

# **The BLACK C o m m e n t a t o r**

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**Wife Swap: No, Not the Kind You Think**  
**Black Married Momma**  
**The Anti-Statistic**  
**By K. Danielle Edwards**  
**BlackCommentator.com Columnist**

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As stressful, tiring, demanding and unendingly involving as parenthood is, one of its many silver linings is that you begin with a fresh script. With no content on the metaphorical page to revise – other than the nuances and noise of how you were raised – you are free to parent your child as you wish.

Becoming a parent means you have the opportunity to release any dysfunctions passed down the family line for generations. It also means using the foundation that you represent as the stepping stones for customs, rites and traditions that continue to be passed down into new lives, new years and possibly in new, innovative and refreshed ways. For example, you may continue to host big family holiday dinners, but perhaps pork won't be on anyone's fork in your home, because you don't cook or eat it.

Becoming a parent also can mean avoiding pitfalls associated with how you were raised. For example, perhaps you have negative memories of being a latch-key kid and you've made educational and career choices with the flexibility in mind that will enable you to meet them off the school bus. Or maybe your folks never discussed anatomy or sex with you. Their only wisdom might have been to "keep your legs closed" or "don't get knocked up." In response, now with your brood, maybe you're frank and unapologetic about sexuality and human development. (The words "penis," "breasts" and "vagina" roll off my tongue like drips from a rusted out faucet with little lady #1. I figure, if she's old enough to ask, she's also old enough to know – and not in cartoonish terms, like "wee-wee," "pee-pee" or "privates." Heck, when she begins sprouting pubic hairs, I'll probably give her a hand-held magnified mirror, and we'll go

through all her parts with an anatomical, labeled illustration close by for reference.)

Channel surfing today, I caught a few minutes of the show "[Wife Swap](#)," which mutually shows two families trading wives and moms to new families that are typically ideologically, economically, politically or socially opposites. When this occurs, the collision between ideals and realities can be seismic. Philosophies clash. Personalities crash down. Penalties don't jibe with what they're accustomed to.

So, it made me think about what I do differently than my parents. Here's what I came up with:

1) We're more vocally and physically affectionate, saying countless "I love you's" and sharing numerous hugs and kisses throughout the day.

2) I tell little lady #1 and little lady #2 how fabulous they are in beauty and brains. There's no shortage of praise in this house, and if they have self-esteem issues, it will come from the external world, not the homestead hub.

3) We eat few fried foods, no red meat, drink no soda.

4) We do way more with them socially than my parents did. When I was growing up, going out to eat or to the park was a major treat. Not so anymore, though this is admittedly more of a function of our child-centric and uber-busy schedules than anything purposely different from my parents' bent.

In looking at the [three main parenting styles](#), I believe I trend toward a more democratic style, while my parents were more authoritarian with occasional windows of democratism.

So, if you were on Wife Swap, what quirks and parenting "dos" would the camera capture on tape? What are some things you do differently from your parents on purpose? And what are some keepsakes you learned from them that you'll perpetuate as long as you can?

*BLACK MARRIED MOMMA are musings from **BlackCommentator.com** Columnist K. Danielle Edwards - a Black full-time working mother and wife, with a penchant for prose, a heart for poetry, a love of books and culture, a liking of fashion and style, a knack for news and an obsession with facts - beating the odds, defying the statistics. Sister Edwards is a Nashville-based writer, poet and communications professional, seeking to make the world a better place, one decision and one action at a time. To her, parenting is a protest against the odds, and marriage is a living mantra for forward movement. Her work has appeared in [BLACK MARRIED MOMMA](#), MotherVerse Literary Journal, ParentingExpress, Mamazine, The Black World Today, [Africana.com](#), The Tennessean and other publications. She is the author of [Stacey Jones: Memoirs of Girl & Woman, Body & Spirit, Life & Death](#) (2005) and is the founder and creative director of [The Pen: An Exercise in the Cathartic Potential of the Creative Act](#), a nonprofit creative writing project designed for incarcerated and disadvantaged populations. [Click here](#) to contact Ms. Edwards.*



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