Parent Connection
Black Male Community Empowerment Forum
DeKalb County Library System
Flat Shoals Elementary
Corpus Christi Catholic Church Summer Camp
Atlanta Christian Academy
Mothers Raising Sons
Agape Summer Camp
The ACE Project – Crawford County Middle School
Southwest YMCA
Village Keepers
Ridge Grove Missionary Baptist Church - Alabama

Let us custom-tailor a solution to help you meet your needs.

PRODUCTION AND PRICING DETAILS

Publisher:	Self-Published -12 Things Press DBA 12 Things.Biz; Riverdale, Georgia
Length:	28,000 words
Delivery date:	Ready for shipment
Computer system:	Microsoft Word and Corel Draw 12
Format:	
	• Size: 8 ½ x 11 • Pages: 143 • Binding: Cover 5 mil laminate, scored / wire-o binding with imprinted title on spine • Exposed tabs for easy quick and easy access
Sidebars:	5-7
Permissions:	Granted for copyrighted character and material in THING / Chapter 5
Front matter:	Foreword: N/A
Back matter:	Primary endorsement by: Judge Glenda Hatchett, The Judge Hatchett Television Show
Suggested Retail:	\$24.99
Volume Discounts:	Call or write for details
Consignments:	Call to discuss arrangements
Shipping:	Ground, customer pays shipping.

Evaluation copies \$15.00

There are several factors that contribute to the price of **12 Things**. Key factors include the construction and craftsmanship and the quantity of books we order from our printer. As a result, our per book cost is still higher than we like. For this reason, we respectfully ask that all bookstores interested in carrying **12 Things** pay a small processing fee of \$15.00. This small charge will allow us to recover the costs associated with printing and shipping the book. If you are not able to pay the \$15.00 processing charge, contact us to request a free copy for a 30 day review period.

Upon completion of your review, we hope you decide to order more books for your store. However if you decide not to, you can opt to sell your evaluation copy for the suggested retail price of \$24.99, thus recovering the cost you paid for the book and actually making a small profit. While we understand this is not the traditional method of evaluating books for consignment, we ask you to also understand that the stage of our new business and the cost we have invested in each book, call for us to run our business and distribute copies of the book using the most efficient methods possible.

To request an evaluation copy of **12 Things**, contact Darryll Starks at (770) 873-6364 or via email at dstarks@12things.org. You can make your checks or money orders payable to 12 Things.Biz. Mail it to: 12 Things.Biz, P.O. Box 586, Redan, GA. 30074. If you prefer to pay by credit card, we can process your order over the phone.

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**12 Reasons Why You Should Consider 12 Things
as a resource for serving African American Boys
In your school or program...**

12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know

- 1) **Healing.** **12 Things** promotes dialogue and communication between boys and their parents/caregivers. **12 Things** is the only tool that we have found that helps boys understand and cope with experiences related to the absence of a father (figure) or problems with their mother (figure). It brings healing not only to the boys, but also the other family members who will be recipients of the moral, ethical, and mental transformation that takes place in the young man.
- 2) **Foundation.** **12 Things** serves as a foundation upon which to address other social ills such as drug trafficking, gang activity, substance abuse, violence, and disrespect towards women and elders. It provides a take home tool to help boys and young men cope with, control, and conquer everyday challenges and ultimately helps build character. It also provides a foundation upon which to build and plan future events and conferences or as a supplemental resource for existing programs.
- 3) **Fun.** **12 Things** teaches boys that reading doesn't have to always be required from a teacher but it can be recreational, fun, and exciting! **12 Things** follows this model where creativity and fun meets learning and practical application of information.
- 4) **Self-Guided approach.** Boys can use **12 Things** with or without the guidance of a facilitator. Very few books adequately address cultural issues in a way that is simultaneously non-threatening, user-friendly, entertaining, educational, and relevant to its audience. For this reason, a Judge or probation officer can mandate that a boy reads **12 Things** as a condition of his probation and trust that he will be able to read/use it without the constant help from an adult.
- 5) **Priceless and timeless.** The information presented in **12 Things** is packaged in a way that is applicable, flexible (working one-on-one or by a facilitator working with large or small groups), and inspirational by teaching old-fashioned values to today's youth.

- 6) **Mass appeal.** **12 Things** has been developed with the help of other boys. It has been tried and tested by over 200 youth and youth advocates representing over 15 different states. Several sessions of critique by a panel of youth and adults has propelled **12 Things** to a level of usability that some authors only dream about.
- 7) **Inevitable progress.** **12 Things** provides an opportunity to help programs go from Good to Great. One-time or weekend interventions are good; however, 12 weeks is more effective. **12 Things** gives the boys an opportunity to extend their learning and involvement well beyond the traditional timeframes in which many programs are structured.
- 8) **On their level.** This work introduces boys to concepts and topics at an introductory level or on their level. Many books on the market for our youth are written in a way that is scholarly and bookish. **12 Things** was written in a way where it is not insulting to the intelligence of the reader but, at the same time, is easily understood and very user-friendly.
- 9) **Uniqueness.** The sports theme used throughout **12 Things** is captivating and presents a different read than that of a textbook. The creative activities further enhance each lesson enabling the boys to better internalize the meanings of each lesson, and more importantly apply them in everyday settings.
- 10) **My brother's keeper.** **12 Things** encourages the formation of Pacts and can be used as an effective tool to further unify tribes or small groups. Further, it provides an excellent tool for helping boys select true friends and avoid so-called friends that tempt them to do the wrong things or have other character flaws.
- 11) **Customizable.** We have control of the printing process and can easily customize a version just for you. We can include a foreword from a Mayor or Judge, or even modify some of the content to best address the needs of your program.
- 12) **Affordability.** **12 Things** is a new curriculum that has been out for less than one year. Right now, interested organizations can take advantage of our special introductory pricing and our attractive group rates.

Endorsements and Testimonials

"As a former juvenile court judge, I was always disturbed by the behavior and conduct that some of our young men displayed throughout the nation and saddened by the disproportionate numbers of African American young men that appeared before me in court. **12 Things** is an excellent tool for young men in general, whether or not they have been involved in the juvenile justice system. By implementing and following these simple, yet poignant principles, we can help ensure our sons' safe passages into robust and productive adulthood."

The Honorable Judge Glenda Hatchett
The Judge Hatchett Television Show

"I view **12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know** as a "must read" for every young man in our community, as well as for everyone who has a responsibility for ensuring our boys maximize their inherent strengths and capabilities. Authors Trimble and Starks have created a definitive piece of work that is practical in its application, timeless in its use, and a God-send to a world where such guidance is too often missing. Kudos!"

Marvin Hightower – President & CEO – BSX Enterprises, LLC
Cub Scout Leader- Lithonia, Georgia

"**12 Things** needs to be in the hands of youth in the home, at school, in churches, and mentoring programs. It should also be mandated for youth in the juvenile justice system. It's going to give the reader power and strength. It is not only for your sons, but it is also for the entire family. Every single mother should have this book! **12 Things** is a healing tool. It empties you from feelings of bitterness and guilt and fills you with the power of healing and forgiveness. Surprisingly, there was a healing in it for me too."

Evangelist Diane Jahfari Milner- Single mom (3 boys, 1 girl)
Probation Officer and Community Activist – Stone Mountain, Georgia

"This book had such a positive influence on me and I feel it will do the same for other African American males in society. **12 Things** is definitely something that every young man should read, enjoy and practice in his everyday living. The language is simple without being insulting. The scenarios in the activities are practical and realistic. The **THING**, If You Can't Take the Heat, Stay out of the Kitchen, really had me going!"

Jerome, 10th grader (Hometown – Gary, Indiana)

Author Biographies

Starks and Trimble are rather experienced in working with and advocating for African American adolescents. Among their many accomplishments, two include self-publishing their book entitled *12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know: Guaranteed Life Strategies for Coping with Boyhood and Becoming a Man* and starting their own company, **12 Things.Biz** which was established to develop innovative programs and resources for youth and youth serving agencies.

Darryll Starks brings over 15 years of experience working with youth and is now self-employed as a social entrepreneur after recently resigning from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta after 13 years of service. Starks, a native of Dayton, Ohio earned his Bachelors of Science Degree in Agricultural Engineering Technology from Fort Valley State University. He moved to Atlanta, Georgia in 1987 and immediately got involved within his community by joining the Big Brothers Big Sisters Organization. After feeling like he was not doing enough to make a difference in his community, Starks gave up a successful six-year career with IBM in Atlanta and joined forces with the Boys & Girls Clubs because he was compelled to do more to address the vast array of issues effecting and destroying youth and families. In fact, his desire and commitment to devote more of his time, talents and energies working with troubled and disadvantaged youth in the inner city was so strong, he took a substantial cut in pay and accepted a part-time position as a Case Manager for a grant-funded program designed to serve status offenders from the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and youth performing poorly in school. Starks gained a reputation for providing top-notch programs and services for youth ages 13-18. During his career he has written and received grant funding in excess of \$50,000 to help implement teen initiatives within the Club and community and served a key role in a four-year partnership with a local organization that serves refugee youth, largely of African descent, which resulted in over 60 non-American teens joining the Club and participating in Club programs and activities. He also developed and implemented an abstinence-based curriculum entitled READY & Waiting, which was designed to promote abstinence to teen girls. Starks is an active mentor within the community and volunteers much of his time with various grass roots organizations serving at-risk and disadvantaged youth. He also has extensive knowledge in developing and implementing youth programs and conferences. Starks, an accomplished athlete in both track and football, experienced his first “fifteen minutes of fame” when he had an opportunity to play professional football for the Chicago Bears in 1987 during the shortened strike season. Off of the field and track, he has received numerous awards at IBM for submitting ideas and multiple honors with Boys & Girls Clubs including Staff Member of the Year and the elite Boys & Girls Club of Metro Atlanta C.A.R.E. Award.

Clifford Adika Trimble, Jr. has over 16 years of experience working with youth from various backgrounds as an educator for Atlanta Public Schools, DeKalb County School System (Georgia), Hattiesburg Public School District (Mississippi), and a program director and teen coordinator for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Maryland, and the S. L. Jones Boys & Girls Club in Metro Atlanta, respectively. Affectionately known as Brutha Adika, he has founded and consulted with several African-centered rite of passage programs designed to empower, encourage, and instill values, respect, and self-worth into young African American men, ages 9-25. He has served the Atlanta metropolitan counties of Rockdale, Newton, and DeKalb in areas of providing both juvenile court and Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice services. Brutha Adika obtained his Master's in Social Work degree from the University of Georgia with a concentration in nonprofit management where he has critically analyzed human behavior theories relative to bio-psychosocial variables that affect African American male adolescent behavior. This veteran educator, social worker, ordained youth minister, and anointed musician is currently employed with DeKalb County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) as a Social Services Case Manager Specialist where he fights for permanency in the lives of children and youth. Some responsibilities include supervising and facilitating visits between children and their birth parents, testifying in court regarding the status of the parent's progress towards reuniting with the child(ren), and; working collaboratively with other youth development professionals from human services agencies and organizations. Brutha Adika believes that, with the knowledge base and dedication of our schoolteachers, community activists, law enforcement officers, caring professionals, religious leaders, case managers, etc., we can create the destiny of disadvantaged, disgusted, decimated, and devalued young men to be one that is illuminated by the joy of educating, mentoring, thinking critically, and assuming moral and social responsibilities.

12 THINGS EVERY BLACK BOY NEEDS TO KNOW:

GUARANTEED LIFE STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH BOYHOOD AND BECOMING A MAN

OVERVIEW

12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know addresses the need for African American boys to have a manual that will provide them with several interventions, some of which are frequently missing in their lives, that, as research suggests, is crucial in their moral and social development. Furthermore, The Search Institute, (a youth development agency based in Minneapolis), has identified 40 Developmental Assets which all youth should have. According to their research, however, the national average number of assets in youth is only 18 assets, less than half the assets needed for successful passage from adolescence to adulthood. Research has shown that the more assets young people experience, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of risky behaviors, and the more likely they are to engage in positive behaviors. While **12 Things** is currently being scientifically evaluated to determine its effectiveness and potential impact on the reader, our preliminary assessment reveals that 22 of the 40 assets are addressed through the lessons and activities in **12 Things**. With three additional volumes currently in development, it is no doubt that the **12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know** series will meet and exceed the standards in which asset-building and character development are currently measured. **12 Things** Volume #1, is packed with interventions and strategies that supports an awareness and understanding of pro-social behavior, stimulates proper moral and character development and assists African American boys in managing some of the most pressing issues many of them face on a daily basis.

In short, **12 Things**:

- Proves to boys that reading and learning really can be fun by utilizing creative activities and offering strategies to become more actively engaged in school
- Promotes teamwork
- Encourages boys to read by using an easy-to-read style, a sports-thematic approach and highly interactive activities
- Teaches today's boys "old-fashioned" values and promotes caring, fairness, integrity and honesty
- Shows them how to make better choices and decisions by developing planning and decision making skills and weighing the pros and cons of each decision
- Relates to the reader by incorporating practical, real-life examples
- Helps the boys to understand the uniqueness of their African heritage, family history and how this understanding transcends into socially-conscious, spiritual, and mental development
- Stimulates communication between family members
- Helps improve mother to son and father to son relationships and promotes peaceful conflict resolution
- Promotes resiliency and commitment
- Develops critical thinking, resistance and refusal skills
- Helps boys in coping with, controlling and conquering everyday challenges and obstacles

In addition to evaluating **12 Things** against the popular 40 Developmental Assets model, we also compared it against Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. This system, or taxonomy, is used for planning and evaluating children's progress through six levels of intellectual skill-building. The six levels include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Success at each level is determined by an established set of competencies each student should be able demonstrate upon completion of a learning activity. Knowing that Bloom's model serves as one of the most prominent tools for assessing intellectual impact, we made sure the lessons and activities would pass the test when evaluated against this system.

This book of approximately 28,000 words encompasses, but is not limited to, the above twelve characteristics in a manner that makes the book come alive. The twelve chapters, or "THINGS," consists of two parts and are five to ten pages in length where each chapter is named for a widely held value or belief that might be classified as "old-fashioned" in today's society. The first part of each chapter begins with the

text that is, on the average, two-three pages long. This text is immediately followed by a quotation, African proverb, or affirmation that relates to the text. Each text is followed by a series of two-four innovative and thought-provoking activities that reinforce the chapter text and promotes higher order thinking skills without complicated instructions or activities.

We, the authors, are well qualified to write this book because we bring over 30 years of combined experience in working with African American boys from diverse environmental, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds. Our experiences range from teaching, training, planning, organizing, coaching, motivating, and supervising Black boys from ages 9-17, whom is the intended audience for **12 Things**. We have found that, by utilizing an ecological and strengths approach in developing this project through presentations at seminars and conferences in the Southeastern part of the United States, the targeted population of readers will justifiably connect to the lessons, anecdotes and the animated tutor which we named, “Dred” that guides the reader through the activities and compels the reader to have an incredible reading experience.

After reading the book, the reader will be able to assess and reassess choices and predict negative and positive consequences that result as a part of those choices. This skill alone can combat some of the maladaptive behaviors that some African American boys exhibit and can eradicate, or at least diminish, negative statistics such as the disproportionate number of them involved in the juvenile justice system or dropping out of school. It will give these young men the foresight to see the importance of obtaining an education, abstaining from negative behaviors, and replacing those negative behaviors with positive ones. various areas throughout his life. Some of the results include enhancing interpersonal skills, critical thinking, decision-making abilities, male-female relationships and male-male relationships, child-adult relationships, developing and maintaining healthy bodies, and ultimately entering the job market as a young man who remembers to never give up on the youth because no one gave up on him.

SPECIFICATIONS

Style and Voice

Written on a 5th grade level, *12 Things* is an easy read for nine-year olds but at the same time is carefully constructed as to not be insulting to the teen reader. It is written in a warm, supportive voice that intermittently incorporates English slang. The use of slang (e.g., don't, ain't, gotcha, etc.) strongly adds to the credibility of the book by capturing the reader's attention as if he were a younger family member or close friend. This nurturing yet candid style of writing tends to be nonexistent in academic textbooks found in classrooms, unless perhaps the student is studying creative writing. Unlike textbook authors who often are corpulent academicians and have little regard for slang, our main goal is to entice the young man to read and we find that we successfully accomplish this goal by "keepin' it real."

With the help from our in-house tutor, Dred, the reader is never alone to complete the activities. Dred introduces himself by telling the reader about his home life, hobbies, his academic performance in school, poor choices he has made, and his relationships with adult family members. The reader will find that he can definitely identify with Dred. In addition to guiding the reader through the lesson, Dred frequently offers advice and words of encouragement. Overall, *12 Things* is written with a mellow tone, occasional anecdotes, and sporadic pockets of humor that the reader will take pleasure in as he navigates through the book.

Structure

Since this work embodies sports themes in each segment of the book, the table of contents follows suit with the theme. "The Line Up" lists the pre-chapter information similar to a contents page: Warm Up (motivation for writing the book), Parent Booster Club (message to the parents/guardians), Huddle Up (message to the boys), and the Kick Off (prepublication endorsements). Following these introductory pages, the reader will find the table of contents, or "The THINGS." The THINGS, or chapters, can be read in any order but we have strategically arranged them so that the reader can develop a particular knowledge base that will be referenced throughout the book. Therefore, we highly recommend that the reader begins with the first THING and progress to the last THING, THING 12.

The League

This book is for...

BOYS

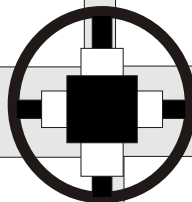


Black Boys and Other Boys of Color
Boys Living in Female Headed Households
Boys seeking true friends
Boys missing their fathers
Boys getting into trouble
Boys who call themselves thugs,
gangstas or pimps
Boys in detention facilities
Boys in foster care or group homes
Boys skipping or dropping out of school
Teens looking for tools to become a
man and discover who they are

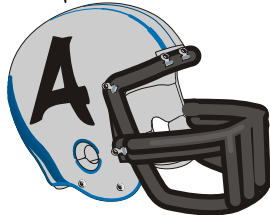
ORGANIZATIONS



Schools and school programs
Boys & Girls Clubs
YMCA's and Boy Scouts
Other Agencies serving youth
Religious Organizations
PTAs and PTOs
Recreation Centers
Alternative Schools
Group Homes / Foster Homes

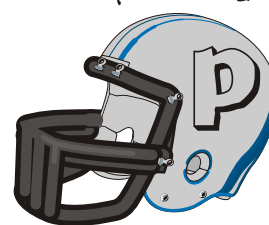


ADULTS



Single Mothers and Single Fathers
Grandparents and Step Parents
Siblings and other Relatives Raising Boys
Religious Leaders
Foster Parents
Teachers, Principals and Counselors
Juvenile Court Judges and Court Staff
Adults Advocating for Youth
Social Workers
Probation Officers and Police Officers
Mentors and Coaches

PROGRAMS



Sports teams and camps
Mentoring Programs
Rites of Passage Programs
Fraternities
Youth Conferences
Truancy Intervention Programs
Summer Camps
Reading and Literacy Programs
Family Reunion Planners
Conflict Resolution Programs

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CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Thing #1

The Mind is An Important Thing to Develop

Thing #1 challenges the boys to take a more active role in learning. It introduces them to concepts in goal setting and aids them in identifying hobbies that can eventually translate into legitimate businesses or career interests. It also guides them in career discovery, assessment and planning, which are critical steps in goal setting for young boys. Activities in this section also encourage the boys to obtain a library card, read a book pertaining to their career of choice, and identify a wide spectrum of both traditional and non-traditional careers.

Thing #2

Hand's Been Dealt

Thing #2 compels the reader to not only take responsibility for choices and consequences, but to also visualize the consequences of both positive and negative choices by taking an old-fashioned concept or lesson like hands been dealt, and introducing it to boys in a manner they can relate to and benefit from. Filled with the colorful and graphic imagery of playing cards, Thing #2 will prove to be a captivating lesson full of activities and concepts the boys will internalize and use throughout their lives.

Thing #3

Apologize When You Do Someone Wrong

Knowing how to effectively apologize to someone, either through words or behavior, is a tool that a man needs to carry in his “moral” toolbox. Thing #3 is the first of two back-to-back lessons dealing with relationships. Activities are designed to teach the boys the art of apologizing and equip them with the skills and courage to apologize sincerely. Additionally they will learn ways to counter any peer pressure from other boys who might ridicule them for doing something that might not be popular or totally understood amongst the peer group.

Thing #4

Don't Burn Your Bridges

Thing #4, stresses the importance and significance of “bridges” and networking and breaks it down in a manner that boys can relate to and understand. It guides them in a thought provoking activity of identifying three people who served as a “bridge” in their life. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for him to thank these people for being there and supporting him when he needed it.

Thing #5

There's Always Someone Worse Off Than You

No matter how bad a situation may seem, there is so much to be thankful for because things could always be worse. Thing #5 is the first of two lessons designed to help the boys cope with and understand adversity. With a goal of teaching skills in resiliency, patience and fortitude, Thing #5 keeps it real by sharing a story of how Juan Dixon, a professional basketball player, battled adversity and tough personal challenges while growing up and still ended up being successful.

Thing #6

Never Give Up

Thing #6 builds on and re-enforces the lessons learned in Thing #5 by providing more imagery and examples of how a few high profile celebrities/entertainers overcame obstacles and challenges in their own lives and still ended up being successful. The boys are directed to watch a movie and complete a comprehensive set of questions that are designed to help debrief the movie and view relevant points pertaining to various topics.

Thing #7

Know Thyself

Children gain a sense of empowerment when they learn about their family members' achievements, regrets, strengths, weaknesses, resiliency and obstacles. In learning about their family members it will help boys identify and seek similarities in their own personal growth and development. Thing #7 is the first of two chapters dealing with the impact history has on each boys life and his future. Activities are designed to help him explore critical events and experiences of his family members in a manner that will provide him with a link to more in-depth self-discovery and goal setting.

Thing #8

Know Your History

Thing #8, builds on the lessons of Thing #7, by going deeper into our collective experiences as African Americans. Thing #8 is so very important because much of what is shared is not taught in today's schools. With the text or lesson being so detailed and lengthy, we opted to lighten the activity by providing a history-based crossword puzzle as the main activity for this section. Upon completion of the puzzle, the boys will learn 12 different names, phrases or terms pertaining to African American history.

Thing #9

Don't Blame Your Mother

Thing #9, is the first of two lessons dealing with parent-child relationships. The activities in this lesson are designed to help the boys show a greater appreciation for their mothers, provide them a different perspective on how some things or situations might be and equip them with the tools and confidence to more effectively communicate with their mothers/guardians.

Thing #10

Don't Blame Your Father

Thing #10 deals with the very hot topic of father-son relationships by helping the boys understand some of the complex dynamics that are often involved. Many boys need help dealing with the absence of a biological father in their life. While it will take several lessons to deal with this topic in its entirety, our goal through Thing #10 is to help the boys atone with their fathers and hopefully the fathers atone with their sons. The intent is to open the lines of communication and hopefully create dialogue that will eventually help the relationship improve. Also, in situations where the father is deceased, boys are provided with a sample letter to guide them in writing a letter to their deceased father that will hopefully help them bring closure or cope with the feelings of grief associated with the loss of his father.

Thing #11
If You Can't Take the Heat, Stay Out of the Kitchen

Thing #11, shares tips, strategies and examples of how to avoid or minimize conflicts by avoiding or minimizing his involvement within jonenin' sessions by strategically positioning or removing himself as to not be directly involved in the process.

Thing #12
It's Easier to Stay Out of Trouble than it is to Get out of Trouble

Thing #12 helps equip the boys with a thorough understanding of how bad choices often lead to unpleasant consequences. It not only helps reinforce their innate ability to decipher right from wrong but also provides them with skills and practice on ways to counter peer pressure and assess pros and cons of various scenarios. Equally as important is the emphasis the activities place on helping the reader understand the short-term and long-term consequences of decisions they make by teaching them to use an effective model to compare various outcomes and the potential impact of each decision.

12 Things Every Black Boy Needs to Know

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is the book only for African American boys and not for girls or boys from other ethnic backgrounds?

A. First and foremost, we wrote **12 Things** for Black boys because we used to be Black boys and can relate to them better than any other gender, race, culture or ethnicity. Secondly, Black boys rank in the lowest percentile in graduation rates, college enrollment, unemployment and adoptions. Conversely, they rank in the highest percentile in areas such as violent crimes, incarceration, and high school drop outs. Black boys are the hardest to place in foster care and the most difficult to match with mentors. For these reasons and more, Black boys need special attention as well effective strategies to reverse the plight that is bound to destroy generations of Black boys if nothing is done.

Q. Could anyone else benefit from reading the book?

A. Sure. **12 Things** is written so that anyone who reads it can benefit from the information. We have heard countless testimonies in which **12 Things** had a tremendous impact on mothers, daughters, mother-son relationships, father-son relationships, family communications, mentor to mentee relationships.

Q. What age group or reading level is the book designed for?

A. **12 Things** is written on a 5th grade reading level and is designed for boys ages 9 to 17. The sports themes and sporadic use of slang helps make it an easy and fun book to read for all boys. While the age gap is large, we have found that the material is not too overwhelming for younger boys and not to insulting for older boys and young men.

Q. Is 12 Things best suited for individuals or groups?

A. **12 Things** was originally designed as a self-paced and self-guided workbook. Our vision was that boys would read the book at their leisure and solicit help and support from their parents or other adults when needed. The overwhelming response we have received from organizations that serve boys, is that they desire to implement it using a group approach with a curriculum being facilitated by an adult. In response to this demand we are developing a Coaches Manual (Facilitators Guide) that can be used when delivering **12 Things** to groups. The proposed availability date is November 2007.

Q. Do you do speaking engagements and workshops?

A. Yes, both authors have experience working with youth and adult audiences and will gladly consider your speaking or workshop requests. Our workshops are highly interactive and very dynamic. We will cater a delivery or presentation to meet your needs.

Q. It's a great book but I doubt I can get my son to read it.

A. Use it an incentive for receiving something else he wants. Before you jump to buy him a new pair of shoes or a new game or cell phone, require that he reads **12 Things**. Parents set the example for education inside and outside of the home. Raise the standards within your home. Make it an expectation for your son to read. Becoming a man takes hard work. The adults have to provide the proper examples, encouragement and motivation and the boys have to care more about their self-development than becoming proficient in fashion, flirting with girls and playing video games.

Q. My son is too young.

A. Depending on his age you might consider reading it to him or working through **12 Things** as a family.

Q. I gave it to him but I'm not sure if he read it yet.

A. Again, you set the examples and expectations. Ask him questions about it or see if he needs your help with anything in the book. There are several activities in which he will need your support or have to ask you some questions. If he is not coming to you, go to him first and offer your support.

Q. Why is it priced at \$24.99? That seems too high.

A. While some would consider the price of **12 Things** high, if they were to take into consideration the construction, content and craftsmanship it would be easier to understand our pricing strategy. Additionally, **12 Things** was self-published by the authors and the price also reflects the quantity or volume of books we are able to produce. We trust our readers and customers understand and decide to make a \$25.00 sacrifice that will ultimately benefit a Black boy or young man.