

# ARE YOU COLOR STRUCK?

NOT SURE IF YOU  
HAVE ANY BIASES  
WHEN IT COMES TO  
SKIN COLOR? TAKE  
OUR QUIZ

By Ylonda Gault Caviness

**1** At work you're introduced to two district managers—a latte-skinned sister with a Halle-style shag and a darker exec rocking short twists. You:

**A** Barely acknowledge Miss Oh-So Natural; you don't want folks thinking you're too radical.

**B** Politely ignore the fair-skinned manager; she's probably stuck up anyway.

**C** Exchange contact information with both women and follow up with an invitation for coffee.

**2** At the salon, flipping through the latest issue of *ESSENCE*, you notice arm-baring, Lady O-inspired looks are the rage for spring. You:

**A** Wish you'd followed Mama's advice and scrubbed your dark elbows with lemon juice.

**B** Decide to try that skin lightening cream on your elbows.

**C** Vow to start hitting the gym to tone up your arms for spring.

**3** You step off the plane ready to enjoy your Caribbean vacation. When the sun's warmth bathes you, you feel:

**A** Dread. You avoid the beach entirely, thinking, *I'm not trying to get any blacker.*

**B** Caution. You diligently apply sunscreen every hour on the hour to ensure you don't get too dark.

**C** Bliss. You're a beach babe ready to frolic in the sun.

**4** Girl Scouts are selling cookies at the market. A dark-skinned trooper and a biracial scout are in the booth. You:

**A** Can't get over how cute the light-skinned girl is and immediately buy four boxes of Thin Mints from her.

**B** Purchase a box from each scout but give the pretty crinkly-haired girl a smile.

**C** Look both girls directly in the eyes as you buy your cookies and tell them how pretty and smart they both are.

## YOUR SCORE

### MOSTLY A'S COLOR-STRUCK

You show preference for light skin. Ask yourself why you think beige is better and consider the source of that attitude. "We have

to challenge and transform our so-called standards of beauty," says psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint.

### MOSTLY B'S SHADE-CONSCIOUS

You don't deliberately discriminate, but you have a slightly skewed sense of skin color. Open discussions are critical. "It's especially important that our girls' voices are heard," says Janie Ward, chair of Africana studies at Simmons College. "As mothers, aunts and sisters we all have to start talking."

### MOSTLY C'S FREE OF COLOR BIAS CONGRATULATIONS. YOU HAVE A HEALTHY SENSE OF IDENTITY.

"It's liberating to know that despite generations of indoctrination, you can reject the self-hating attitude that says everything Black is evil," says Poussaint. Now help a sister out. When you notice color bias, call it. We have a collective responsibility to raise awareness about how colorism hurts us all.