



# Bruh to Brotha Forum

04/23/2021 Volume 1 #1

## Facilitators



Sir Ervin Williams III



Steven Elam



Demarco Davidson



Dr. Aaron Willis

## Author Note

*At the end of the forum, a few brothers decided to stay at the zoom meeting. With the gathered information, we decided we were going to create a newsletter, so we can have information at our disposal. As well as, to help brothers who missed the meeting, have the information. We present “**Bruh to Brotha**” **Newsletter Volume #1** This meet-up was powerful. The stories that were told, the information that was given, and the vulnerability that was shared helped change our lives. We were truly blessed by the conversation. Growth is necessary for living our lives, freely and unapologetically. During this conversation, the brothers decided they were going to start sharing books to help each other on our journey. We’re thinking about starting a book club as well. We are extremely honored, to have created a safe space for Black Men to speak. I appreciate all of the calls, and conversations after the meeting, stating you feel better, and how much this conversation is needed. We look forward to growing with all of you, for as long as we can grow.” –**Sir Ervin Williams***

**\*This Month’s Business to support is Hakee Mitchell’s Non for Profit “ACCOP”. Please take the time to review his information on page 5.**

## What Did You Miss?



This week in the “Bruh to Brother Forum” was intriguing and powerful. We had thirty brothers in the room, talking about issues that concern us. We started with an intense and in depth debate about, Will Smith decision to slap Chris Rock. Was he right or wrong? Everyone had visceral response, and contributed to the discussion.

On the “Yes” side, one person stated, **“Will Smith was wrong. It wasn’t about him defending his wife. It was his ego that made him do what he’s done. He wouldn’t have done that to any other comedian, and for him to do that to another black man, on national television was wrong!”**

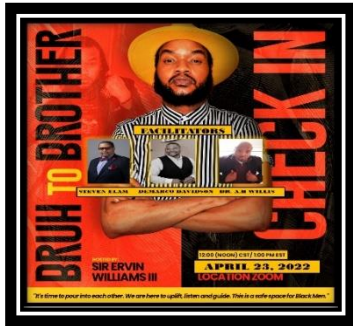
**Another person stated, “The same black woman he is protecting, is the same black woman that he is humiliating him. That same Black Woman that he is protecting should be protecting him as well”**

On the “No!” side, however, one person stated, **Everyone has the freedom of speech, accept Black People, Black Men in particularly. People can say what they want to say, but we can’t. So if we don’t have Freedom of Speech, Chris Rock doesn’t have it either!”** Another participate stated, **“You cannot dictate how that man choose to defend his wife. That’s his wife, and if he felt disrespected personally, or he felt she was disrespected, he can defend her however he chooses. Whether we like it or not, that is his decision, and his consequences.”**

We never got a chance to finish the debate, because we wanted to dedicate enough time to why we were here. We introduced the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) we watched a video from Dr. Nadine Burke Harris. You can click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk&t=570s) and watch this powerful video, to prepare for our next forum. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk&t=570s>

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*“Life is beautiful and complicated in such a simple way. We search for ourselves, in others, only to disappoint ourselves every single time. The person who is going to save you, is you.” –Sir Ervin Williams*



1. Will Smith V.S. Chris Rock Debate
2. Adverse Child Hood Experience Video
3. Open Floor Discussion about Childhood Trauma
4. ACE's Test Results
5. Business To Support
6. Closing

If you didn't make it you missed an amazing experience and information. I hope and pray that we will use the information we've learned, and be charge to take full and complete control of our lives. Forge forward brothers, you got this, and we believe in you.

## Shared Experiences After ACE's

### Information

After the video, there was a silence in the room. Even though this was done via zoom, you felt the heaviness over each person there. Some were almost brought to tears. So, we took a ten minute break, to gather our thoughts, and come back to the forum. What happened was amazing. Brothers chose to explain how the video had affected them. A great deal of us identified ourselves, in the science of the video.

**Dr. Nadine stated,** “If you are walking through the woods, and you see a bear, immediately your body start to release stress hormones, and you are ready to fight or run from the bear, and that's wonderful if you are in the forest and you are about to fight the bear. Now, what happens when the bear comes home, and activate that system every night? High adversity, changes your physiology, DNA, and health. What does that do to your health, when you are constantly in fight or flight mode?”

### Open Floor Discussion

Many quickly identified how the video affected them. Some of us talked about various health issues we've faced every day. From Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Anxiety, and many others. Realizing that some of the adverse trauma we endured as a child, may have played a significant role in our life today. One of the participants stated, how he had an “Alcoholic father, and how he made sure he did things the right way, because he didn't want to be anything like his father.”

Another participant identified in therapy how, “I was doing things in life, that no longer served myself, and I had to let it go. What I realized once I started looking into my health, is how my adrenals were very high, and was making me ill.” As we unpacked other trauma's around us. A participant identified how trauma affected his children, who also has special needs (Autism). He stated “they have all the pieces to the puzzle, but don't know how to put it together. As parents we must consider how trauma may affect you, based off your circumstances.” The story that brought me personally to tears, was when a participant described how his father made him and his brother play Russian Roulette when he was a child. The participant stated that he was five years of age, and how his father was calling him weak, because the participant couldn't pull the trigger. “It wasn't that I couldn't pull the trigger, because I was emotional. I couldn't pull the trigger because I wasn't strong enough. That moment had me battling with anger issues. It took me turning twenty to realize, I might be angry and need to seek some help.”

One thing that Dr. Nadine stated about dealing with trauma is, “Instead of fixing our issue, we would rather be sick.” We all started choosing our health and our mental stability. No longer would we allow our trauma to affect our presence.

The open discussion garnered much needed conversation. We were allowed to process our trauma,

## ACE'S Test Results

(You can take the ACE's TEST by clicking the link on PG. 6)

The open discussion garnered much needed conversation. We were allowed to process our trauma, in real time. We took the ACE's test. Click here to take the test. Those who were comfortable shared their scores and stories. Scores ranged from 1-10. The higher your ACE's score, the more detrimental your health disparities could be. We learned how trauma continues to affect us today, as well as told our own stories about how the connection between the scores and our current lives. One of the participants stated, that "Black men walk around with extreme trauma, and because people can't physically see it, they don't know and can't see our pain."

Some discussed how their father's abuse, transformed them. How they started to fight more, and be angry towards the world. Some talked about the drug abuse of their parent, and how they raised them to be nothing like them. Some discussed, how they scored low on the ACE's test, however, they had given this test to their parents, and how they scored 9/10. How this allowed him to understand his parent's differently. Participant's shared stories of trauma and triumph. We realized we weren't alone, and some immediate solutions where given.

## Immediate Solutions

- **Spirituality**- Knowing who you are in your faith, and practices it.
- **Racial Awareness**- Being aware of who you are in history and life. (Your perspective of yourself is important)
- **Self-Esteem**- There is a person on the other side of that mirror that you have to build up. Every morning affirm them.
- **Peer Pressure**- Choose your friends wisely. (Find those who would uplift you, and call you out on your foolishness.)
- **Responsibility**- Be accountable, set boundaries, and hold others accountable for being in your life. Everyone should NOT have access to you
- **Mentoring**- Find someone who you admire, and reach out to them for mentorship. Don't assume they will say NO! Go for it.
- **Sources**- Research information for your journey. We don't have all the answers, so we must seek them out, until we can find some of them.

# ACOPP (Assistant Children of Prison Parents) is the Nonprofit to Support

**Hakee Mitchell**, Founder and President of ACOPP is the business we are highlighting this month. On December 12, 1997 an altercation happened. My sister's abusive boyfriend and I engaged in a fight. During the fist fight he pulled out a box cutter and I was fortunate I



wasn't harmed. However, on June 17, 1998 he was. After our finally altercation, I was convicted of 1st degree assault with an Armed Criminal Action (ACA) I was sentenced to 10 years in the Department of Correction. At that time I was also a drug dealer and gang member who unfortunately, had to grow up on the violent streets of Metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri. During my prison sentence I realized that I

was tricked and it was more damaging to my family and especially my children, (Akeya and Darion) I was devastated. I could not see my children or my nieces grow up the first half of their childhood. I began to pray diligently for forgiveness for my past mistakes, and I asked God to "reveal to me the purpose that He intended for my life." That is when I received the vision to establish ACOPP and Second Chance STL. Since being released from prison on June 17, 2006, I have put all of my thoughts and efforts into serving God, and being a good father to my children.

On July 2, 2008 I founded ACOPP and promised God that I would support as many youth as I can. Through my ministry and also as many adults that I can through the Second Chance Ministry. I thank God for blessing ACOPP to grow tremendously within the last 14 years and I welcome all United States residents to join me in our ministry by supporting, volunteering, and partnering with us

On Sunday May 15<sup>th</sup> 2022, we are calling for volunteers to walk with us in the "Annie Malone Parade" (May Day Parade) and help pass out flyers, speak with children, and help organize new volunteers. You can support by **Clicking here. <https://acopp4change.org/>**

**I pray that this article helps you in your mission, and hope to see you at the next Bruh To Brotha Forum.**

**DATE: May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**TIME: 12:00 PM (CST) / 1:00 PM (EST)**

**LOCATION: ZOOM**

# ACE's TEST

[https://americanspcc.org/take-the-aces-quiz/?gclid=Cj0KcQjwvLOTBhCJARIsACVldV0z9W\\_abumoWVRu0FMae6hBd74d3j7il6yq9YINer2SJGvhn0JwLpoaApSKEALw\\_wcB](https://americanspcc.org/take-the-aces-quiz/?gclid=Cj0KcQjwvLOTBhCJARIsACVldV0z9W_abumoWVRu0FMae6hBd74d3j7il6yq9YINer2SJGvhn0JwLpoaApSKEALw_wcB)

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<https://forms.gle/UxukZ7J9sBH9D9Rz9>