



## Love is Influential

*by Oliver Peterson, Associate of Arts student*

I love the feeling of inspiration. When I'm experiencing a moment of inspiration I must create, I must express. Be it literature, poetry, cleaning, designing, or even meditation.

Inspiration is when something within me stirs and whispers: Better, Great, Legendary. It's then that I know I must act now.

The woman to have the greatest impact on my life is my eight-year, young niece. She is an actress, model, comedian, and dictator. She's a basketball player and a pianist, a queen, and a logistician. So when I look at her then at myself, I'm influenced to be better, great, legendary. She reminds me that I must always perform at a higher standard than average, anything less will not suffice. Because it is by her standards of me that she will hold a boyfriend, a fiancé, and her husband. So to her I am a friend, a brother, a father figure, and an uncle.

It is this type of inspiration that makes me take up my responsibility in helping the world become a better place. Any decision I make is influenced by how she may view it now and in the future. It is this influence that will help keep me out of prison because it's hard to explain to her why I missed her championship game and even more difficult to tell her to hold on when she begs for me to come home. I'm afraid of missing any moment where I could have been a positive influence.

I look at her and see the future, my future. In my deepest despair I look at her and find hope. I realize it's impossible for me to settle for less while preaching to her that settling for less is unacceptable. It is her who keeps me conscious someone is always waiting and will have questions. So it's my responsibility to keep my words and actions righteous.

She has changed my way of thinking and has made me more aware of the knowledge that I obtain. Everything I learn I make sure it can benefit her also now and in her future. As a Black woman she is the foundation of the Black identity.

She inspires me and in turn I hope to inspire her so that she will inspire a nation. It is this inspiration which breeds dignity and integrity all from a eight-year young, young woman.