

## Rap Artists Urged to Step Up as Role Models

Written by Keith ID1606

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Hip-Hop/Rap artist and many other things, Will Smith couldn't have said it better. Maybe someone like Will Smith can start the movement to save the music and the hip-hop culture we all love or at least make a difference. There are many other rappers out there that could step up; both young and new to the game and the old veterans that have the power to turn things around. To use their craft for the good of the youth, the hip-hop community and the millions of people that they have the attention of.

Will Smith told the story of his experience with the kids while touring a village in Mozambique, he came across a shack on which someone had scrawled the names of slain rapper Tupac Shakur and Jay-Z. When he asked the boys from the village why the names were there they replied, "your impossible." Not understanding what they meant it was explained to Smith that the kids view what these great black men and many others have done as impossible for them to ever do.

Smith said before the show, "The kids that are making these trends, making these songs, don't understand the level of effect that black Americans have around the world," he said in an interview. " ... Black Americans are so elevated, it's almost worship."

In 1988 Will Smith won the first Rap Grammy for his hit "Parents Just Don't Understand," said he wants hip-hop artists to recognize the platform they have and use it in a positive way. "It's real important to have balance of the imagery. Yes, there are people who fire guns in the street, but there's also doctors who go to work in those areas to feed their children."

The following is where Smith raps up the Hip-Hop game today in a real easy way to understand. Keep in mind that at 36 years old he is a veteran in the game since the 80's. He has been around long enough and around the block enough times to see the evolution of Hip-Hop and its community.

Will Smith points out Common and Mos Def as just a few artists that have a message that should be heard. But, they don't fit into the cookie cut mold of the rap artist of these days. They don't have the gold or diamond teeth, they don't floss the limited edition Bentley's, their videos don't get played on 106 & Park and they don't appeal to the market of kids that get fed the bogus gangsta image.

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On Smith's latest album 'Lost and Found', he even raps about how a veteran in the game such as himself can't even get airplay today, "Black radio, they won't play me though," he raps in one song. "Guess they think that Will ain't hard enough. Maybe I should just have a shootout ... just ignorant, attacking, acting rough. I mean then, will I be black enough?"

But, he sums it up with a statement and an attitude that could as I said earlier change the face and the direction of Hip-Hop today. His current single "Switch" is a top 40 hit, the man once known as the Fresh Prince said he no longer worries about album sales. "I'm an entertainer. I make it and close my eyes," he said. "Sometimes it sells 14 million, sometimes it sells 300,000. For me it's about just doing what I do, and hoping that my artistry makes a difference."

That is the attitude that is missing today because most artists would rather promote a false gangsta image of street creed and be a mogul in everything from clothes, sneakers, sports drinks, liquor and even pornography. No longer is about motivating the youth, starting movements to make a difference or just having fun.

It is about creating false beliefs that you aren't anything unless you wear what they wear, do what they do, roll in a Bentley and all of a sudden it's cool to get shot. You got to be a "Pimp" (should have civil right activists rolling in their graves) rolling on dubs with some ice and some fine hoochies to make it today's world?

I am also starting to see more and more the medias place in this circus. Perfect example is in the news over the past couple of days. I hate to mention his name and give him any publicity at this point. But, 50 Cent is great example of the ignorance in Hip-Hop today.

The great news about 50 these days are his new commercial for his sneakers and the fact that he shot a video in New Jersey the other day. 50 Cent, Mobb Deep (damn not them too?), Tony Yayo and others were on hand in NJ for the video shoot. Where they were treated like God's by 13 and 14 year old kids (who obviously don't know better). The kids there made comment about 50 being their favorite rapper and the cars in the video were just as exciting.

But, I consider the bigger news this week about 50 was him backing out of Live 8 concert

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because of a conflict in schedule with shooting his movie. Some reports say it was just that but, other will show reps for 50 saying it is because 50's standpoint on trade policies. Well if you buy that one I got a limited edition Bentley to sell you!

I find it real ironic that someone can't take time out of their schedule to raise money for AIDS, hunger and world debt to film scenes for a movie titled Get Rich or Die Trying. There is time to shoot videos which make money, time to promote commercials that make money but when it comes time for charity there isn't a empty time slot.

I want to give props to Will Smith for standing up for what he believes in the way he did. To the artists out there that have the power and will step up and voice that they feel the same way. Because there is no way that Smith is the only one that feels like this.

I know that many talented unsigned artists out there with more talent than 50 Cent can't get signed because they won't sell out and don't want a piece of what Hip-Hop is today that feel the same way. There is a also veterans in the game that feel the same way as well that need to jump on the train that Will Smith put in motion.