

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Is A Good Crucian Man Hard To Find? Crucian Women Give Mixed Answers

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ST. CROIX -- What is it like for Virgin Islands women, in this case Crucian women, to find a good man? It's no secret that many of the island's men have migrated to the U.S. mainland seeking financial stability in wake of the territory's economic downturn.

There are still Crucian men on the island who are looking for a good woman, but of the three women that *The Consortium* spoke to over the weekend, two said a good man is hard to find on St. Croix, while the other woman, Sheelene Gumbs, disagreed.

"I guess I'm in a different position than most people, but I'm not looking for a man," Gumbs told *The Consortium* on Saturday morning at the Frederiksted waterfront. "I feel

to myself that the amount of things that I do and what I want to do for the community, I really don't have the time, and I haven't come across anybody that would make me say, 'okay, I can give up all of this.'

A lot of us have friends and our friends are perfect for us, but they're boring, so you'd never be in a relationship with them. - Sheelen Gumbs.

Gumbs said although she does not believe that that special someone would want her to give up what she's doing, "I believe that a relationship needs to have balance, and so you have to be able to balance time, activities and family," she said.

"You have to do "you" time because if you don't, you stop being the person that you are and turn into somebody else -- and then that leads them to want to cheat because you stopped being the person that attracted them in the first place; and I'm not trying to do that," she added.

So to the women who complain that a majority of the men left the island, or are in jail, or are womanizers, Gumbs said the problem is these women are looking for men who perfectly fits their mold; which drastically lessens the field of opportunity because no one man can be exactly what a woman is looking for.

Gumbs, a Crisis Counselor at Women's Coalition, said she often say to other women that there are good men on St. Croix. "Now, whether they are compatible men, that's where the problem comes in. Because you may want a man that's responsible, and a responsible man can have a job, he could own a business, but he has no idea how to take care of you," she said. "And they fail to see that they compartmentalize their lives."

Gumbs, affectionately called "Shelly", then pointed to a problem that goes deeper than the story told on the surface. She said Caribbean women were taught by their parents not to depend on no one but themselves, and were encouraged to excel -- and that's a good thing. But in a woman's quest to succeed -- which includes finding the perfect man -- the field of eligible candidates instantly becomes narrower.

I've been back here since 2008 and had two relationships -- both church relationships and these men didn't know what they were about. - Diane G. John.

"They want to know your credit score, they want to know if you're doing well, do you have your own house or do you live with your mama, you paying your own bills or you on food stamp. It's no longer a matter of a relationship being a unit where, if he has the potential, and starts to recognize his potential, and starts to move in his reality, then you move with him," said Gumbs, who is also a black belt in taekwondo and president of the Virgin Islands Taekwondo Federation.



Sheelene "Shelly" Gumbs

And Gumbs said she's not suggesting that one settles for status quo.

"If you are somebody who has your own home and that's important to you, that's part of your values, don't look for somebody who lives in the projects or lives with their mama because you're going to become their caretaker, and you're not going to have an equal relationship; you're going to get into problems."

Even so, the well-accomplished Gumbs said that most times, what women consider as perfect is only their idea of what is, "because you may not know what is perfect for you until you meet someone and get to know them better," she said.

"A lot of us have friends and our friends are perfect for us, but they're boring, so you'd never be in a relationship with them."

Gumbs agreed that a young man with dreams living in the "ghettos" can still strive to be in a relationship with a lawyer; and that lawyer should not look down on him because of his current situation.

"Everybody has potential; making your potential a reality, you are allowed to work towards where your end result is going to be. But if you have no idea of how you want to get there, or you're just talking and not moving towards getting there, you're never going to achieve and that's going to be a problem because the lawyer is not going to want to

love somebody that she has to take of. She wants when there is a long day at court and things aren't going well, she can come home and have a conversation."

Sometimes you need to come out of your checklist. - Cliaunjel Williams.

Diane G. John, *VI Consortium's* second interviewee, begged to differ. She said finding a man on the Island, Christian or not, has been painstaking, and that as a Christian she like "snakes."



to find a good man," she began. "I've hips -- both church relationships and

Diane G. John pose for VI Consortium

on Sunday at Fort Christiansvaern

Diane, who is currently dating a Caucasian Christian man, said it wasn't until five years later that she met the person "that was really worth my time, who really proved and showed that he was truly interested in me, getting to know me and seeing Diane for who she is, and it's been great."

Diane sees the problem to be a generation of men "that just don't know what a good relationship is." She said a lot of her male friends grew up in single-parent homes and therefore may not know how to treat a woman, "so you really can't live what you don't

know," she went on.

As a Christian woman, Diane said the playing field is even narrower, and even then, the men in church, she said, tend to be "wolves."

"Snakes, yes," she emphasized.

Diane said some Christian women she knows have settled for men who do not fit their criteria, but it's not a compromise she's willing to make.

"If I have to stay single to be happy as opposed to being in a relationship and being unhappy, I'll be single all day long. Diane said her standard is "someone who loves the Lord, he has respect, he takes initiative and is proactive.

"I like someone who gets up and go and know what he wants and somebody who has a great relationship with his family."

Diane, who also has a son, said the right man doesn't need to be a millionaire, but he needs to show that he's striving to succeed in life.

Ryan, Diane's boyfriend, was sitting next to her on Sunday afternoon during the interview, listening intently to what the woman who might be his future wife had to say about their relationship. He was pleased.

Diane, however, motioned to her left hand's ring finger and said, "I'm still not seeing anything on there."

"I'm trying to be patient, as patient as I can be," she said. Ryan, who told *VI Consortium* that he was awestricken when he first met Diane, acknowledged that there's been some turbulence in the relationship, but generally it's been worth every moment.

Claunjel Williams, next month, will become Claunjel Williams-Mulley. The stunning beauty is set to marry the love of her life in a ceremony at her father's church, taking the holy vows of matrimony and a hopeful eternity with a man named Jermaine Mulley.

VI Consortium caught up with the devout 20-something Christian after a service at Speak the Word Ministries, asking her the same question that was posed to the other women.



Claunjel Williams with fiancé Jermaine

Mulley

"I do think it's difficult to find a good man here, and I think it's more of a social thing and where you go to find these men," she began. "I feel like a lot of women have this idea in their head of how their man should be and one thing I had to struggle with is realizing that it's not for me to necessarily choose or pick, because then I'm creating the person, making them into how I want them to be and that's not really how they were supposed to be."

She added: "It's more so knowing your standards, knowing what you want. Some people like different things, but for me, according to my standards, I would say it's hard."

Williams, a teacher and [former Miss St. Croix](#), said the men of today don't focus on long-term relationships but rather the here and now. She said they are easily caught up in various situations, and if they're not guided, the many distractions of the world will lead them astray.

"There are so many distractions out there, and if you don't have that stability at home, it's going to be very hard to find that young man to really commit."

And in relation to solutions to the problem of the lack of men, Williams said she knows women who have been approached by men, but because these women have a checklist that the men have not quite lived up to, they've turned them down.

"Sometimes you need to come out of your checklist," Williams concluded.