

INSPIRATIONS |



Mo Beasley is a sexuality educator, author and performance poet. He is ILERA's first INSPIRATIONS feature because he represents the inspiring change one man can make in the lives of young people. Mo embodies ILERA's motto of *increasing awareness and changing lives*.

DeShannon : *How do you think society influences sexuality and how does it influence you?*

Mo : Religion, education, legal, and media systems. All systems are patriarchal - slanted in favor of a male position. Legally, the constitution says all men are created equal but that's not true. When you ask, " *How does society influence me ?*" I tell you that I'm a poet. By nature I'm a sensitive male. Society puts that into question. When I was young, society said I wasn't aggressive enough. I beat someone up at the age of 11. That was when I first felt someone else's fear. It felt powerful and that was my first acquaintance with the seductive nature of violence. Fortunately the seduction didn't stick.

DeShannon : *How do you view your family's role in your sexual development?*

Mo : My book, *No Good Nigga Bluez* is based on this question. I grew up with two conflicting voices. One was from my single Mom and the other was from my Uncle Reuben. He wanted me to be hard. He thought I was too soft. Interestingly enough, girls started liking me more when I became a "thug" and started acting like I didn't care about them, which was contrary to the voice of my Mom and Grandmother.

DeShannon : *As a male sexuality educator how do you teach the girls in your classrooms?*

Mo : I use the same philosophy as a father. My oldest daughter is 22. When she was 15 I decided to educate her the same way I would a boy. I didn't want to impose a double standard. I use the same philosophy speaking with the boys and girls in my classes.

DeShannon : *What is your comfort level working with girls versus boys?*

Mo : In the beginning my comfort level was the same with both genders. On a scale of 1 – 10, I'd say I'm at a 7 with the girls and 10 with the boys.

DeShannon : *As a father, if you had a son, would you have educated him differently about sexuality versus the way you taught your daughters?*

Mo : Ironically, boys and girls have to be encouraged and empowered beyond patriarchal confines. Boys need to be educated and supported to respect themselves and others while girl must be made aware of their bodies and intricacies. Girls need to know early that they have control over their sexuality and they set the boundaries. What I like about my classes is that boys and girls enlighten each other by having the opportunity to ask questions and learn about their differences and similarities.

DeShannon : *Why do you believe it is difficult for families to discuss sexuality with their children, let alone the possibility of sexual abuse?*

Mo : Male abuse has been condoned in the home a long time. No one wants to talk about the sexual abuse. It's the white elephant in the room. We still live in a patriarchy. Having Daddy at home is important. There is such a great need to have a man in the house. I've had family members who were silenced by elders for disclosing abuse. It can be more difficult for black families because you don't want to have another thing against a black man.

DeShannon : *What do you think must happen for sexual abuse within families to decrease and be brought out into the open within communities of color?*

Mo : Candid and therapeutic exchanges with counselors who have expertise in the area. Sessions should be broken up for individuals and the family group. Shedding sexism, racism and patriarchy is a life long process.

DeShannon : *Why do you believe the sexual abuse of boys and men is not discussed to the extent of girls and women and how is this linked to male sexuality in American culture?*

Mo : It's detrimental and embarrassing to the male ego. Manhood and men's sexuality comes in to question. Men who experience erections while being molested or raped are ashamed. There is a heavier stigma. His strength and personal power is questioned. Female on male rape is laughed upon. Yet, male on male rape is mistaken for homosexuality.

For more information about Mo Beasley please contact him through the following websites www.lovestorm.com and www.myspace.com/mobeasley.