

Lemon

continued from page 2

snowball among black gays?

DL: I don't know. But I do think it helps the next person, because I get positive feedback every day from someone who has read my book.

KW: See, you're not just a journalist. Plus look at all the blowback from your recent remarks agreeing with Bill O'Reilly about the black community.

DL: I don't feel any blowback, but I will say this, whether you agree with whatever I said or not, at least I got a conversation started. That was my goal, and I think I accomplished it. I think if you've watched or read my work over the years, you know that I'm pretty much at the top in terms of taking on issues that have to do with African-Americans and profiling, and with race and racism. What I love about CNN is that, yes, we believe in diversity of bodies, but we also believe in a diversity of opinion. So, whether my bosses agree with what I said or not, it doesn't matter. We're in the business of journalism here. Journalism is about having a diversity of opinion. And just because I'm African-American does not mean I have to feel a certain way because I'm black. You don't have true freedom until you allow a diversity of opinion and a diversity of voices.

KW: I always feel that I'm black, so whatever my opinion on an issue happens to be is a black opinion.

DL: That's a good way of putting it. [Laughs]

KW: But do you fear being pigeonholed as a buddy of O'Reilly?

DL: There are many things that Bill O'Reilly and I disagree about. I just happen to agree with some of what he had to say on this issue, but not all of it. Does that mean I co-signed his whole being and existence? No?

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

DL: Yes, what do you get from icons like Dr. King, Malcolm X and John Lewis? What I get from them is personal empowerment, personal responsibility, and that the only thing you truly own is your mind. And once you truly own your mind, you're free.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?
DL: Sleep. I loooooove to sleep. I also like salty, plain potato chips and Lindt dark chocolate with a touch of sea salt.

You can decide for yourself what is the best way to respond in the face of discrimination. How to carry yourself with dignity. What matters is how you think of yourself, and having presence of mind. Once you get that right, it doesn't matter what anyone thinks of you, because you know how to carry yourself in the world.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

DL: The last two books I read were: "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander, and "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl, a Holocaust survivor.

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

DL: Besides all the flaws, I see the kid that I once was. [Chuckles] Seriously, what stares back at me is someone who lives in a constant state of gratitude, regardless of what's going on in my life. Just this morning, when I woke up, I walked into the bathroom, looked in the mirror and said, "Look how far you've come. I'm grateful for this day. And for those fat cheeks. And for the



Don Lemon

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory in Baton Rouge?

DL: Sitting in my grandmother's kitchen at about 3 or 4, watching her talking on a yellow telephone with a long cord. I spilled my drink, and my sister scolded me, "Every time you spill something!" And I asked my very understanding grandma's permission to go to the bathroom.

KW: Can you give me a Don Lemon question?

DL: Yeah, this question has gotten to just about everyone I ask. It even made Wendy Williams cry. It's, "Who do you think you are?"

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