Editor’s Letter--Spring 2008

February 27, 2008 By Hilary Beard

Eight o’clock on a Thursday night in the late 1980s and early ’90s would find me parked in front of *The Cosby Show*, the first TV sitcom about an upper-middle-class African-American family, and *A Different World*, set at a fictional black college. Like every other black female college graduate I knew, I aspired to be Clair Huxtable: smart, proud, beautiful, sharp, capable and compassionate—with her black woman’s backbone and ability to put a hurtin’ on her husband intact.

Life has proved me less capable of expressing these qualities than Clair. So now it’s her real-world counterpart, Phylicia Rashad, whom I admire. As she approaches 60, Ms. Phylicia gives black women of all ages a role model who—in this world of youthful longings and cosmetic surgery—is maturing wisely, healthily, gracefully.

But while Phylicia Rashad can still turn heads without effort, lots of us find that growing older is anything but easy. Research shows, for instance, that many middle-aged black women are afraid of falling. Want to reduce the chances that you’ll take a spill? The exercises you’ll find here will help you stand steady on your feet.

Dry irises, blurring vision, and cataracts and glaucoma can also make us feel unsteady, turning the vision we may have taken for granted into a treasured luxury. Here you’ll learn more about eye health and how to preserve your sight and your children’s.

Protecting her newborn should be the first order of business for any woman. But for far too many pregnant sistas, unmanaged chronic health conditions such as diabetes, untreated fibroids and undiagnosed STDs give our little ones a stressful passage into this world. We went out and talked to black women, and beginning on page 32, we share three of their top health challenges, along with prevention and treatment tips.

On the topic of tips, who couldn’t use some for building a more nutritious breakfast? We’ve all been told that it’s the most important meal of the day, but many of us skip it as we race out the door. Check out our suggestions for a healthier jump start here.

Stand strong: Make one conscious healthy choice today. Then repeat it tomorrow.

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