



# Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America

By Charisse Jones, Kumea Shorter-Gooden

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Based on the African American Women's Voices Project, *Shifting* reveals that a large number of African American women feel pressure to compromise their true selves as they navigate America's racial and gender bigotry. Black women "shift" by altering the expectations they have for themselves or their outer appearance. They modify their speech. They shift "White" as they head to work in the morning and "Black" as they come back home each night. They shift inward, internalizing the searing pain of the negative stereotypes that they encounter daily. And sometimes they shift by fighting back.

With deeply moving interviews, poignantly revealed on each page, *Shifting* is a much-needed, clear, and comprehensive portrait of the reality of African American women's lives today.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

USA Today correspondent Jones and psychologist Shorter-Gooden initiated the African American Women's Voices Project and recorded the experiences of 333 survey respondents and 71 interviewees. The results are here compiled to form an urgent narrative, doggedly chasing the hypothesis of the book's title: that the twin bigotries of race and gender force black women to constantly "shift" between identities in order to accommodate the expectations thrust upon them by black men and white America. "From one moment to the next, they change their outward behavior, attitude, or tone, shifting 'white,' then shifting 'Black' again, shifting 'corporate,' shifting 'cool!'" The authors argue that the contemporary survival tactic of shifting is rooted in slavery, but history does not figure strongly, with the bulk of the book composed of quoted testimonies from the research subjects, tracking their shifting experiences in the realms of communication, mental health, beauty standards, romance, child-rearing and religion. Compelling and educational tribulations are piled on, but the authors rarely pause to reflect on the contradictions or solutions the stories present. Yet the book makes a real contribution, as men and women of all races will find it an illuminating if sometimes shocking record of life between two "isms."

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From [Booklist](#)

Jones, national correspondent for *USA Today*, and Shorter-Gooden, a psychologist, team up to examine how black women cope with racism, sexism, and the myths--from the image of hypersexuality to long-suffering strength--that govern their lives. Based on research garnered from the African American Women's Voices Project, the largest study to date of black women, the authors detail these women's survival strategy of "shifting" as needed into different roles, personas, and even language appropriate to corporate America or black communities. Drawing on surveys of a cross section of black women, the authors cite troubling statistics on dissatisfaction with their image and their treatment. The authors intersperse the statistics with excerpts from interviews that illustrate how individual women are coping. The poignant individual portraits provide a glimpse into the lives of black women in the church, in their families, at work, in personal relationships, as the women behind the statistics speak with their own voices about the personal cost of the need for "shifting." *Vanessa Bush*

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Review

"A deeply moving, intimate and important book about the emotional costs for Black women in white America." (Harriet Lerner, author of *The Dance of Anger*)

"Always moving, at times haunting, and often inspirational, *Shifting* provides a richly textured look at the lives of Black women." (Bebe Moore Campbell, author of *What You Owe Me*)

"Searing...as I read *Shifting*... I wanted to rip out chapters and send them to nearly everyone I know." (Gwen Ifill)

"Jones and Shorter-Gooden are wise, warm and candid, breaking new ground.... An important and powerful book for us all. (Mary Pipher)

"Meaningful and poignant...this well researched and beautifully written book is a must read." (William

Pollack, Ph.D., author of *Real Boys* William Pollack, Ph.D., author (Booklist)

“Poignant...based on research garnered from the African American Women’s Voices Project, the largest study to date of black women.” (Booklist)

“Stress is a common theme...the authors found good news...’We’re learning that we don’t have to lose ourselves.’” (Essence)

“Urgent...compelling and educational...a real contribution.” (Publishers Weekly)

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Doris Anderson:**

The experience that you get from *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* will be the more deep you looking the information that hide inside words the more you get considering reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* giving you enjoyment feeling of reading. The article author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by simply anyone who read the idea because the author of this book is well-known enough. That book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this specific *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* instantly.

#### **Charles Owens:**

Your reading 6th sense will not betray an individual, why because this *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* book written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book which can be understand by anyone who also read the book. Written inside good manner for you, leaking every ideas and publishing skill only for eliminate your hunger then you still uncertainty *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* as good book not only by the cover but also from the content. This is one guide that can break don’t assess book by its handle, so do you still needing one more sixth sense to pick this specific!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

#### **Tiffaney Serna:**

Reading a book to become new life style in this season; every people loves to learn a book. When you go through a book you can get a large amount of benefit. When you read guides, you can improve your knowledge, because book has a lot of information onto it. The information that you will get depend on what forms of book that you have read. If you would like get information about your research, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself you are able to a fiction books, this sort of us novel, comics, in addition to soon. The *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* provide you with new experience in looking at a book.

**Steven Strong:**

What is your hobby? Have you heard that will question when you got students? We believe that that question was given by teacher to their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everybody has different hobby. And also you know that little person including reading or as reading become their hobby. You must know that reading is very important in addition to book as to be the point. Book is important thing to add you knowledge, except your current teacher or lecturer. You get good news or update in relation to something by book. Numerous books that can you go onto be your object. One of them are these claims Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America.

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