

# BE Modern Man Dedrick Sims

**One Word That Describes You:** Grateful

**What does being one of the BE Modern Man 100 Honorees mean to you?**

Being one of the BE Modern Man100 is an extremely humbling accomplishment given the thousands of men across the country who are deserving of this honor. It means that the work that I've labored in for over 20 years on behalf of young men of color, is speaking for itself, and it's my hope that it will live on for generations to come. I'm grateful for the recognition, and it's my desire that I leave a legacy marked by service and preparation of young men to positively impact their communities and leave a legacy of their own.

**What are you doing as a BEMM to help support black male achievement now or in the future?**

I created the Sims-Fayola Foundation in 2011 with a mission to improve the life outcomes of urban males. Over the years, my foundation has developed three "pillars": Advocacy/Awareness, Capacity Building, and Education, which undergird our vision and mission. Under the umbrella of each pillar, we conduct large forums in major cities to discuss the challenges, potential, strengths, dreams, and support options based on the cultural realities. I also work with hundreds of school administrators and teachers through workshops and coaching to increase their capacity to create learning experiences that lend themselves to the way these young men interact with the world. Finally, we've created our own school model for young men and also help other groups who'd like to open schools to do so. This foundation is built to support young men now and develop them to serve as leaders now and in their future.

**What are some examples of how you turned struggle into success?**

As a youth, I was a victim of child abuse and neglect. In those silent moments of trying to understand 'why?' I often saw visions of myself speaking to thousands of people from a stage. I've questioned what the "stage" was over the years. Now I know the stage is the "ministry" of what I do for young men of color. The abuse and neglect that I endured prepared me for the ministry that I walk in today. As a child and young man, I had hoped to be heard, safe, and feel like I mattered. Now that ministry has crystallized into the development of boys' schools, workshops, character development curricula, grants, books, a foundation, and motivational speaking—all for the young men and those who serve them.

**What is your "Extraordinary Impact?"**

I would consider my "Extraordinary Impact" to be my demonstrated commitment to improving the life outcomes of young African American men through school programming, mentoring, building the capacity of those who serve them, and creating schools that reflect their needs, culture, and strengths.

**What is an important quality you look for in your relationships with others?**

The most important qualities I look for in my relationship with others are encouragement, support, and kindness. The people I surround myself with are those who sharpen me or those that consider me their sharpener. In these kinds of relationships, those qualities can mean

life or death! Therefore, those qualities are extremely important to me in building or establishing relationships.

**What are some immediate projects you are working on?**

We just finished designing and receiving approval to open a 9-12 STEM charter school in Arkansas this fall. Additionally, we just submitted a charter application in Arkansas to open our all-boys model school as well. Furthermore, I am also finishing my third book called *Hey Man, We Just Talkin'* for young men ages 11-18. It should be out in the fall. Finally, we are expanding our character development curriculum, Empowered Ambition Youth Development Program for Young Men (EAYD), to five more schools in Denver this fall. The overarching goal of our EAYD Program is to assist our young men in increasing their capacity to be better stewards of their choices, careers, and ultimately, their lives while developing into positive role models. These are all the projects happening at this time.

**What is the best advice you ever received?**

It's good to invest in others, but it's more important to invest in yourself. Your health and spirituality are the things that allow you to do for others. I've taken that to heart.

**What is some advice you have for other men who want to make a difference?**

Find out what you value most about yourself and build a ministry around developing that in other young men.

**How do you prep for an important business meeting and/or event?**

I live by the motto, "If you stay ready, you don't have to get ready." The meetings in my life usually revolve around my work. Therefore, I am always increasing my capacity to serve through reading, workshops, research, and life experiences. In a sense, I'm always "getting and staying ready!"

**As a busy Modern Man, how do you unwind on vacation?**

Hands down it has to be golf! I am an avid golfer, and I love the game. My best vacation had to be the trip to the Virgin Islands. On that vacation, I had a chance to play golf at an exclusive club and loved every minute of it, even the moment when an iguana fell out of the tree as I was addressing an errant tee shot into the woods. When that iguana fell on my shoulder, it and I both ran like we were at a track meet! It was classic and unforgettable.

**If you could travel and stay anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?**

I'd like to go to the Jerusalem region and trace the steps of Jesus. My relationship with Him is real, and I'd like to walk where He walked and see some of what He saw on his way to doing what no one else would have done for me.

**Anything else you'd like to say?**

Again, I'm extremely grateful for this honor, and I pray it inspires and reaffirms the work that other men are doing for young men of color in the hidden recesses of this country.