

Issue I

# MORE

*Celebrating Women*



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## A few words

This has been a long time coming. If you've been a contributor, you know this was to come out back in the late spring, early summer, but WHEW. We made it. We had delays, we had COVID, we have injustices that demand our attention, and we have had many a break needed to recoup and recenter. Nonetheless, together we have created a community that is taking peoples' breath away and challenging us to think outside the box and evaluate ourselves.

I created MORE with the intention to help in some small way Make Opportunities Reachable for Everyone. The content has been curated to educate and inspire. With that knowledge and aspiration, I hope you feel compelled to act. Take action in your own life by making changes for yourself, or to look hard at the businesses you support and see if your dollars are going towards small businesses with missions bigger than themselves.

This first issue is focused on women. We are taking a look at incredible capabilities women have, the way women are misjudged, and ways we can support and lift one another instead of battling each other. I hope this issue leaves you as inspired as I am by the women that created it.

All my love,  
*Arianna Cruz*



*As Told by Us*



*Being Feminine*



*True Colors*



*Contributor's Choice*



*Contributor's Choice*



*Men's Media*



*Sustainable Style*



*As Told by Us*



*Mother Nature*



*HijabSoForeign*



*As Told by Us*



*Mineralogy Exclusive*



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# AS TOLD BY ME

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Society often projects assumptions and stories on women without knowing them, so we're taking the narrative back. For this shoot, we started conversations about how the society's perception impacts how we view ourselves and whether or not society's assumed story line ups with our own.

Spoiler—they don't.

# KELLY LIANG



Growing up, I felt a bit isolated since I was always the only Asian person in my classes. Because I knew how terrible it felt to be lonely and isolated, I always did my best to treat others kindly to those that were excluded in group settings. I felt good knowing my interaction with someone had made them feel comfortable when they felt too shy to reach out to other people. However, there were always people perceiving my good intentions negatively. I started hearing people call me "fake" or a "people pleaser".

people pleaser  
dramatic  
fake  
maintenance  
awkward  
pushover  
mediocre  
partier



This really impacted my self-esteem and forced me second guess my actions of being forward towards others. Although I knew what people were saying behind my back, I knew I had pure intentions and was doing it out of the goodness of my heart. This helped me regain my confidence in myself and continue my efforts to be a person that others could count on. Despite all of the things people may say about me, I know the way that I viewed myself was more important than anybody else's could ever be.

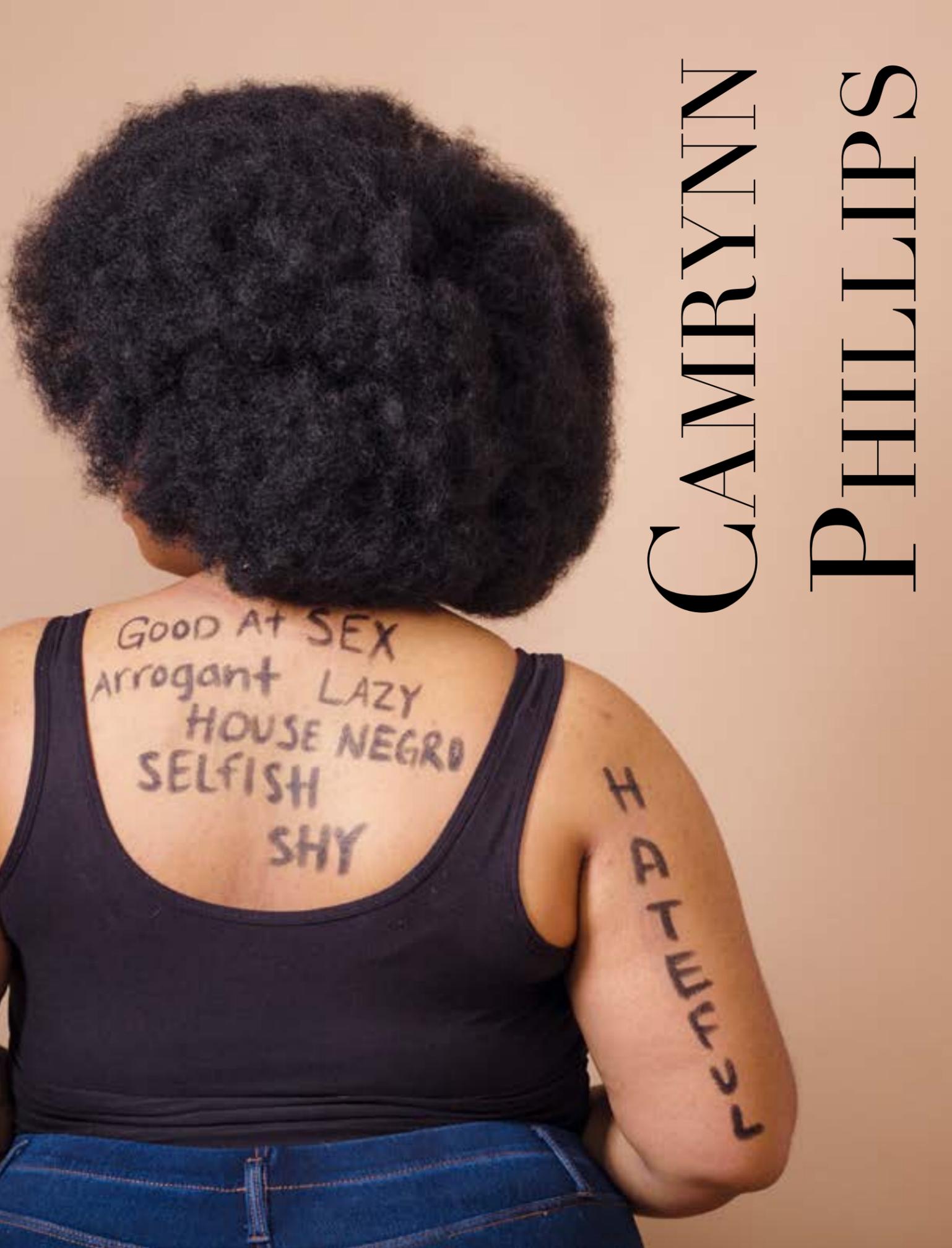
# Because of their sacrifice, I am able to live my dream and take care of others.

*I am a first generation Chinese-American. I was born and raised in the mid-west after my parents had immigrated from China. I had a difficult time growing up in a dominantly white neighborhood since there was very little diversity in my schools and the media. It made me resent my culture because I was so different from everyone else and made me almost resent being born Chinese. I remember praying that I would one day wake up as an "American": blond-haired, blue-eyed, girl-next-door.*

*However, I started gaining more appreciation and love for my culture once I had traveled back to China and saw the beauty of being Chinese. My family's constant support has also made me into a strong, caring person after seeing all they had left behind and sacrificed to come give me a better life in America. This fueled my drive to work hard and be compassionate and caring towards others as a Registered Nurse. Because of their sacrifice, I am able to live my dream and take care of others.*



kind thoughtful  
loving family-  
oriented funny  
warm open  
social caring  
thoughtful  
forgiving gentle  
funny patient  
open creative  
gentle loving  
family-oriented  
patient open  
creative diverse  
cultured  
social caring



# CAMRYNN PHILLIPS



*It's hard for me to pinpoint when I realized the disconnect between how I am perceived and how it made me feel. I think the only thing that really sticks out is this idea of me "acting white." I've heard it since at least middle school and it's never necessarily bother me in-regards-to who I am, but rather the stigma and stereotypes that are associated with what it and what it means to be black...Black women hold VERY few roles [in the media] when they are in a place of power. We're perceived as masculine rather than strong and feminine. Give black women better back stories than the same played out single/abused mom archetype. It's rare that I see someone that looks like me, or the people I grew up around, being portrayed as successful and happy in the media.*

*I think it's hard, especially at this point in life to separate what you believe people think of you and what you think and hope to portray. Very few of the things that I believe people think of me, have I actually been told. I self-reflect a lot and think about the message my actions might give off as well as my explanations for them. Each individual needs to look within themselves and pay more attention to how you perceive someone that fits a certain narrative in your head. We need to accept that we all have biases and stop ignoring it and acting like we don't. We need to observe those and figure out what has led us to that mental path. Think about how our experiences and who we surround ourselves shape our perception of others.*

*I'm fortunate enough to be surrounded by such diversity, specifically within my family, that every aspect of me has been influenced by the different people who I've surrounded myself with, but I've always fit in somewhere. I've always understood that everyone is "different" so I've never truly felt "different," or like an outcast because I've always known that's how it supposed to be. And my "differences" have always been celebrated or just seen as a-part of me.*

**I'm willing to risk major things in life for what I believe is right to me.**

*I've actually grappled with this concept [who I am] for years and will ask people to describe me because I have no clue who I am or how I'm perceived. I just do whatever feels right to me and am constantly trying to be the best me each day. I'm not sure what that makes me. I can say I'm a creative and I'm outspoken. I'm willing to risk major things in life for what I believe is right to me. I've given up the path into forensic anthropology a year before I was supposed to finish, to focus on and study the fight for civil rights. I'm a giver and a lover. I hope to be a light and inspiration in other's lives whenever they need it.*



proud  
forgiving  
observant  
aware  
trusting  
dedicated  
outspoken  
aware  
trusting  
proud  
dedicated

honest  
supportive  
side

# LUISA MACER



hot-tempered unstable  
uneducated lazy illegal  
follower complacent  
poor ignorant perfect  
criminal lazy broken  
ignorant

*I realized the disconnect early on in high school and throughout college. People would assume I was "American" simply because I did not fit their perceived stereotype of a Mexican woman. I wasn't dark skinned, I had no accent, and I carried myself in a mature way. Well what is a Mexican woman supposed to look like or behave? You combine these elements and it created a trigger for me to become an advocate for my community.*

*The media can help the community understand diversity is more than just different races, its different perspectives. "Thought" diversity is often overlooked, but it serves a purpose when you are the only woman in an all male-roundtable. Minorities, immigrants, and under-served communities have stories to tell and the media has the platforms to allow those stories to flourish.*

confident extrovert  
passion bubbly  
brave adventurous  
outgoing over  
confident vibrant  
maternal witty  
positive loyal  
persuasive bubbly  
honest brave  
loyal vibrant



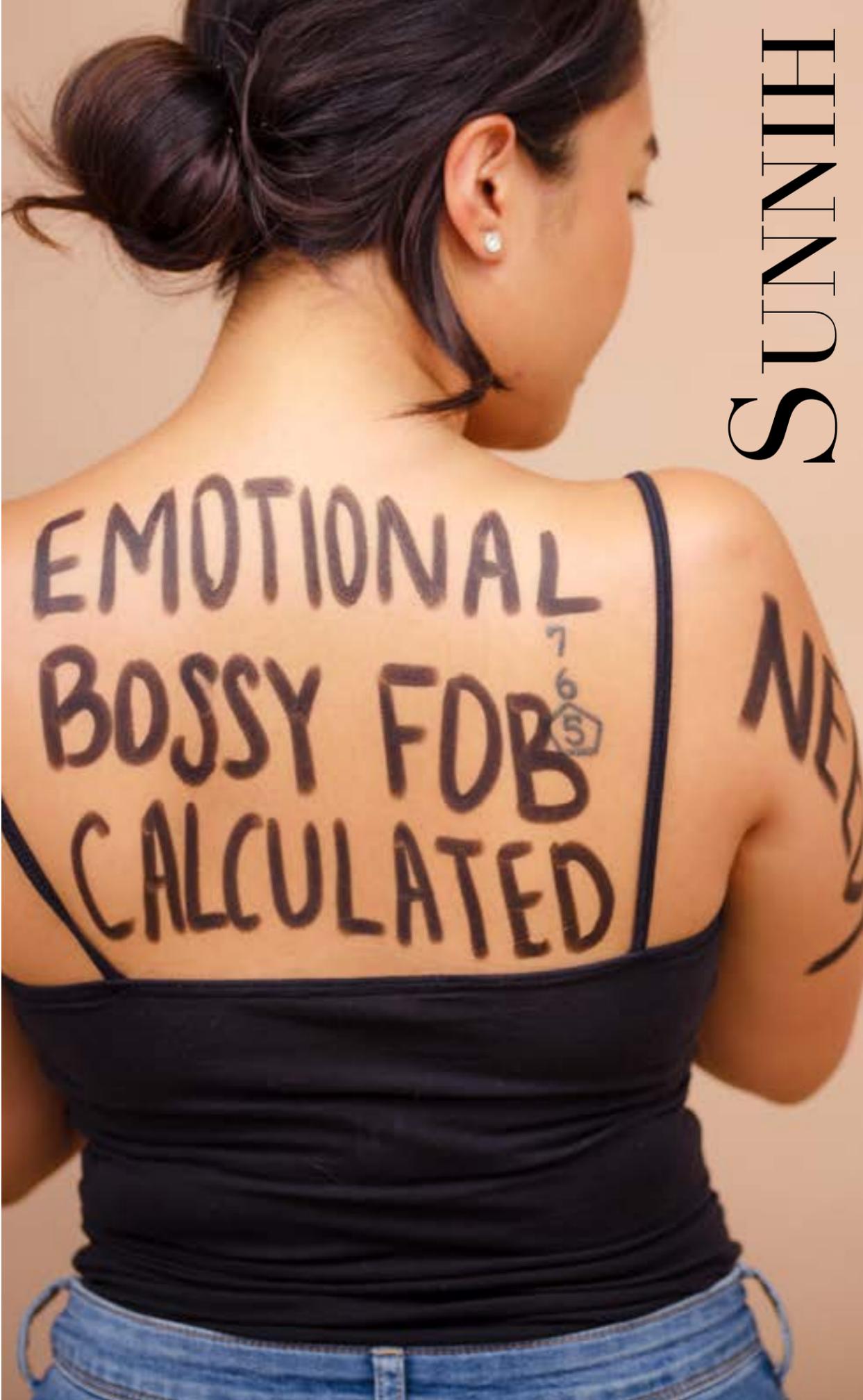
*At a very young age, I had an interest in trying on mom's clothes and would eagerly anticipate a weekend mall trip. Growing up with three older sisters, it was hard not to be a girly-girl. But don't get me wrong, you can easily also find me in sweatpants and in a bun about 90% of the time. My Instagram highlights my everyday life: the good, the bad, and the funny. I like to live in the moment and hardly say no to an adventure. I am also a total foodie. Most of my adventures have revolved around trying a new restaurant or supporting a local business wherever I go. Traveling allows me to experience new places and cultures, and teaches me each time about how much there is to learn about the world. My life revolves around my husband and family. They are my support system and without them, I wouldn't be the woman I am today. I believe in karma: what goes*

**I strive to put out good energy and be a fearless leader in the community.**

*around, comes around, so I strive to put out good energy and be a fearless leader in the community.*

*I have a story to tell and being the only child out of my siblings to pursue a college degree, I know that I have a responsibility to my family in not being another "statistic". College taught me how to use my voice to stand up for those who can't. It pushed my boundaries for what I was capable of and I learned to never let a "NO" stand in my way. Persistence has been key in my professional journey and to always keep breaking the glass ceiling.*



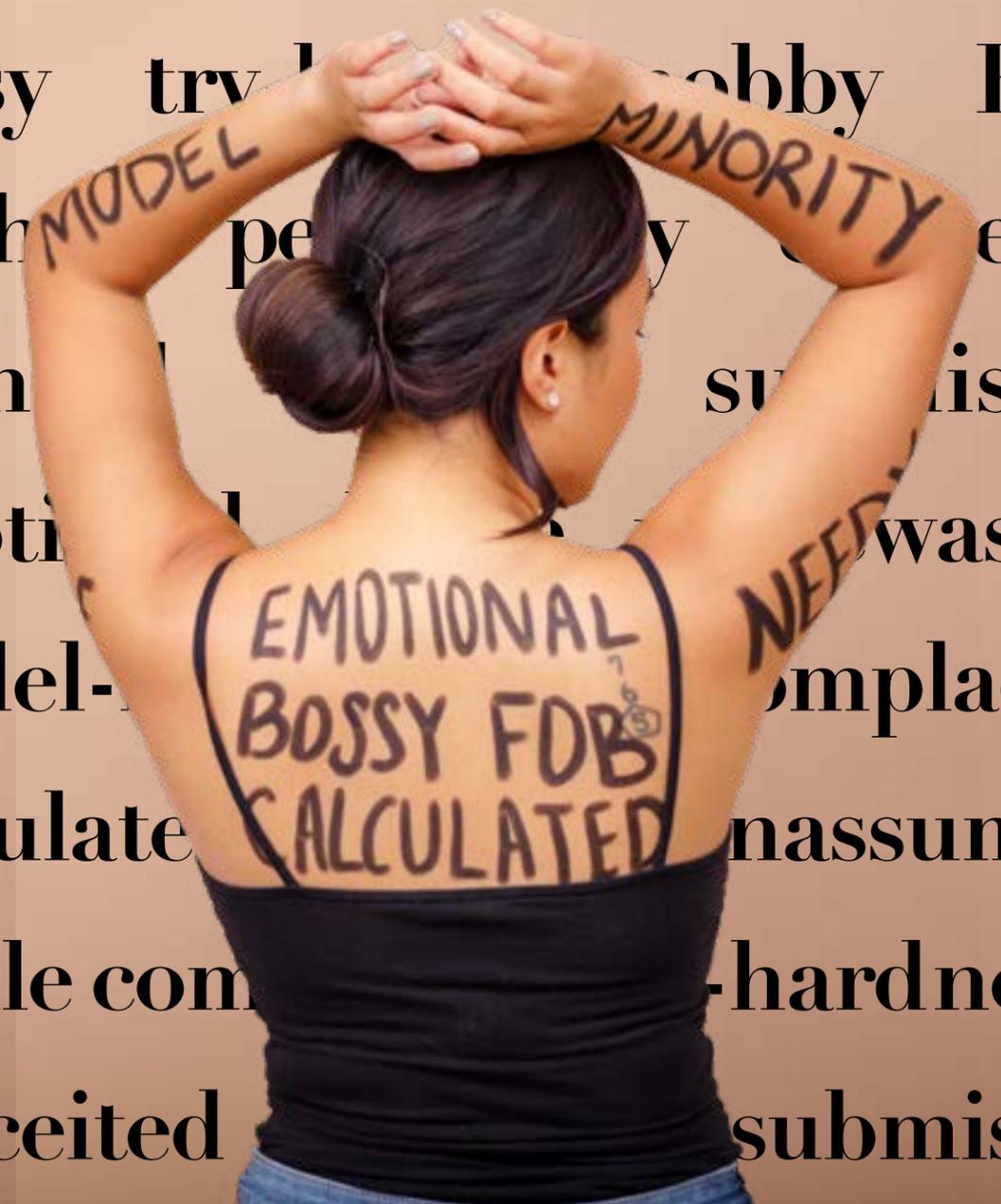


# SUNNIIH FLORES

*Representation is getting better, but why does being Asian have to be so hyper-sexualized? I'm glad to see Asian recognition through K-Pop, but it seems to be the same hyper-sexualization for men that women are portayed as in Anime. People can have preferences, but are you reaching out to someone because you like them or because you think they will fit your idea of a K-Drama character? I'm excited for when we progress past the "token asian" trope.*

*Colorism is also still a huge thing; even within our own ethnicities. By Ali Wong's definition I'm "Half Jungle Asian & Half Fancy Asian" with my dad being Filipino and my mom being South Korean. I don't see a lot of solidarity between different ethnicities.*

bossy try-hard bossy FOB  
teach MODEL pe y eited  
try-hard su missive  
emoti h y washed  
model- complacent  
calculate nassuming  
docile com -hardneedy  
conceited submissive



independent creative  
confident articulate  
advocate empathetic  
captivizing  
clever  
le  
expi  
creati  
thought  
leader



*I used to put a lot of value into what people thought of me. I was in a strange paradox of wanting to blend into the beige tapestry that was Kokomo, Indiana while also being recognized for any possible accolade. I realized that what sets me apart is my personality and how I can put someone at ease in an unfamiliar situation. I have always seen people for who they are and what they could be, if they want to be. I am guided by my motivations to ensure justice and equal opportunity for everyone. To eat, you have to have a seat at the table, and my goal is to make sure everyone's invited. My best friends either went to Stanford, or pursued engineering or pre-med. I didn't even take AP Chem.*

**I was no longer emotional, I was empathetic. I was no longer bossy, I offered intuition.**

*It wasn't until these people, I was healthily competing with my entire life, sat down and told me what my strengths were and how we were excelling in different ways. Their love for me really has no bounds and it comes from enjoying who I am, and not what equation I can solve for them. When I became an orientation leader the things that I had resented before were put to use in a productive way. I was no longer emotional, I was empathetic. I was no longer bossy, I offered intuition to those starting a new chapter in their lives and adapted it to their needs.*





# ARRIA WOOLCOCK

*I am unapologetically an independent, Black woman with a heart of gold. I have so much fire, some people can not handle it. Sometimes, I can be misunderstood until you get to know me. I have a hell of [a lot of] flaws, but I turn those flaws into flawless lessons. Through social media, I have realized people really believe I'm a stuck up bitch on social media.*

angry lo  
pretty bitter  
uneducated  
my blackness  
privilege  
mixed  
loud  
questi  
bitter

*I am Leo woman that takes no bullshit from people. My energy is not for everyone. I love to create and inspire others; it helps with my anxiety. I guess I give [a type of] energy, but I am a very down to earth person. Once they actually meet me they think I'm hilarious and cool.*



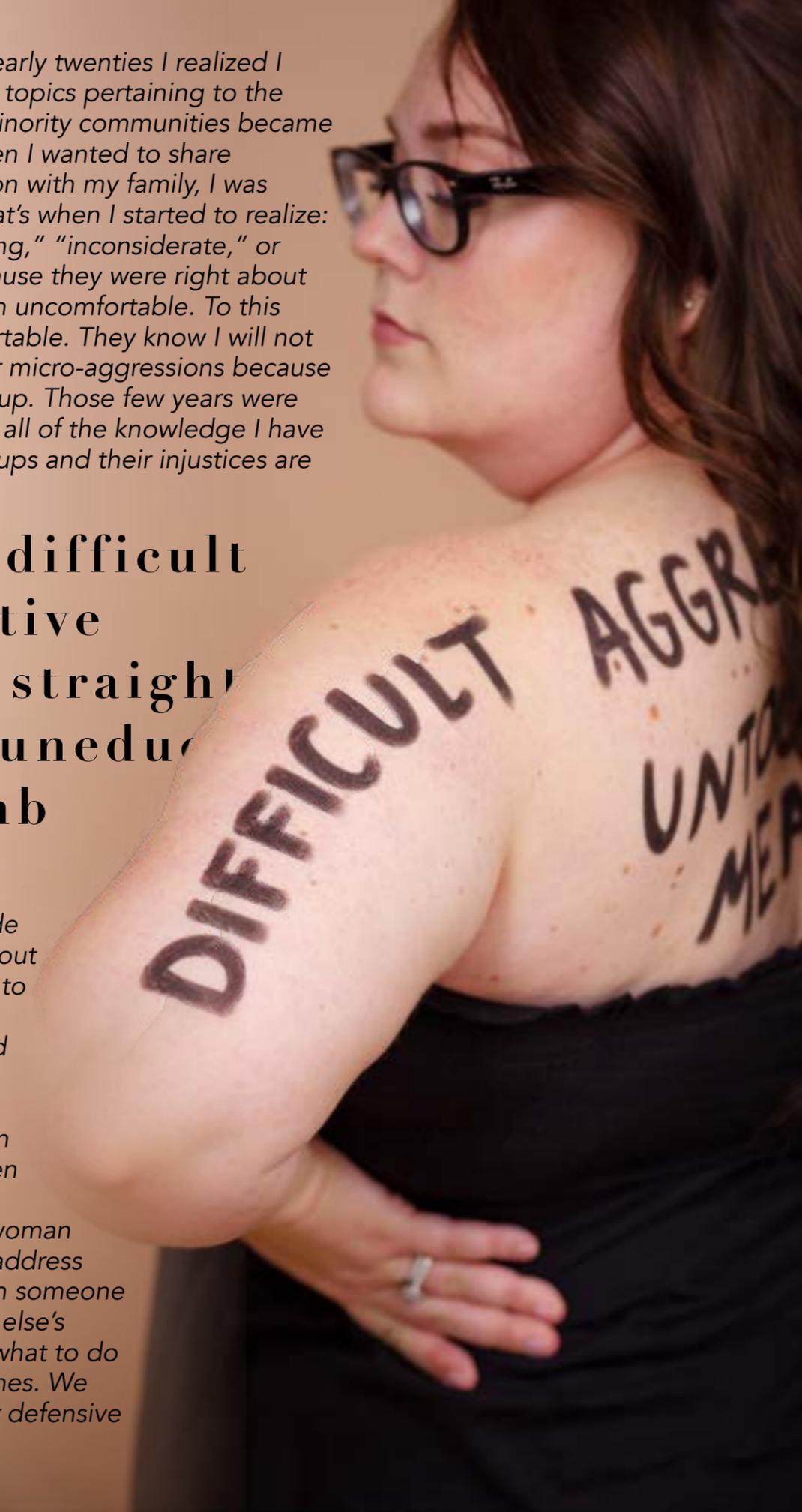
# EMMALEE CULPEPPER



*In my late teen years and early twenties I realized I was very passionate about topics pertaining to the presence of injustices in minority communities became very important to me. When I wanted to share that knowledge and passion with my family, I was completely shut down. That's when I started to realize: when they said I was "wrong," "inconsiderate," or "too much", it wasn't because they were right about me, I was just making them uncomfortable. To this day I make them uncomfortable. They know I will not stand by and listen to their micro-aggressions because I do and always will stand up. Those few years were rough, but it just solidified all of the knowledge I have gained about minority groups and their injustices are completely valid and true.*

**aggressive difficult  
argumentative  
mean loud straight  
emotional uneducated  
stupid dumb  
privileged**

*The media has mostly made women out to be soft without a strong voice, submissive to a male figure—and I hate that. Although I don't mind being loving and caring, I will never be suppressed by someone else. So, when people come across women like me who are loud and I am willing to be the only woman in a room full of men and address them directly, or I say when someone has hurt mine or someone else's feelings, they don't know what to do with us, so they call us names. We are aggressive and loud or defensive and rude.*



*I'm a second time student. Ex sex-trafficking social worker. Ex teacher, and soon to be Cosmetologist. But I have an even bigger slew of backgrounds. Raised in an average all white household but surrounded by people of color my entire upbringing, with a chosen family being all people of color.*

*I recently married the love of my life, and we have battled our way to visibility and validity together. Because myself, and the people in my life are in a minority group, and I am majority-passing, I use all of my voice to defend them and stand up for them.*

**I am  
working  
toward a world  
where people see  
each other for  
human beings.**

*I have always been branded as bossy, rude, or argumentative when it comes to topics that involve minorities. It was hard. It was hard to feel like I couldn't ever say the right thing or have the "right" level of passion.*

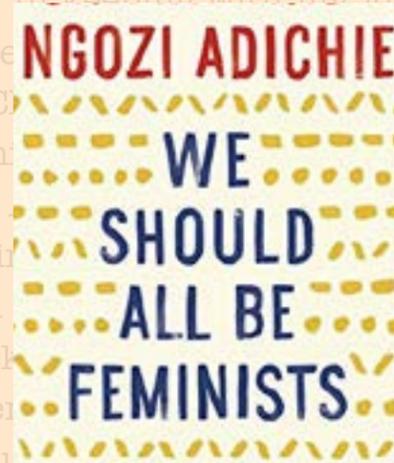
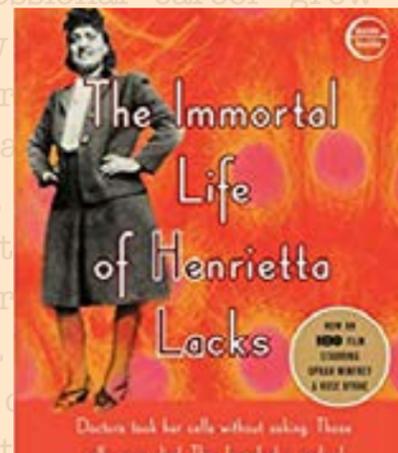
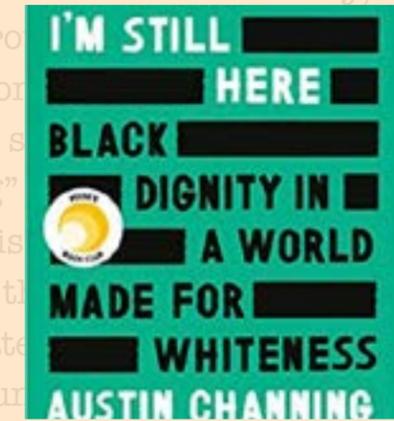
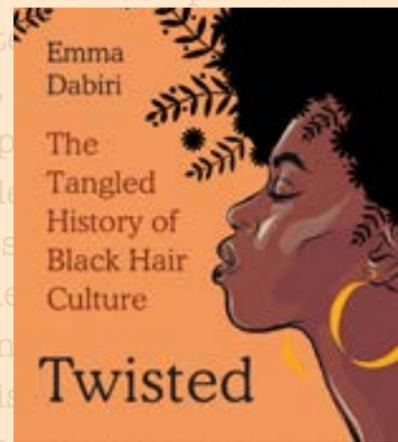
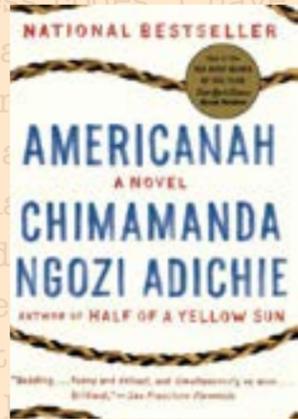
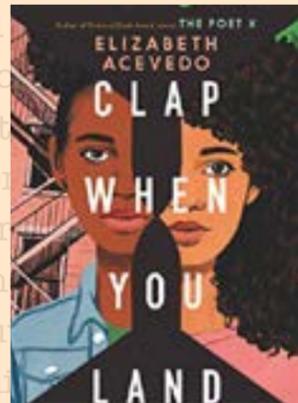
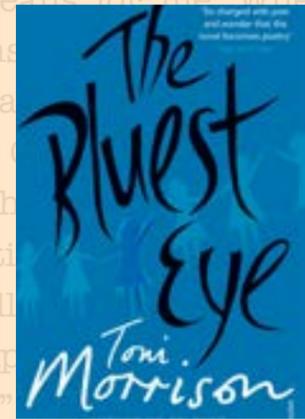
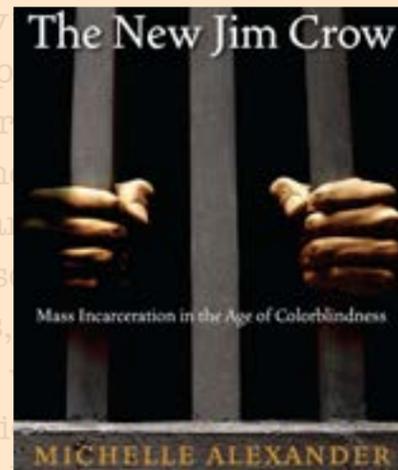
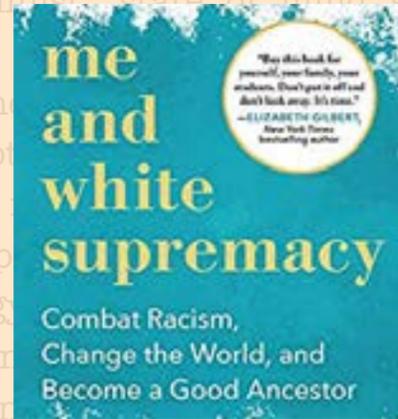
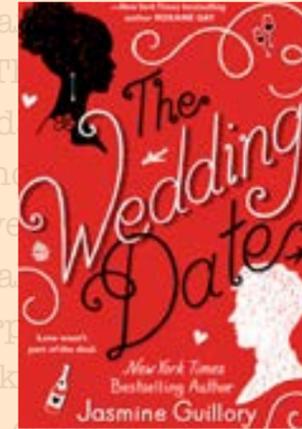
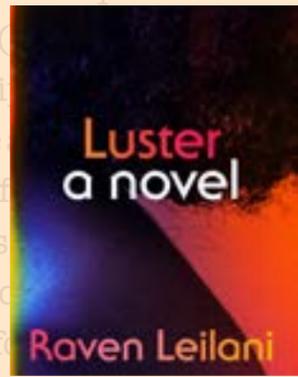
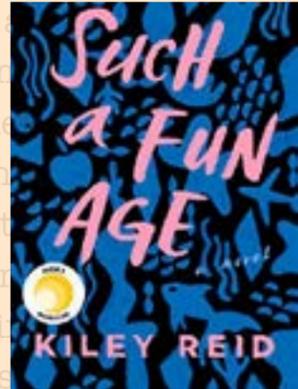
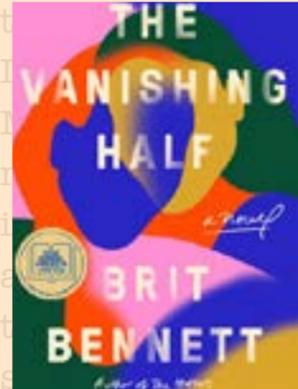
*I realize now that I am not bossy, argumentative and rude. I'm intelligent, reasonable and unapologetic. Going forward in my life, I will have to work to let go of the idea that I am too much or that I am impeding on others when I stand up for others.*

**intelligent passionate driven  
strong val...thered  
fearless...ving...path  
healer...m...valid  
lesbian...ess soft  
lovi...healer  
int...te driven  
st...unbothered  
fe...g beautiful  
h...empathetic**

*Instead I have adopted the idea that I am working toward a world where people see each other for human beings, and see that we deserve equity and quality of life. Universe willing, if I have a daughter, she will know that she can be a badass, she can have a strong opinion about someone controversial, she can share her feelings openly, but she can also be kind and caring and those two things are not mutually exclusive.*

# Contributor's Choice: BOOKS TO READ

Hannah Mills lays out a few of her  
to-be-read books



**Fiction reads:** *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett; *These Ghosts are Family* by Maisy Card; *Such a Fun Age* by Kiley Reid; *Luster* by Raven Leilani; *The Wedding Date* by Jasmine Guillory; *The Care and Feeding of Ravenously Hungry Girls* by Anissa Gray; *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison; *Clap When You Land* by Elizabeth Acevedo; *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; *The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon

**Nonfiction reads:**  
*Me and White Supremacy*  
by Elizabeth Gilbert

*So You Want to Talk About Race*  
by Layla F. Saad

*The New Jim Crow*  
by Michelle Alexander

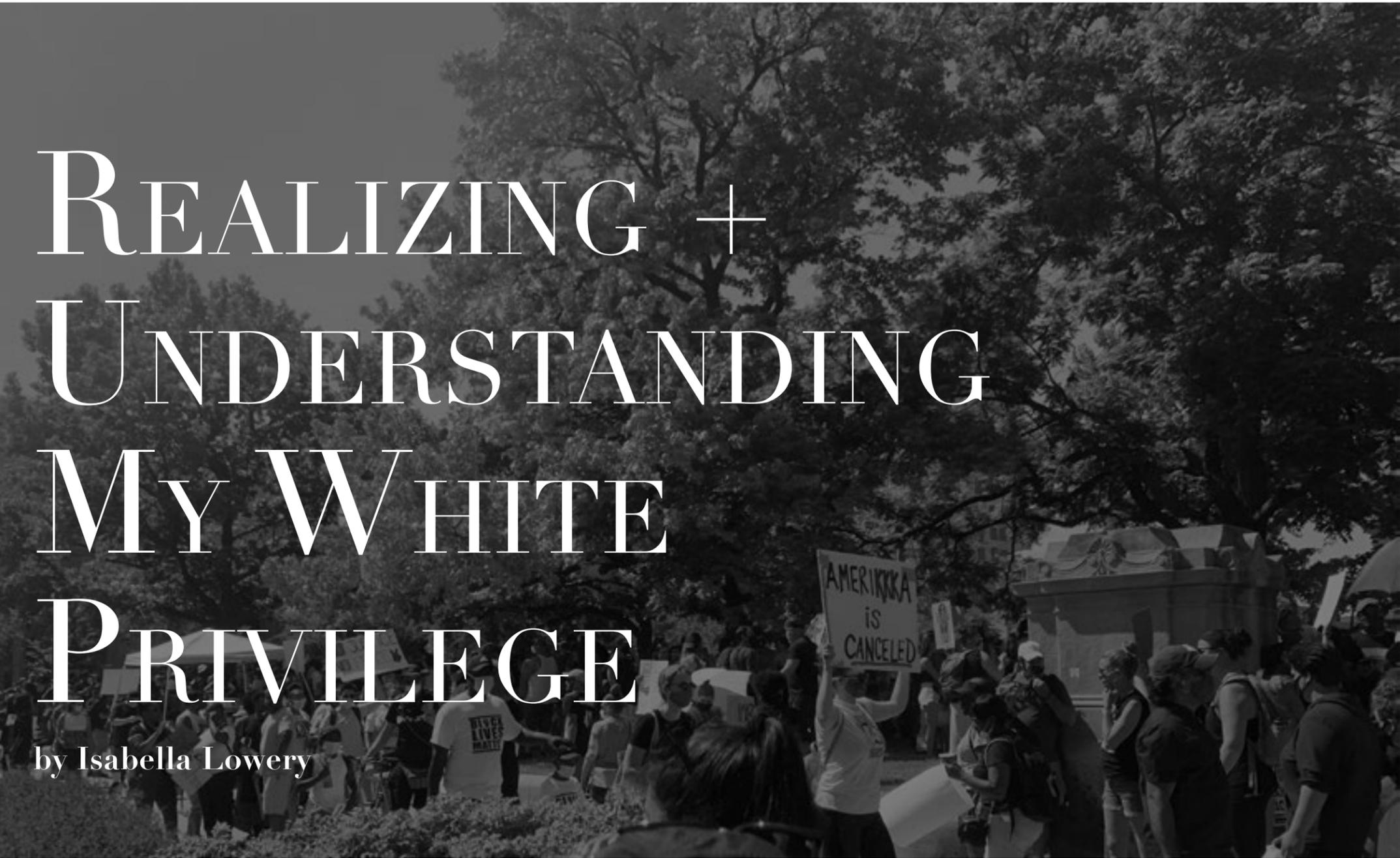
*The Hate You Give*  
by Angie Thomas

*Twisted: The Tangled History of Black Hair Culture*  
by Emma Dabiri

*I'm Still Here*  
by Austin Channing Brown

*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*  
by Rebecca Skloot

*We Should All Be Feminists*  
by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



# REALIZING + UNDERSTANDING MY WHITE PRIVILEGE

by Isabella Lowery

In light of the recent political climate, Isabella has found herself confronted with her own white privilege and wondered how she couldn't have been more aware of it before. But in analyzing public education and white-washed media, she finds it's easy to understand why many people haven't yet confronted their own privileges. Isabella urges us to all actively search for ways to uplift melanated voices and fight against systemically racist systems in our society.

I'm sick and tired of hearing people say they're sick and tired of politics; the irony isn't lost on me, considering the ability to ignore politics is a privilege to begin with. Privilege can refer to any advantage or right that a certain person is given above another, and while there are many different kinds of privilege, the one I have the most experience with is the kind dealing with race. Ah, the elusive white privilege. Maybe you've heard of it through the Trump administration's recent ban on racial sensitivity training for federal agencies<sup>1</sup>, or perhaps from your racist grandmother who called it "propaganda". Maybe you're already educated on the subject and are reading this now in support. Regardless of why you're here, white privilege is defined as just that: privilege someone receives just by being white. More extensively, it gives white individuals advantages that non-whites don't receive.

A few years ago, I was completely unaware of the word. See, I had the privilege of not needing to know, since being white had never affected my life in a negative way. However, over the years, I've learned a lot from my own research as well as listening to people of color (POC) experiences that made me understand white privilege like never before. The recent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has spurred forth a new generation of youth crusaders in an increasingly volatile political climate. Demands are beginning to be met, and though it may not be as quickly or drastic as is necessary, starting a conversation is the first step. Doors that have remained sealed shut for decades are now billowing open, allowing activists all over the world to unite in their causes. Ideas that were once labeled "radical" are now much more accepted and agreed upon by the general public. When the BLM hashtag first popped up in 2013, it was met with overwhelming amounts of backlash—look how far we've come! We have a long way to go, but I believe change is slowly (but steadily) being made. With



that being said, we can't be afraid to speak up: silence in the face of oppression is as much of an offense as being an oppressor yourself. One of the most crucial talking points when dealing with racism is white privilege, and it's prevalent in more ways than meets the eye.

When we talk about white privilege, one of the first examples that may come to mind is dealing with authorities. Police officers have demonstrated racial profiling from their implementation as southern slave patrols all the way to now, post-civil rights era. Not only is targeting people based on race common in the force, rather it is encouraged.<sup>2</sup> Certain police departments have laws in place that encourage racial profiling--in my experience living in Frederick County, I've seen the direct effects of programs such as the 287(g) agreement that allow police to racially profile "immigrant-looking" people and turn them into ICE.

Police brutality has been growingly spoken upon, with George Floyd's murder in May being the event to jumpstart the second wave of BLM protests across the globe. So yes, the police force's relationship with minorities is common knowledge at this point, but I only recently learned how early this kind of discrimination starts.

People don't think about school resource officers and how they directly contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Black students have disproportionately higher suspension, expulsion, and school arrest rates, even though they make up a significantly smaller portion of the student body. To make matters worse,

students who receive disciplinary actions at school are more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system. Why is it that I'm not confronted for wearing a short skirt, but young black girls face such a degree of sexualization that they are forced to go home and change? You're telling me my natural hair is fine, but theirs is "unprofessional"? I've only been sent to the principal's office on one occasion, an occasion that I was let completely off the hook with, yet my POC peers are charged for lesser offenses?

## Silence in the face of oppression is as much of an offense as being an oppressor yourself.

The truth of the matter, what they don't want you to know, is that racial discrimination is engraved so deeply into the system that it starts in our schools. Authority figures of all kinds, from the police department to school administration to employers, contribute to creating an environment in which only those with white privilege can survive.

Addressing the rampant discrimination enforced in our schools is vital in the fight against racism, but understanding the reason that it stems from is just as imperative. Some of the first instances where I

became aware of whitewashing (erasing POC history in order to make room for white history) were located in my history textbooks.

My government classes avoided topics like voter suppression, the industrial prison complex, and affirmative action in order to focus on George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, men who contributed great things to the country! Wait, let me check my notes--while being the two U.S. presidents with the most slaves. The only dose of black history we get is slavery and the civil rights movement, and even then textbooks

continue to gloss over the significance of lynchings and other atrocities committed by white people at the time. There are so many famous figures of color to focus on instead of only the well-known racist Christopher Columbus. I grew up learning about these prominent white historical figures while my peers of color never got to see people like them on our teacher's slideshows. I want to see black girls learn about inspiring black women like NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson, or have Latina girls listen to Mexican pop-star Selena in their music classes.

Whenever the curriculum actually touches on other cultures, they seem to mix up the term "education" with "cultural appropriation". While I was having a blast at my first grade Thanksgiving party making noodle necklaces and Dollar Tree feather headdresses, Native Americans had some of the highest rates of suicide and mental illness. The only time we learn about Hispanic culture is when we make piñatas in art class for Cinco de Mayo, a holiday the majority of Mexico doesn't even celebrate. There's a substantial difference between cultural appreciation, where we can demonstrate sincere interest in a culture and learn about its significance from the people it represents, versus cultural appropriation, where my friend's mom bought a sugar skull costume for a Halloween party despite not being Hispanic nor knowing anything about Dias de Los Muertos. So many minority groups suffer hardship for honoring their native customs, but white people trivialize the adversities they face for an arts and crafts project. When there are so many schools that don't value resources such as Black Student Alliances and culture clubs, it's all the more important to give students of color representation that isn't presented as paper-mache mockeries of their traditions and customs.

Unfortunately, the education system isn't the only victim of whitewashing. This is a common theme throughout Hollywood, where all POC are extremely underrepresented. I spent my childhood idolizing Avril Lavigne and Hayley Williams, women who not only kick-started my love for alternative culture but whom I could see myself in as a little girl. I can't imagine not being able to admire celebrities who look like me, but that's the reality for so many POC. When people asked for a black Disney princess, they got Tiana—a princess who was a frog for the majority of the film. Don't get me wrong, that movie's awesome, but it just goes to show how young black girls don't get to see themselves on television.

The representation they do receive is embarrassingly lacking. Tyler, the Creator touched on this in a 2020 GRAMMYs interview, where he called his rap nomination a "backhanded compliment" since "guys that look like [him]" are always grouped in the rap or urban category, calling the latter a "politically correct way to say the n-word" (3). Lizzo, another rising star of 2020, won three GRAMMYs for categories including R&B and urban contemporary but collected none of the big four awards (while Billie Eilish took them all home).

To sum things up, representation on the big screen gives our youth the self-esteem they need to believe in themselves and strive for success. When we take this away, inspiration is harder to come by, and those big dreams of stardom America loves to glamorize seem so far away. My privilege made it so that I could always watch award shows full of strong women who look like me, but that just isn't realistic for too many American minorities; this is where the problem lies.

When I first tried explaining white privilege to a relative of mine, they passed it off as a hoax. "What do you mean, 'I'm not targeted because of my race?' I have to hear comments about white stereotypes all the time!" Okay, true, there are stereotypes deemed as "white people things", but they're of an entirely different nature. White stereotypes poke fun at us for not seasoning our food and spending too much money on decorative pillows from Pottery Barn—someone with racial bias may label black people as gang-riddled murderers, Hispanics as rapists and drug dealers, and Asians as terrible drivers. When leadership takes advantage of fears between different ethnicities and insists on widening the divide, it's no wonder these stereotypes continue to exist.

Just this past year, Asian American and Pacific Islanders saw a huge spike in hate crimes and assaults due to racism stemming from politicians' usage of the terms "Chinese virus", and "Kung Flu" for COVID-19.

BLM protesters were condemned by the media as violent rioters, while those protesting against mask mandates were applauded for their bravery in the same breath. White people were attacked for...clapping when the plane lands? You get the point. Regardless of your opinion on what counts as a joke, white stereotypes are undeniably not as harmful as those targeting other races. If you're white, you have white privilege, and if you have white privilege, you can't be racially discriminated against to the degree of, say, black Americans. You absolutely can struggle for reasons besides race, be that financial status, sexuality, gender, or anything else of the sort, but the key point to acknowledge is that though you may be suffering, the color of your skin isn't making it worse.

Everything I've mentioned here all ties back to my privilege as a white person in America, something I never knew the name for until I got older. Suddenly those Thanksgiving parties seemed really out of place, and I wondered why I had never seen a problem with my favorite characters on television all having my skin color. I think of all the times I let people get away with bigotry when I was younger and feel sick to my stomach, but the growth I've experienced over the years has granted me the tools and knowledge I need to prevent it from happening near me again.

I've learned so much in the past few years, even more in the past few months, about the struggles of black and other POC people that I was lucky enough to never undergo. Recognizing my privilege was only a baby step in my journey, though, and I feel like that's where a lot of people get stuck. Now my job is to make sure I use that privilege in a way that's beneficial to others.

White people need to use their privilege to uplift POC voices and lend support. The easiest ways are by spreading information on social media and sharing POC accounts and experiences, but there are other, more hands-on approaches you wouldn't think of. Forming human shields at protests to protect black individuals from law

My privilege  
made it so that  
I could always  
watch award  
shows full of  
strong women  
who look like me.

enforcement, or actively showing up to protests in the first place, are great ways I've learned to assert my privilege. I use my voice to demand change whenever I can, enough to raise POC voices up but not enough to overshadow them. Whether that's "being argumentative" (sorry Mom) at family dinner when I hear a thinly-veiled microaggression, or drafting a list of demands to my local school board created by thoughts, feelings, and stories of POC across my county. Becoming involved in local politics is a step in the right direction, too--speaking out against officials at a local level is necessary to create nationwide change. The most important takeaway? Silence is compliance, and compliance is violence. It's not enough anymore to "not be racist". We must stand together in fighting oppressive systems and be actively against racism: it's time to use your white privilege to help those without it.



## about Isabella Lowery

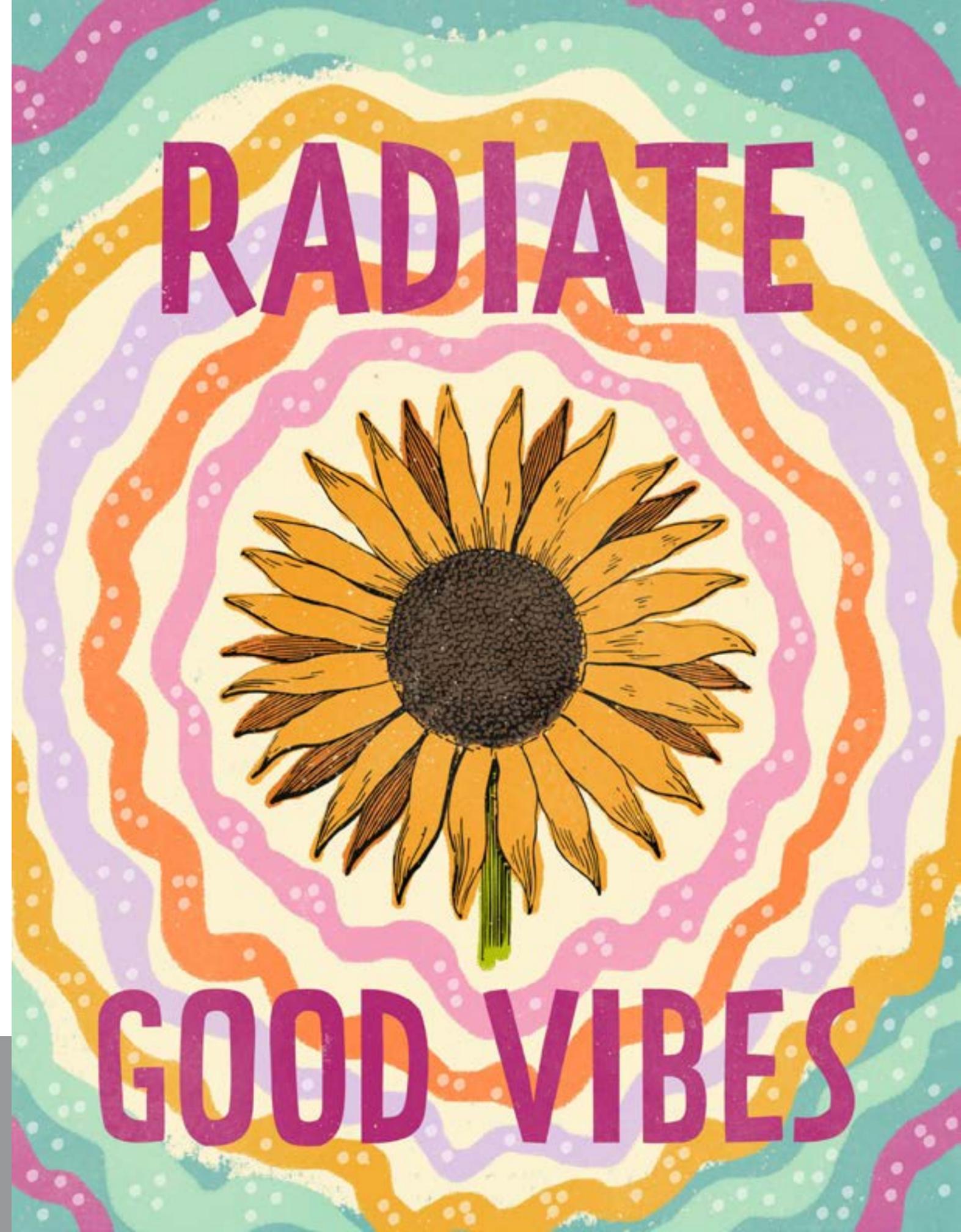
Isabella Lowery is a full-time student based in the DC area. A highly ambitious and driven individual, she hopes to use her love of writing as a tool for social change. Her belief is that any voice can make a difference, no matter how small, and she aims to portray that through her work. She strives to do her part in the battle of equality for all, and is especially passionate about women's and LGBTQ rights.

When she's not working, she enjoys spending time with friends and exploring the city. Mental health awareness is a special interest of hers, and she does her best to start conversations in her community on how to lend support and fight stigma. Her other hobbies include music, literature, and debate.

<sup>1</sup>Kelly, Caroline. "Trump Bars 'Propaganda' Training Sessions on Race in Latest Overture to His Base." CNN. Cable News Network, September 5, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/04/politics/trump-administration-memo-race-training-ban/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Cab, Officer A. "Confessions of a Former Bastard Cop." Medium. Medium, June 11, 2020. <https://medium.com/@OfcrACab/confessions-of-a-former-bastard-cop-bb14d17bc759>.

<sup>3</sup>Owoseje, Toyin. "Tyler, The Creator Slams Grammys' 'Urban' Category as a Politically Correct Version of the n-Word." CNN. Cable News Network, January 27, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/01/27/entertainment/tyler-the-creator-grammys-intl-scli/index.html>.



# MOTHER NATURE

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FIERCE + NURTURING

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Photography | Linda Vang

Makeup | Rachel Madison

Model and Designer | Dee Slagle









Photography | Linda Vang  
Makeup | Rachel Madison  
Model and Designer | Dee Slagle

it's just

# WHIPPED CREAM

but still means something.

by Leila Breton



I'm a bridal designer, but it wasn't my childhood dream. I didn't start sewing for my Barbies when I was little. I didn't own Barbies. I was too busy riding my bike, and playing outside, getting skinned knees, and dreaming of one day becoming a rock star. Oh, yes. You read that right. I was writing songs all the time, putting them to music I made up in my head.

I started sewing because my body had shifted after having kids, and I started looking at my body in a negative light, despite the fact that I gave birth to two babies. I didn't want to feel self-conscious in my clothes. I had two small children and I didn't want to be pulling and tugging on my clothes, sending them the message that I felt there was anything wrong with my body. That's when I started sewing and tailoring all of my clothes. I didn't want to hide my body. I have always wanted to be present, and I don't think we can be present when we're pulling and tugging at our clothes. It pulls you out of the moment you're in, and, subconsciously, people notice.

We think that people who are pulling and tugging are nervous and unsure. How can we make a strong, positive impression (though I know the first impression we give off is not necessarily who we are) when our body language is screaming we are not comfortable.

There is so much that is lost on people when we walk in wearing uncomfortable clothes. Just imagine that outfit that makes you feel amazing. Think about why it makes you feel comfortable. I'm going to guess the reason is mainly because it fits. There are so many looks and design details wrongfully reserved for certain body

types. My theory is if it's something you're drawn to, and it's made to the proportions of a person, anyone can wear anything.

But we're not used to that. We're used to wearing whatever is the least uncomfortable, the decently flattering, the closest to the color we actually like. Most people don't actually think about asking for what they want. We've been conditioned to believe that it doesn't exist and it's pointless to even ask. In my work, alterations, tailoring, and custom dressmaking, I often see people who are afraid to ask for what they want from me. That's when I start the dialogue about design, proportions, and my theories about our conditioning.

## Most people don't actually think about asking for what they want

I share my thoughts with everyone who comes into my studio. I see people of all body types, and what I've found is (one way or another) everyone is hurt by body image negativity. I believe people are made up of many more interesting parts—other than just their body. Therein lies what body neutrality is to me, and I treat all people like people, not with body identifiers.

When we were little, most of us, most little girls' bodies were the topic of conversation. So much of our young lives are monitored to contain and control us. We're told to share our toys. Be nice. Smile. Wear the dress. Have pretty hair. Look pretty! Don't be so bossy. Don't be loud. Don't be assertive. Girls who assert themselves are called names.

Then, one day, you walk into a coffee shop and order a coffee. You're paying with your own money. It's exciting. You feel independent. You're in line and people are taking you seriously. It's your turn. You step up, and with confidence, you order a coffee. "Do you want whipped cream?" "Nope," you say, "I'm good," and you smile. Then you wait for your coffee to be ready. You look around, and you feel like you're part of something. Part of this whole crew of people asking for what they want and getting it. You feel great. They call your name,

your order is ready. You grab your coffee, take the lid off, and realize they put whipped cream.

What do you say? Nothing; it's fine. You walk away with a quick sigh, and it's no big deal. In the grand scheme of things, it really is okay. It really is just whipped cream.

Why don't you walk back and ask for them to remake it the way you want it? Then you start to wonder why you didn't send back the food you ordered the last time you were out to eat. They didn't get it right. Why didn't you ask questions when you didn't understand something in class?

The truth is that we're constantly settling. Sure, it's little things like the whipped cream on your coffee, or the croutons we didn't want on a salad. While it initially doesn't seem like a lot, every single time we settle, we practice settling. We, extensively, get better at it. And it's little things that we assume are small that end up adding up.

However, if we speak up about these seemingly small things, we're called names. "What a b\*\*\*\*!", they say. Brides are called bridezilla (a term I wish could be erased from our collective vocabulary, and I don't use in my studio). We don't know how to take requests. We lack the muscle to listen to other people's feelings without getting defensive.

## We don't have to fully understand why someone asks for something, but we have to respect it

Most of us are afraid of speaking up because we're afraid of how other people will react. A lot of people are more volatile than they let on, and there's only one way of seeing their true colors, and it's speaking up about our wants and needs.

What if they get mad?

Not everything is an attack, but we're afraid that our friends and family, colleagues and employees will get mad. Most requests are honest requests, even if they aren't approached with the perfect tone and wording.

What we need is a culture of dialogue. We don't have to fully understand why someone asks for something, but we have to respect it. I'm not touching on gaslighting, manipulative behaviors. That's an entirely separate conversation.

Imagine this. You don't get what you expected in a situation. Rather than get upset, speak up, and tell the person you're talking to you are realizing that you had expectations that aren't being met, and you'd like to talk through it.

Approaching situations that you aren't happy with, or that for whatever reason aren't meeting your needs, or are hurting your feelings, with an open mind can help you break old patterns of settling.

Having those uncomfortable conversations always surprise me, and the more I have them, the more I want to have them. What I've found is that I prefer speaking up. It helps me grow as a person and it has helped me get closer to people.

Imagine asking for what you want, which is what I encourage my clients to do, and having a dialogue about the request. Most of the time, when someone asks me to change something, or to add something to a dress, or tweak something in a dress, it's an easy yes. If it's not possible, we have a dialogue.

Now imagine the domino effect of practicing to ask for what you want. Imagine what having an open dialogue can do. You'll be more inclined to ask. That's a domino effect I want to be part of.

## about Leila Breton

Born and raised in Colombia, South America, Leila moved to the United States when she was 14 years old, but Leila says, "I still feel like a foreigner." Her last career was in theater and while she loved being on stage, she retired when she had her first kid. Leila now has two middle school kids, a lovely partner, a sweet Barbet, and a kitty.

She's a mother, a wedding fashion designer, and more recently asked her partner to be her wife. She love hiking, caring for her plants, cooking, listening to her daughter play piano, and watching her son's face light up when he gets a new idea.

One of her favorite things is to encourage people to be authentically themselves. It makes her world turn! She loves connecting with people, and she needs her work to be meaningful. Bridal fashion, while fun to design and make, is only enjoyable to her because of the people that wear it.

Image courtesy Leila Breton  
Photo © Heather Sherrill Photography

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# IT'S WHO I AM



I was six years old when I got on the school bus  
I wore my purple and white dress with a woven rose  
In the middle of my chest. My velcro sandals were newly  
White. Mom braided my hair back. I sat across  
From a boy who stared at me,

"you have monkey arms,"  
He said.

I never knew having that much hair on  
My body was different. I cried on the first day of  
Kindergarten. When I got home I asked my mom,

"Do I look like a monkey?"

It made sense. I was brown and hairy. But  
My mom said it was completely normal to have  
Hair on my body. It didn't feel normal to me. All of  
The other girls had light skin and blonde hair. Almost  
None on their arms. I was different. I was abnormal.

In third grade, it was summertime. We were out at  
Recess. I wore a white tank top with fireworks on it.  
A group of boys and girls were playing tag. A boy was  
Chasing me and grabbed my arm. He snapped away from  
Me in disgust.

"Your arms are so hairy!  
You should just shave them,"  
He said.

I cried in the middle of the playground. My teacher asked  
Me if I was okay.

"I'm ugly because I have hairy arms!"  
I said.

My teacher showed me her arms her sunkissed,  
White skin. And her few strands of blonde hair that  
Sat on her arms

"Look I have hair on my arms too! It's okay,"  
She said.

It wasn't okay though. Her hair was light and  
Pretty. Mine was dark and unattractive. I stopped  
Playing with them at recess. And I never wore  
Short sleeves again.

"Marie, aren't you hot?"  
My teachers would ask.



I would wear sweatshirts in the hot weather and  
sweat in my insecurities. I chose to sweat stains into my  
Clothes so I wouldn't be picked on for my body.

"I'm fine!"  
I panted in reply.

In middle school, I finally gave them what they wanted.  
I was 13 when I put Nair on my arms in my mom's bathroom.  
All of the flaws attached to me vanished with one wipe of a  
Warm washcloth. I felt happier?? I felt normal. I was so  
Excited that I picked out my outfit for school. A short sleeve  
V-neck. It was light blue. My mom saw what I had done,

"Marie you were always beautiful,"  
She said.

My mom always told me I was. But now the people who  
Made fun of me would finally think the same way.  
I walked into school with so much pride. It's not like  
Anyone noticed right away. But I was eager for someone  
To ask. A boy in homeroom who sat behind me called my  
Name. I turned at him. He and his friends were already  
Laughing.

"You shaved your arms? You're like bald,"  
He said.

I turned back and covered my arms. I wish I had brought my jacket.

What the hell did people want from me? I got made fun  
Of for being hairy now for not being hairy? I continued  
To shave my arms in high school. When people asked why  
I did it I would say,

"It's for sports. It helps me be aerodynamic."

Not that it actually did. But it got people to shut up. Then I was  
Finally leaving the small hell that high school was. I was going  
Somewhere where no one knew who I was or cared what I looked  
Like. In fact, there were more girls like me. I met my close friend  
Who was brown and hairy like me. I grew my hair back on my arms.  
It came in beautifully. I no longer cared if people stared at them.  
I still get asked why I have so much hair on my arms. But I  
Just let them know,

"It's who I am. And if you have a problem with it,  
You can kindly fuck off."



# STAYING STYLED



Mural by Dan Handkillz | @invisible\_hometown



The latest trends seem to flash by in seconds; one day we're loving animal print and tie dye, and the next day it's only acceptable to be wearing basics and neutrals. Fast fashion plays into these trends by feeding us collections that arrive weekly and creating cheaply made pieces of clothing that are pretty much made to be worn a few times before unraveling. Trying to keep up can be overwhelming and mentally and financially draining, especially in an instant gratification culture caught up with fitting in and keeping up with everyone else. I know I've been sucked into it more than once and I'm always disappointed when something falls apart quickly or doesn't look like the picture online at all. I try my best to shop secondhand when I can, and then shop local next, but sometimes fast fashion gets the best of me, because I'm only human. So where does thrifting come in to save the day?

**I try my best to shop secondhand when I can, and then shop local next**



In the past, thrifting had some negative connotations and perceptions: people thought the clothes in the stores were dirty, weren't in style, didn't fit bodies properly. However, nowadays, thrifting has become an activity people choose to do over more traditional forms of shopping. These past ideas about thrifting have had a major 180 and now you can see people of all ages in thrifted pieces, happy to show them off and proud to talk about them. You can shop second-hand in multiple ways, like at local thrift shops, websites and subscription boxes like ThredUP, reselling apps like Poshmark and Depop, and even Instagram accounts sharing thrifted goods. These different platforms make thrifting more accessible than ever nowadays and the connotations people once held towards it seem to be changing for the better. Since thrifting has taken over all forms of media and retail, it is ultimately easier to find your size, style, and preferred color with search filters online and accounts dedicated to finding different trends.

I first experienced thrifting when I was really young; my grandma used to work for Goodwill so whenever I would visit her we would explore the store and find hidden gems after she got off work. She also would wake me up at six in the morning to go to garage sales that she had researched and prepped for the night before and we would go to these sales until the late afternoon.

# + SUSTAINABLE

by Hayley Shay McCoy



The second highest  
cause for pollution  
is fast fashion

Every year for Christmas and my birthday she would mail me something she'd found while hunting at Goodwill (and I would usually have to pretend I loved it) and wanted to send me. I feel like I took these childhood memories full of thrifting with me into my teenage years and adulthood. I still love going thrifting and I've expanded my finds into furniture, home decor, and items for my kitchen that I can now use in my apartment. I especially love decorating my bar cart with glasses from Goodwill that I can find for less than a dollar instead of purchasing them full price since I'm still living a post grad life on a budget. Indianapolis has a large amount of local thrift stores and secondhand shops so it's always fun to go out on a Saturday and do a thrifting crawl!



Now that thrifting is more accessible and accepted, it has also become a great alternative for those looking to keep up with the trends and styles all while staying within a budget since these items are a fraction of their original price. Thrifting locally also helps keep money circling in the local economy and multiple thrift stores like Goodwill and St. Vincent de Paul have generous missions behind their business model to help those in need in the community. For example, Goodwill has a program that helps those who need employment to work in their stores. Thrifting also has a personal benefit since places like Goodwill provide you with a receipt to do a tax write-off when you donate items. Thrift stores are also a good place to get items that if bought through fast fashion would promote the degradation of the environment or wildlife. For example, clothing made out of animal products like leathers and furs can be found in thrift stores for a very affordable price. Instead of more animals having to suffer to produce these clothing items, they can be purchased at thrift stores, saving a life and cutting down on the amount of resources that are used to produce these clothing items. Along with the financial benefit of thrifting, there is the environmental benefit that further emphasizes the importance of thrifting.

**Thrifting locally also helps keep money circling in the local economy**



**With the financial benefit of thrifting there is the environmental benefit**



Oil is the number one cause for pollution on the planet. However, a lot of people aren't aware that the second highest cause for pollution is fast fashion. This is definitely a shocking statistic but it helps us put into perspective how detrimental this industry is for the environment. Just because clothing is made cheaply and readily available doesn't mean the clothing is quality or good for the environment. Cotton is actually one of the biggest offenders, needing tons of water and fertilizer to produce in usually already dry and hot climates.<sup>1</sup> A lot of clothing in thrift stores are made out of these resources anyways, so it's a great idea to start there when looking for particular clothing items. Keeping up with the latest trends has a price, and cheaply made, poor quality garments usually made by impoverished people not making a living wage are worn a few times and then thrown away. The making of these clothes also uses an excessive amount of water and energy.<sup>2</sup>



Quantity over quality has rapidly become the trend when it comes to fast fashion and the environment suffers as a consequence. Brands are concerned with coming out with more and more collections to the point of excess and stores can expect new collections almost daily. The materials used in these pieces of clothing require a lot of energy to produce and can actually be pretty toxic. Waste from the production of these garments can also infiltrate our drinking water, and fertilizers used on certain plants used to make clothing can also have a negative effect.<sup>3</sup> The negative effects of fast fashion obviously have a bigger impact than we could even imagine and the lifecycle of these cheaply produced garments cause more harm than good. Another thing to worry about is the little pieces of tags and plastic buttons or tabs that are thrown away along with the clothing item. Microfibers and plastics also can affect sea life and pollute our oceans.<sup>4</sup> The quality of thrifted pieces are definitely different from fast fashion garments, since they're usually made during a time where quality materials were used. This helps the items last longer and be more durable.



Along with thrifting, there are many ways we can take care of our clothes better so they don't deteriorate faster. Clothing inevitably falls apart eventually, but we can do our best to research stain removal instead of just throwing an item of clothing away, or repurpose pieces we don't want anymore around our house. I know I've used old t-shirts as cleaning rags before and they definitely get the job done! Reading up on the best ways to wash and dry pieces of clothing can also lengthen its life and save you money. I've seen people use old t-shirts as reusable and washable makeup removers by cutting them up into circles and sewing them together with cotton balls on the inside, so the options are endless for what you can do with clothing you don't love anymore. I really love finding tutorials on fun and new ways to cut my clothing, too. I've made awkward length shirts into crop tops and too short jeans into cut off shorts, so no need to throw these pieces away or go buy new ones from a fast fashion website when I can just make my own at home. Clothing sits in landfills for decades so it's better to practice reusing and reducing your purchases and find ways to make items in your closet new to you.

Thrifting has a great advantage over fast fashion when it comes to saving money and our environment. Thrifting for sustainability can also impact our local community with companies that have generous charity driven business models. Current trends and styles can be found at thrift stores these days so it's incredibly easy to find ways to shop sustainably and keep up with trends. We can also aim to change our habits when it comes to clothing, like buying more quality pieces and taking good care of them, reusing old items as cleaning rags or shirts to wear around the house, or even using sites to sell clothes you just aren't wearing. Thrifting can be easy and fun, and can leave us with peace of mind when it comes to helping our planet and environment.

<sup>1</sup>Environmental Impacts of the Fashion Industry. (n.d.). Retrieved August 30, 2020, from <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/old-environmental-impacts>

<sup>2</sup>Leon, L., Xu, S., Pumpkin, E., & Rios, C. (2018, December 11). Why Thrifting is Good for the Planet, Not Just Your Wallet. From <https://serc.berkeley.edu/why-thrifting-is-good-for-the-planet-not-just-your-wallet/>

<sup>3</sup>Environmental Impacts of the Fashion Industry from Sustain Your Style. (n.d.). From <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/old-environmental-impacts>

<sup>4</sup>McFall-Johnsen, M. (2019, October 21).



Photography by Arria Woolcock | Makeup by Carrie Cosby | Styling by Fēi from Fēi Vintage Goods & Apparel | Modeling by Amber Codozor

## about Hayley Shay McCoy

Originally from Iowa, but she moved to Indiana to pursue her Masters degree in Museum Studies. She loves history and learning new things. She's recently started blogging and creating content as City of Shay, a lifestyle, local culture, and affordability blog encouraging young 20-somethings to live their best life while living within their means in the city of Indianapolis! Hayley especially love talking about thrifting and sustainability.



# IT STARTS AT HOME: Self-Care with Mothers IN MIND

by Katie Thrush

My eyes open around 7 am to the sound of my daughter cooing from her crib. It's hard waking up due to the fact that I collectively got around 4 hours of sleep due to nighttime feedings with my baby. Before I tend to the needs of my daughter, I shuffle my feet over to my trusty coffee maker to prepare me for another day of diaper changes, cooking lunch and dinner for a toddler who doesn't appreciate a home cooked-meal, and whatever other predicaments my day has in store.

My living room floor looks like a tornado went off. I sift through the debris of dress-up clothes, princess dolls, crayons, and whatever else a toddler can get into these days.

The pile of laundry mocks me every time I walk past it - tell myself once again that **TODAY** will be the day it gets folded and put away. Until we meet again, jeans and socks.

My four-month-old had another blow out which means it's time to do the song and dance of changing clothes, sanitizing surfaces, fresh diapers, etc. But then I hear yelling from the girls' bathroom. My toddler is telling me she went potty and she needs help with wiping. A baby on one hip, wiping another's bottom - this is what my days look like most of the time.

Bedtime eventually comes around, and after several room-breaks-outs and the baby finally settles in for the evening - my body hits the couch and when I glance at the clock, it's after 8 pm. I'm exhausted. All I want to do is binge Schitt's Creek and enjoy my rosé in peace.

No one said this life  
would be glamorous.

After my oldest daughter was born, I started spiraling in terms of figuring out how to be a mom, but also needing to take care of my own needs. I suffered from clinical postpartum depression and did not see the warning signs right away. I thought it was normal to be so exhausted to the point of falling asleep while breastfeeding. I thought crying in the shower was just "baby blues". After my husband sitting me down and expressing his concerns with me and guiding me to seek help, I realized a couple of things. To this little person, I claimed the name of "mom". I forgot all of the other titles that go along with my name.

Writer. Sister. Believer. Friend. Lover. Daughter.



How in the world are we supposed to carve time out of our day to take care of ourselves? We are made to believe that we are only taking care of ourselves if we put money towards something.

Spa days are desperately desired.  
Shopping sprees are tempting.  
Girls weekends are daydreamed.

We can get caught up in the mindset of thinking if we buy face masks, outfits, alcohol, self-help books that suddenly we will somehow be the well-rounded mom who has her ducks in order. While some of these things can help at the moment in time, it's not going to solve what really needs to be taken care of - your mental and emotional health.

So what's the solution then? Girl, I've got you. I have a couple of ideas for you that won't break the bank, will implement healthier coping skills, and hopefully bring a sense of relief and confidence that you are doing the best job at being a momma.

### **Pamper Yourself (at home)**

One of the easiest and cheapest ways to take care of yourself? Take a long, uninterrupted shower. While you are taking care of your physical needs, it also promotes psychological benefits. According to Medical Daily, taking a shower can increase oxytocin levels which can help with combating anxiety.

Ways I try to pamper myself at home are reading books that fill my brain with positive energy, writing my feelings out either on paper or the computer, running on the treadmill in my garage, painting my nails, or whatever else I know that I can successfully do at home. You don't have to go out of your way to make sure you are taking care of yourself!

### **Guilty Pleasures and Hobbies**

Just because you are a mother doesn't mean you can't tap into your interests and the things that make you feel alive! Whether your hobbies include being able to get your hands dirty, playing music, putting pen to paper, rolling out your yoga mat, or maybe even attempting to find new hobbies that may interest you. There's no shame in finding out what makes you feel alive and finding relief from the tasks and responsibilities that being a mom entails. Sometimes it takes trial and error to find exactly what it is that brings peace into your life. So go on - try your hand at some things

While some things can help in the moment, it's not going to solve what really needs to be taken care of - your mental and emotional health.

### **5 Senses**

This one is perfect for you if you struggle to find relief during those tough days. The great thing about it? It's free and can be done anytime, anywhere. This activity is recommended by therapists as a "grounding tool". This exercise helps to find balance when you feel like things are coming unhinged. Use this prompt to recenter yourself and find relief:

What are 5 things you see?

I see the sun, birds, and children playing

What are 4 things you feel?

I feel the grass on my feet, hands around coffee mug, and a hug from a friend

What are 3 things you can hear?

I hear my daughters laughing, car horns, and trains

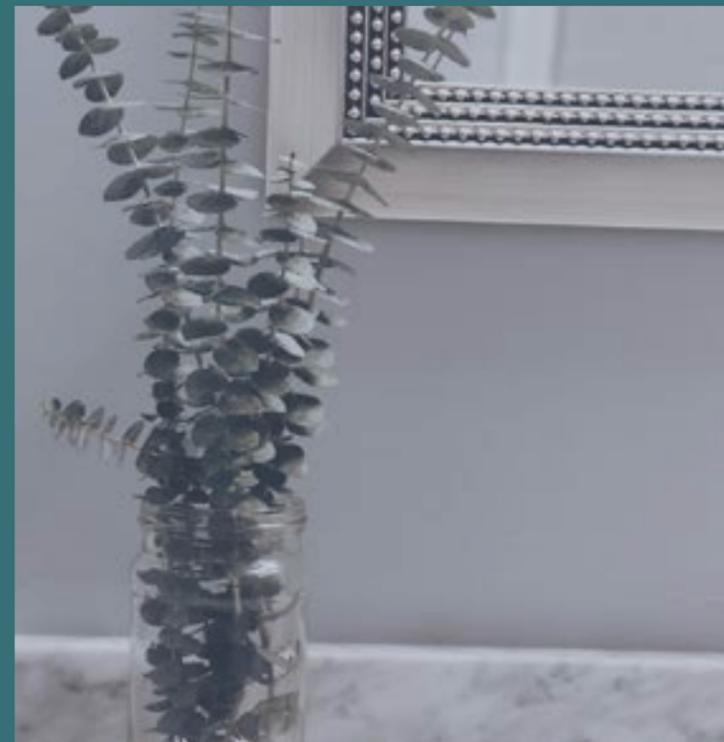
What are 2 things you can smell?

I smell brewing coffee, warm bread, and fresh laundry

What is 1 thing you can taste?

I taste my mint gum, tea, and chocolate

This exercise can help if you struggle with anxiety or feel a panic attacking trying to make its way in. Coming from a personal experience, this has helped me in times where I need to reframe my mindset when I feel like I'm close to hitting my breaking- point.



### **SLEEP**

If you are a mom, you KNOW you are not getting enough sleep! Whether you are a first-time momma with a newborn or well-seasoned mom to older kids, it seems like we are still in dire need of a weekend-long slumber. We are constantly caring for our children or worrying about their overall well-being which in return, keeps us up at night. According to a study from Sleep Junkie, 68% of people surveyed who aren't parents were getting the recommended amount of sleep (7+ hours). As for the parents? Only about 10% were getting the recommended amount. It makes sense why moms are dragging in the mornings!

What can we do to ensure we are getting enough sleep? We can't all achieve the recommended number of hours when it comes to sleep, but we can try to implement better nighttime habits to get more zzz's. Here are some ideas that have been helpful to me when I'm trying to catch up on my beauty rest:

**Lavender lotion. Epsom salt baths. Melatonin (if recommended by your physician). Tea. Less screen time at night, Exercise. Hot showers.**

These are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to finding better ways to get quality sleep. Now, go ahead and place that gorgeous head of yours on your pillow and get some sleep!

## Recognize the feelings that are inhabiting your body and mind

One of the most essential ways to take care of yourself is to admit when you are experiencing the feelings of being overwhelmed, stressed, frustrated, or depressed. You are allowed to feel all of these emotions. Sometimes it's hard to accept we feel like it's too much for us. As moms, we are told we were born for this. We are told again and again that once you have your children that your "instincts will kick in".

**We need to be able to say out loud when we are feeling inadequate.**

Can I be the one to tell you that it's ok if you feel like you don't have all your crap together? As a mother to two girls, I still feel like everyday is a new obstacle to reach, and I'm constantly questioning if I'm being the best mother I can be for them. We don't always have the right answers. We don't always feel our best. We need to be able to say out loud when we are feeling inadequate.

Want to know the best secret about being a mom? Finding people in our corner of the world who understand us and what we are going through. When you connect with other moms and have the chance to be vulnerable with your struggles and let people in - amazing things blossom from those relationships. You might not be alone in the feelings you are experiencing. There are plenty of resources online that can connect you with local mom groups, church programs catered to mothers, support groups, etc. All you need to do is make the first step in connecting with others—reach out.

You don't have to do this alone, momma. We've got your back.

The prevailing point I want you to take away: it is ok and absolutely necessary to take care of ourselves. Self-care is not selfish. When you are battling the guilt of taking time for yourself, think about airplane turbulence safety. Motherhood has turbulence, and what do they say time and time again on flights? They remind you to make sure your mask is on before you help someone else with theirs. If you run out of oxygen for you then how can you help those around you? We need to restore our needs in order to do the best that we can do for our loved ones.

## about Katie Thrush

As stay-at-home momma to little girls and writer, Katie has been writing for the last couple years and have found her niche in writing in the area of mental health and faith. She has a book out *All Is Not Well: A 14 Day Devotional Navigating the Seasons Of Waiting*. Katie continues to be an advocate for women in ministry, mental health, and very proud feminist.

Katie has also recently debuted her podcast: *I'm Curious*, where she opens up the conversations that are hard to have, but need to be had. Her advocacy for mental health goes beyond her podcasts episodes, and she continues the conversation in her social media, using her platform as a safe space for feelings to be felt and voices to be heard.



Images courtesy of Katie Thrush

# DOUBT

# WE,

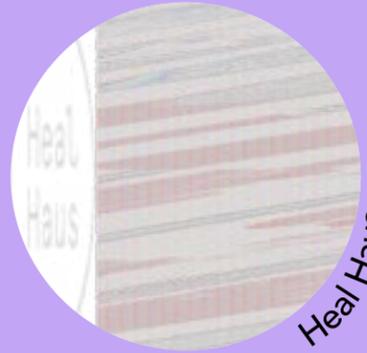
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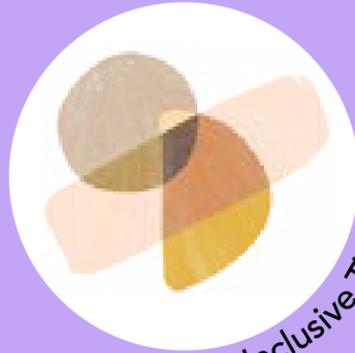
# Contributor's Choice:

Top 10 Black Mental Health Accounts to Follow

by Katie Thrush



Heal Haus



Inclusive Therapists



Alishia McCullough



Brittney R. Cobb MSW, LCSW



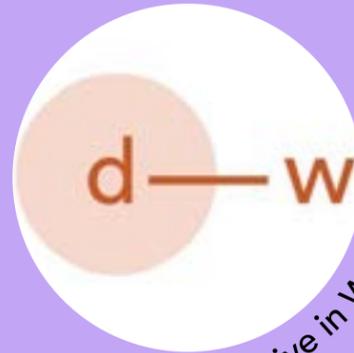
Dr. Donna Oriowo



Black Girl in OM



Megan Torres LISW



Dive in Well



Therapy for Black Girls



Loveland Foundation

# The Trinity Thrift

Changing the world one piece of clothing at a time



# PROFESSIONALLY FEMININE



by Hannah Mills

Tulle skirt: Amazon  
Blouse: Modcloth  
Blazer: Zara



How a woman dresses is a never-ending dialogue. It does not matter what she is doing, her clothing choices somehow make it into the conversation. Whether she is a movie star or politician, her clothing choices supersede her actions. While we see more high-profile women criticized or praised for their appearance, every woman has been under the microscope. Are you dressing appropriately? Who has decided what is appropriate? How do we know if the way we dress is because we were socialized under a patriarchal society or it is because we enjoy what we have chosen?

It is hard to tell where the “if you are dressing feminine or girly you are not a feminist” state of mind started. Some people believe dressing “girly” is a direct result of growing up under the influence of the ideal woman in a patriarchal society (the “ideal” woman is a whole different conversation, and I will not be delving into that here). A woman could not possibly be fond of wearing pink dresses, they must have been trained to think that way. The realization that some women genuinely appreciate what is deemed inherently feminine is now more widely accepted in feminist circles. The rallying cry of shedding all that is or was feminine, however, is not completely behind us. You are not alone if you have ever been criticized for dressing “too girly”. These ideals have followed us into all aspects of our lives.

While the conversation on how women dress in all areas of life and how they are perceived because of it is important, I am here to focus on work wear, specifically in the business casual setting (dress codes and how they are inherently misogynistic is also another conversation to be had). Business and fashion have always clashed, especially for women. If you dress more feminine this clash becomes even greater. The men and women (hello, internalized misogyny) in an office setting perceive a woman dressed more femininely as someone who may not bring much to the table. It can be assumed that the fluffy dress you’re wearing matches the fluff in your head. This can lead to less respect in similar roles, especially in executive positions. While it has not specifically ever been stated to me in so many words, I have felt the pressure to dress less feminine in the workplace because people may not take me as seriously in my brightly colored, patterned, and textured pieces.

Fashion and personal style were not something I always had top of mind in the sense of curating my wardrobe. What was always top of mind (I just did not notice at the time) was how I was perceived when wearing certain items. When I was younger (not quite school-aged), I loved dressing up and picking out my outfits. I refused to wear pants and found comfort in dresses and matching sets (much

like I do today). When I entered school, I flipped between the “tom-boy” and “girly-girl” aesthetic because I could never quite figure out where I fit. I was teased on both ends. As it typically does, age brings wisdom and a don’t-really-care attitude. My style and taste were not defined by men who prefer short skirts or by those who liked to comment, “you are overdressed”. It was defined by me, what I found comfortable, and profoundly, well, me. That person, this woman, is someone who likes to wear pink and twirl worthy skirts, especially around the office.

My professional life has been plagued by dichotomies and double standards. Men may feel some pressure, but women have always tried to straddle the line of “just right”. Comments such as “wear makeup, but not too much”, “look feminine, but not sexy”, “wear heels, but nothing too high”, and “dress like a lady, but not a prude” have made their way in to conversations regarding what is appropriate for female employees in places I have worked. I have spent around ten years figuring out what “they” are talking about and what that means for me. When it comes to dress codes, I have always been on the side of “loose interpretation.” Not all positions allow for your personal style to shine through (uniforms are important in certain workplaces). I have purposely chosen to work for companies with a structure for attire, but do not (necessarily) dampen personal flair. It is easy for a man to say, “Just let your work do the talking, it does not matter what you are wearing” because for him, it does not matter (unless he is giving a presentation to a CEO in a suit and he is dressed in a trash bag). The color of his tie is not going to distract from his work, however, my green and white polka dot skirt could.



My professional life has been plagued by dichotomies and double standards. Men may feel some pressure, but women have always tried to straddle the line of “just right.”

One of my favorite pieces about women and fashion in their professional lives is the Elle piece by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie “Why Can’t a Smart Woman Love Fashion?” (2014). Adichie wrote about how she watched her mother’s professional career grow while also paying attention to fashion and style and how her career path as a writer affected her views on not only how she dressed, but how other women dressed. Adichie wrote, “Women who wanted to be taken seriously were supposed to substantiate their seriousness with a studied indifference to appearance.” What she is saying and what I have found to be true is that women can either be perceived as smart or into girly things, but they certainly cannot be both. So, what is a girl to do? Do you run the risk of your work being overlooked by your looks?

What I had always thought, but Jessica Day (New Girl, Season 1 Episode 11) finally said, “I brake for birds. I rock a lot of polka dots. I have touched glitter in the past 24 hours. I spend my entire day talking to children. And I find it fundamentally strange that you’re not a dessert person. That’s just weird, and it freaks me out.

And I’m sorry I don’t talk like Murphy Brown. And I hate your pantsuit. I wish it had ribbons on it or something to make it just slightly cuter. And that doesn’t mean I’m not smart and tough and strong.” The two characters have vastly different jobs. A schoolteacher has a wider range of options for her wardrobe, while her lawyer counterpart could potentially find her work wardrobe stifling. Both jobs are incredibly important, so why should only one of these women be taken more seriously? Is it because one is in a pantsuit?

Both the gauzy dress and the suit get the same compliments of how pretty I appear, but by wearing the suit, I have grabbed their attention to my work. In keeping with my identity, any pantsuit I wear is still fundamentally “girly” but is deemed more acceptable. I have stood in front of my closet for longer than necessary while staring at each piece determining how “professional” it is. Why can I not be ambitious, professional, and adorably dressed? I have never understood why I could not be the person at the head of the table even if I were wearing a pink dress with a big bow at the neck. Whether or not I choose to dress more inherently feminine should not determine my level of authority. How I dress, how others choose to dress, does not take away the ability to lead a room, a team, to success. The system just wants you to believe you can’t, so you won’t. Besides, those stiletto Louboutins and Manolos are perfect for smashing glass ceilings.



Above: Suit: Lookalike from Asos; Blouse: Modcloth  
Pink dress (cover and left page): Gal Meets Glam;  
Headband: Amazon; Shoes: J. Crew factory  
Bottom Left: Tulle skirt: @amazon; Blouse: Modcloth;  
Blazer: Zara; Headband: Amazon; Shoes: Aldo

## about Hannah Mills

Day jobbing as a Property Marketing Manager for JC Hart Company (property management), by night (and weekends, Hannah Mills blogs for fun about fashion/style and some random lifestyle things.

Her main focus is petite style for less. She hasn’t actually blogged in awhile, but her party is mainly on Instagram anyways. If she isn’t taking outfit photos, you’ll find her curled up with a book or at brunch.

# Clothing is a Lifeline

As a survivor of traumatic experiences, Sarah felt compelled to help other survivors get back on their feet so she became an intake coordinator. She is a resource for people who have been abused to talk about what happened, seek new employment or housing, become sober, or simply take the time they need to recover. Clothing is an immediate way to be identified and potentially discriminated against, so she helps survivors who are getting back into the workforce or finding new housing dress for success.

by Sarah Leone

According to the National Coalition to End Domestic Violence, on average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States<sup>1</sup>. If you do the math that means in one year more than 10 million women and men are abused. Those numbers are unimaginable, but it's the reality of so many. Some of these might be people you know. Violence is something that many families hide, but not by choice in some cases. Abusers can be manipulative and charming one day to show the victims that they still care, but then the next, they commit acts of violence against their family. In many cultures, you don't talk about things like domestic violence, or sexual assault. It's considered bad manners to do so, to air out your dirty laundry so to speak. I know this, because it happened within my family, and within the families of so many people I know.

## Every survivor's escape is different.

When it comes to violence, we only think of the intervention aspect, the racing to get the victim out of the house or into a shelter or a safe place. Every survivor's escape is different. As a sexual assault and domestic violence victim advocate I helped through crisis intervention and prevention. An example of crisis intervention is when a person is assaulted or abused, and as advocates we immediately get called to respond to the hospital.

Once at the hospital, I would find the Sexual Assault Nursing Examiner (SANE) in the Emergency Room. From there, I would be taken to the room where the survivor is being kept. Once in the privacy of the hospital room, I would introduce myself, and explain what I was doing there. I'd ask the survivor if it was okay for me to stay with them and keep them company while we wait for any friends or family to arrive.

If yes, then I'd explain the services my agency provides and that, if open to it, we can provide them with shelter as soon as they're released from the hospital. They can say no to both of these options, and it is absolutely okay.

The importance of that exchange is that the survivor is in control and they got to choose what happens next to them. Giving back that control to the survivor is the best thing you can do to initially help them, after, of course, their basic needs are met. The next step is if the client wants you to stay and they want the SANE exam, you will stay with them and provide emotional support, because the exam is not an easy thing to experience.

Prevention is what work can be done before the assault or abuse ever occurs. An example of this is by presenting about sexual assault and domestic violence in the community. I presented to Emergency Services in four different cities in East Central, Indiana.

Additionally, I created professional relationships with other agencies that provided the type of resources that could help my clients. One final component of my job was working in a prosecutor's office to help survivors file protective orders against their abusers.

What happens after they escape? Once they accept the option of staying in a shelter, they don't magically become healthy and whole again. In fact, many survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault need to hear, "Hey, it's okay to feel that and it's normal to feel that way; but it's not safe for you stay there." We try to help by educating each survivor on the cycle of violence and its 3 different stages and tools that will help them to break that cycle for good.

For women and men in emergency shelters, the battle to get their life back in order, is just as hard, if not harder than leaving their abuser in the first place. While every survivor is different in terms of barriers they have to overcome, as an advocate, I found the need for professional wear/clothing to be extremely disheartening. Especially the expectation for women to have access to such clothing. Before I jump ahead, let me explain the key components that survivors need to thrive: housing, job searching, and emotional stability (typically from therapy). These three all work together to help survivors on their healing journey, and clothing can make these components a little easier to approach.

As far as housing, many shelters have partnerships with their state called Rapid Re-housing. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Rapid re-housing is a solution to homelessness designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. It is

offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household<sup>2</sup>. At the shelter I helped work, we had a rapid-rehousing program that helped so many men, women, and children.

For job searching, there are case workers and victim advocates like myself, who worked with the clients to find jobs. We would work with the client to create

goals, determine what jobs they qualify for, and then also what jobs they would prefer to work. Many of the clients I worked with were not picky, but rather were grateful for the opportunity to support themselves financially. If the client were unable to work because of a disability due to a medical issue, we would help them apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). That would enable them to find housing and pay their bills with the check they would receive each month. We would help them apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which helps families feed their families each month as well.

Lastly, emotional stability is the one of the hardest components that a client will have to overcome. Within the first couple days of arriving

at the shelter, many go through a roller coaster of emotions, ranging from happiness, to sadness, to anger, and then to shame for not leaving sooner. Having therapists on staff, such as licensed social workers and/or counselors is such a great way to help these clients begin their paths to healing. This is especially necessary when the client is struggling with drug or alcohol abuse. Having licensed addiction counselors is necessary because a big struggle for clients is when they are going through withdrawals in the shelter.

# Clothing can make these components a little easier to approach.

Within each session, the client will get to speak to a trained professional, to begin dealing with all of their emotions. This isn't something easily solved with one session. This is something they will have to continue to develop as they go through the healing process. No two survivors will have the same healing process as everyone else.

Housing, job searching, and emotional security are all things a client needs to accomplish for them to thrive. However, the sad reality is, many places (leasing offices for housing and employers during interviews) are judgmental, so this is a barrier for clients who do not have professional clothing. One way they can find a good job is by presenting themselves in a professional way, and this is where interviewing clothing comes into play. However, for the women staying in shelters, finding nice, professional clothing is hard. Many shelters only provide basic clothing like jeans, sweatpants, shirts, pajamas, and undergarments (bras, socks, and underwear). Though they are always looking for nice items that they can keep for their client's, especially for job interviews.

Even then when they have items, they get handed out fast, which is why shelters continue to always be accepting for donations. Shelters are always needing bras (in all sizes), underwear (men, women, and children), and SHOES! Many survivors of violence leave in a hurry, and so they don't have the basic necessities to bring with them as they escape from their home. To make a change, we can look through our gently worn professional clothing, and consider changing those boxes marked "garage sale" to "donate." It's incredibly easy to donate your clothes to a local domestic violence and sexual assault shelter.

If you are unable to donate your clothes or don't have any to give, social media is a great tool in helping shelters and organizations fighting violence and helping survivors. Make the people you know aware of the clothing that is needed. Recognize the possibilities of what a retweet, like, or share could do. For example, the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence** has a general list of what shelter's need, that's an easy thing to share, a quick retweet and the word is able to get out. The **National Sexual Violence Resource Center** has is active as well,

and you can help raise awareness by following and sharing. You can also find the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence** and the **National Sexual Violence Resource Center** on Facebook.

Some other ways you can help is by working with the programs and services that are already there! Don't stress about trying to fix problems that are too big for one person, but rather work collaboratively with others with the same passion as you. Violence against men and women is not something that will end overnight, to be honest, I'm not sure when it will. I do know though, that love is stronger than the hate that fuels violence, and as long as we love one another, there is nothing we cannot overcome. People show love by helping survivors through their every action, no matter how small.

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### about Sarah Leone

Sarah received her Bachelor's of Social Work degree from Ball State University. She has volunteered with a grass roots organization, RESULTS, to help end poverty worldwide by advocating on Capitol Hill. Additionally, she also worked as a certified victim advocate for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors at a domestic violence shelter. Currently working as the Prevention Coordinator for Amani Family Services, she now works with an agency that partners with immigrant and refugee families and the community to promote safety, encourage personal growth, and foster a spirit of belonging.

<sup>1</sup>"NCADV: National Coalition Against Domestic Violence." <https://www.ncadv.org/statistics>.

<sup>2</sup>"Rapid Re-Housing Works." National Alliance to End Homelessness, April 4, 2019. <https://endhomelessness.org/rapid-re-housing-works/>.





# Entrepreneurship from a Black, Muslim Woman

After falling in love with business and marketing, Raheema became one of the few Muslim women in a predominantly white business program. Her education and passion revealed a lack of resources and fair pricing to women of color, and she sought to fill in those gaps. Today, she is the sole proprietor of HijabSoForeign and hand-creates hijab for any woman who wishes to cover for culture, religion, or style.

by Raheema Chachouai

The statistics for black, women-owned businesses has continued to grow over the years and has done so for a variety of reasons, both good and bad. The catalyst, for making the leap into entrepreneurship, has often been for reasons of poor treatment and the perception of being undervalued in workplaces. Levels of unemployment, gender and racial pay gaps, have led women of color to pursue entrepreneurship due to necessity and survival. Due to the history of injustice faced by African Americans, black women have always been on the forefront of both the racial and gender discrimination, especially when it comes to accessing resources necessary to excelling.

Many times women of color do not feel heard, represented, respected, or appreciated in workplaces, making it difficult to land and stay in jobs that make us happy. Many of my peers, and myself included, feel the need to always research and look at images of employees in a company to see how diverse they are and what the company culture is like, while determining whether it's a place we will feel comfortable in. Concerns of being in male-dominated positions along with lack of proper representation, make it extremely difficult for us to adapt and grow in the workforce.

For the same reasons as these, it has made me seek out entrepreneurship—not only because I have a passion for it, but because I know that I will likely be put into a box and limited to what I can do and accomplish if I am not conforming. I am not just a woman, but I am a Muslim Woman of Color.

As I began working retail in high school, I started to pay close attention to the way companies market their products and how much they sell them for. I would always try to make mental guesses of how much it cost to manufacture these products then determine how price points were calculated using a variety of factors (quality, brand name, demand/supply, and competitor pricing).

I began to fall in love with learning about business when I began to realize how detrimental financial literacy is to my family, my life, and my community. I wanted to understand why people struggled financially, why people dislike their jobs, and why people drown in debt. This led me to pursuing a business degree, to learn and grow alongside individuals with the same mindset and desire. I was one of the few people of color in the Indiana University Kelley School of Business, as well as being a Muslim woman who wore Hijab, in a predominantly white school.

This was a major shift for me having to come from diverse schools and having to adapt to the changes. My ideas and opinions were never recognized and when speaking out on issues I was considered “sassy” or “loud”. This eventually led me to seeking a group I knew I would be appreciated in and properly represented. I started to visit our campus multicultural center and joined the African Student Association (ASA) and felt so welcomed and appreciated. I was surrounded by intelligent, creative, and powerful individuals that made me love my culture and other cultures even more. It was because of this organization, that I gained connections with the most amazing people I’ve ever met in college. I still work with these individuals today and many of them I am thankful for motivating and encouraging me to pursue entrepreneurship.

When starting my own business, I knew I needed to be disciplined and knowledgeable, be ready for challenges, and focus on the continuum of all refining my skills. I never appreciated seeing businesses thrive off up-charging products to black women as well as Muslim women, especially when the companies profiting from us, aren’t welcoming or having us work in these spaces. I wanted to tap into this unsaturated, overlooked market with consumers who were being taken advantage of sheerly because they had few other options. It feels absolutely necessary for us, as women of color, to use our platforms and power to create products and services that fit our needs.

It is imperative that WOC should be excelling as entrepreneurs. We have the power to change and improve the business industry to fit our needs and wants. The demand for Muslim women seeking out modest wear has reached an all-time high as trends

# We have the power to change and improve the business industry

have changed and companies are attempting to improve representation in their branding to match the consumer demand for it. Too often I’ve seen large companies try to slowly appeal to Muslim women, but at a premium price. Frustrated, I began developing my brand during my last semester of college. Working full-time during the day to pay for school, using excess funds and time to build my business. I attended a Muslim Youth of Indianapolis art show in September 2018, and brought some Hijabs I had made to showcase, with no intentions of making a sale or starting a business—I sold four that night. Not having any information to share about my brand, website, social media, or story, I saw how necessary it is to brand which motivated me to officially launch my first business, HijabSoForeign, that very night.

HijabSoForeign is a brand of creativity, strength, beauty, empowerment, diversity, and versatility. HSF was not created only to be a brand for Muslim women, but for all women who appreciate and love to cover, whether it is for culture, religion, or style. I use my brand to express my passions and creativity, while ensuring high quality and affordability. The versatility of the products, go to show women that we have choice when it comes to how we style and dress.

There is no one way to do things and as women we need to embrace that freedom. With Hijab being something so dear to me as a Muslim, it has made me feel so appreciative and beautiful in my own skin, even in a world where showing more is deemed as “empowering”. I want to reduce the stigma that when a woman chooses to cover her hair, body, etc., it should never be considered oppressive or wrong. I want to reduce the stigma that the business world is not a place for women of color but a place for every woman to strive and



accomplish everything she puts her mind to. I have used my brand to hone in on the diversity of Muslim women but also women of all backgrounds, shapes, shades and religions. When it comes to photo shoots, I reach out to women who aren’t always in front of the camera to get them out of their comfort zone and make them feel beautiful. I show women who look different from one another to admire the beauty in diversity. When it comes to styling pieces, it is important to show the versatility of how women can wrap their heads based on factors, as hair, style, outfit, weather, fabric, and just personal preference, as different lifestyles are what make the brand what it is.

Part of HSF’s mission is to inspire women to feel beautiful by being themselves, and also giving them the freedom to showcase their personality in whatever way they choose.

The goals of HSF have shifted, and I would like to work on branding my business in a slightly different way. I am in the process of trying to play with new fabrics, new looks, and in the future, plan events to showcase my brand even more. I have been the one working on the marketing, website/business development, finance, design, content creation, and sales leads/management of my business thus far, which has been very challenging.

Learning how to sew from my mother, referencing accounting notes from school, leveraging resources, and using my own money to fund my business, has made me more mindful and knowledgeable of the many components involved with a business. If I were to do it again, and I would, there are undoubtedly a few things I would do differently. While it has been a learning experience, I hope my success inspires another woman’s success.

There is always more information to learn, unexpected circumstances, costs, fluctuations in demands, and the unforeseen that keep entrepreneurs on their toes.



Photography: Arria Woolcock and Yasmine Kofahi, respectively

It is imperative to constantly learn from others, and be vulnerable in the aspect of sharing struggles, lessons, and being teachable. Branding is so much more important than just starting a business. It starts with you as a person and how you carry and portray yourself. As WOC we know what we want and need, many times the products, services and resources are limited, so it is our job to search and reach out to as many people and companies as possible to find answers and solutions. Who you know can provide you with a multitude of opportunities, so always build your network. Additionally, understand that networking is a two-way street. You need to be willing to let people learn from you as much as you want to learn from them. Leveraging social media and technology can get us in contact with individuals all over the world, who many times can guide or assist us in the right direction. We need to stop letting people limit us to our gender and skin color and go beyond that to create and inspire other WOC.

Confidence is key; many times it takes us longer to reach the levels we would like due to self-doubt. Read, comprehend, learn, discuss and apply everything to create your dreams into tangible success. Be ready for a path of success that is nowhere near a straight line. Never fear failure, as with anything comes faults and lessons. I was never surrounded by successful entrepreneurs nor was I taught to seek entrepreneurship as a means to earn an income, but I saw a need, and I chose to be a provider for it. The right risks are worth it, and I see HijabSoForeign taking off in the future with careful strategy and devotion. I would love to continue to witness the growth of Women of Color in business.

## about Raheema Chachouai

Raheema Chachouai is an African American/Moroccan Muslim woman living in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is a fashion enthusiast with a passion for marketing and entrepreneurship. She currently has a small online business called Hijabsoforeign, in which she designs and sells Hijabs/headpieces. She loves creating and styling pieces that make women feel beautiful and confident in what they wear, just as she does for herself.

She hopes to continue working on her passions and creating pieces and content, that catches the eyes and the hearts of individuals.

# TRUE COLORS





# AT FIRST GLANCE





LET'S HARD TO



ONE'S FEEL

PERSONALITY

THE ART



SOUR

ESSENCE

TRUTH

TRUE COLORS



# Media is a Man's World

by Chloe Price

It's 2020, and women are still being placed on the back burner when it comes to acknowledging outstanding performances, and generally giving them any recognition. As women, we can shout about it, but when it comes down to it, are we, the consumer of all things media, creating the demand and supporting the women we want to see succeed?



Statistics are undeniable. Women, especially women of color, are discriminated against in most professional fields. They don't receive the same opportunities as their male peers to rise through the ranks. This is easy to pinpoint in the world of the arts, because directors and other members of production teams have their names plastered on promotional materials, playbills, and nominations come awards season. For example, in the list of 2019 Oscar nominations, all five artists nominated for Best Director were male. Animated Film Directors?

All male.

Of the twenty people up for Screenplay/Adapted Screenplay, two are female. Costume design is one of the only categories that is female-dominated. Geena Davis, famous for her roles as Barbara in *Beetlejuice* and Thelma in *Thelma and Louise*, founded the Institute on Gender in Media in 2004 to provide a massive body of statistics about women's representation in the media. This research includes encouraging statistics that positive female role models inspire women all over the world to become more ambitious, assertive, or even to leave abusive relationships. But it also provides troubling statistics that 83% of film and television characters are male, and

only 7% of directors, 13% of writers, and 20% of producers are female.<sup>1</sup> This lack of women creating art and choosing what art gets funded leads to a huge gap in representation and non-sexualized female characters and plotlines.

Even in the world of theatre, which is supposed to be diverse and inclusive by nature, women directors have to work much harder to even be considered to head a project and often aren't trusted with big financial decisions. If we look at the 2019 Tony Awards, the categories Best Direction of a Play or Best Direction of a Musical only had one woman in the midst, and she won for her direction of *Hadestown*. In an article published by *Playbill*, a number of professional female directors talk about this issue, and creative solutions to fix this disparity. Leigh Silverman, Broadway director of shows such as *Violet* (2014) and *Grand Horizons* (2020) provided a call to action for all producers, directors and writers; "It's really simple. Gender parity can happen if people hire more women. That's the answer... Hold yourself accountable. Do you have an interest in prioritizing gender parity?"<sup>2</sup>

## Being represented in the media feels good; the evidence is everywhere.

A business such as theatre, which is primarily sought out by women, should have more opportunities for these women to perform, write, direct, and design. When they do, art is created that so many more women can identify with and see their own stories in them.

Not seeing powerful role models who are your gender, ethnicity, body type, or possibly who share your physical or mental disabilities can lead to young women feeling like they are alone in who they are, or it can lead to them thinking that what they look like is wrong.

## Our population of real people needs to be represented accurately by the people who make big decisions.

Being represented in the media feels good; the evidence is everywhere. Little girls going to Disney and seeing a woman who looks like them playing Tiana, Moana, Mulan, Pocahontas, or Lilo empowers them to feel beautiful and capable of being as strong and independent as these characters are.

A woman seeing another woman in a piece of media leaving her abusive spouse or in a position of power makes us feel like we are capable of the same. There is also a large gender bias among journalists in news media whether they know it or not; Ros Atkins of BBC's "Outside Source" admits that his team struggled when they took a hard look at their gender representation and bias in what they were writing. "The very real obstacles to achieving gender-equal representation had morphed into justifications for not getting there... I wanted to prove that we could make our journalism better and more popular through fair representation."<sup>3</sup> Atkins understood that by writing for a more generalized and non-biased audience, they would affect a larger demographic and their ratings and exposure would improve. It is important for all workplaces, not just ones reporting news or creating media, analyze their treatments, promotions, and hiring of women.

On a more positive note, there are plenty of female artists that are being widely recognized and awarded for their contributions, and support of them opens doors for even more women wishing to create art. For the sake of consistency, let's take a look at the Grammy awards from 2019. The best new artist

of the year was 18-year-old Billie Eilish. Other nominees included Ariana Grande, Lizzo, a plus-sized woman of color, H.E.R., another woman of color, Lana Del Rey, Queen Beyonce, and Taylor Swift, among many others. There are numerous female artists that may not be nominated for awards but are still making fantastic contributions to the arts, both internationally and locally, even right in your hometown. It is undeniable that in this social climate we exist in now, it is more important than ever for women of color to be fairly represented and highlighted in all forms of media. Women like Lizzo are working hard every day to normalize plus-sized women of color being in the spotlight and knowing that they are unequivocally beautiful. Representation matters now more than ever. It goes beyond the world of media as well; our political, educational, and social leaders should be women, women of

color, and other gender and racial minorities. Our population of real people needs to be represented accurately by the people who make big decisions.

So realistically, what's the solution for the lack of women in popular media and other important social roles? It requires everyone from the bottom of the hierarchy to the very top making a more conscious effort to hire women, write for women, trust women in advanced positions, and include women in broad conversations about the art we all create. People of all gender identities, racial minorities, and socioeconomic classes deserve representation and media that includes them, and we must continue to have conversations with each other on how we can achieve this equality in everything we do.

### about Chloe Price

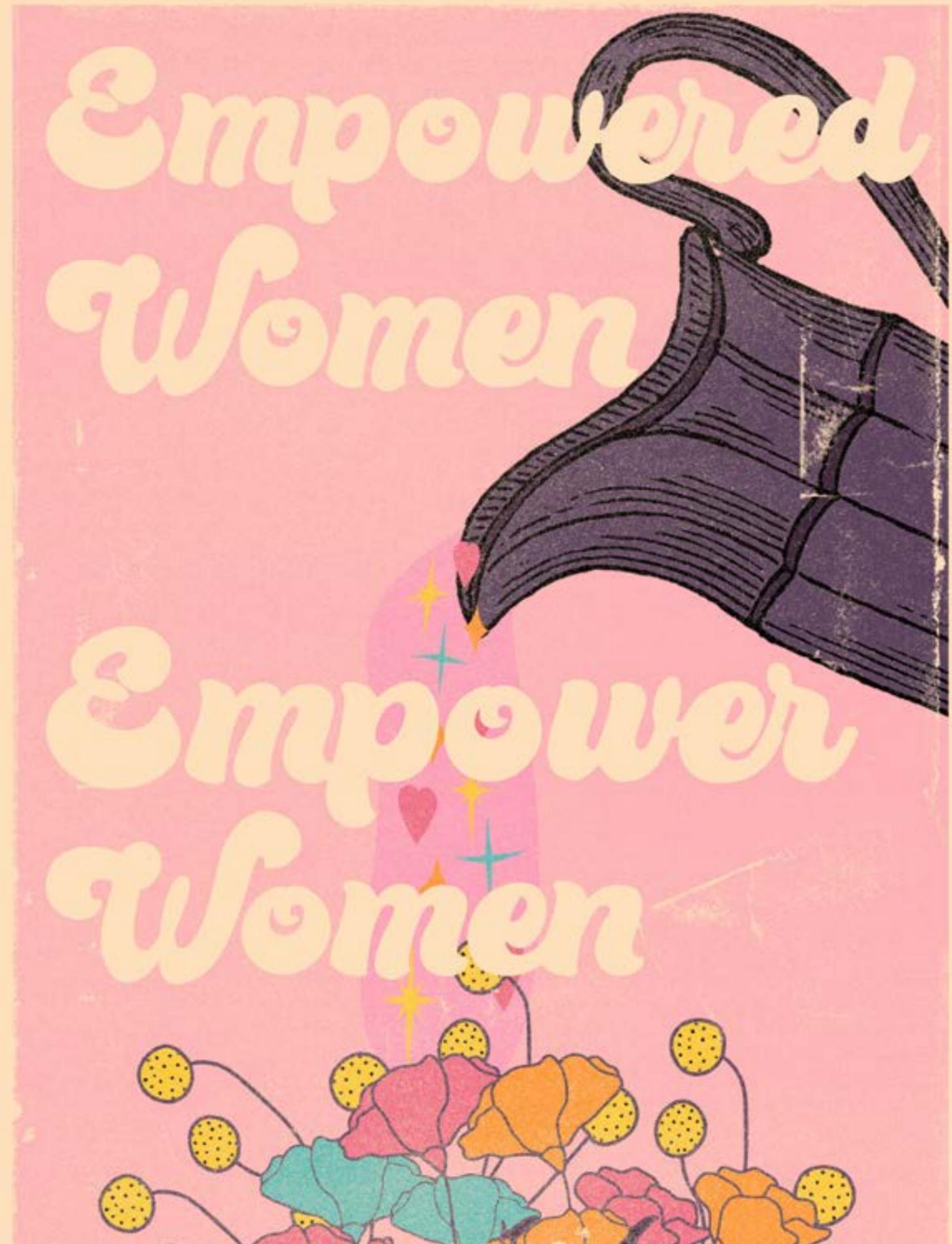
A natural-born, professional performer in the Cincinnati, Ohio area who has a passion for creating theatre and other forms of art that reach people on a personal and impactful level. She seeks to inspire change in the world of entertainment that makes it a more positive and inclusive environment for women, people of color, physically or mentally disabled people, and anyone else with a love for the arts. Chloe also passionate about history, poetry, women in the film industry, video games, and animal rights.

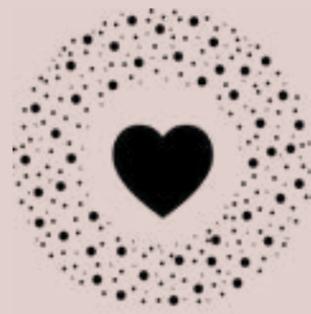


<sup>1</sup>Geena Davis Institute. "Gender in Media: The Myths & Facts," January 22, 2018. <https://seejane.org/research-informs-empowers/gender-in-media-the-myths-facts/>.

<sup>2</sup>Clement, Olivia. "5 Female Directors On Why the Theatre Industry Struggles With Gender Equality." Playbill. PLAYBILL INC., February 8, 2018. <https://www.playbill.com/article/5-female-directors-on-why-the-theatre-industry-struggles-with-gender-equality>.

<sup>3</sup>Chilazi, Siri, Aneeta Rattan, Oriane Georgeac, and Iris Bohnet. "Tackling the Underrepresentation of Women in Media." hbr.org. Harvard Business Review, July 8, 2019. <https://hbr.org/2019/06/tackling-the-underrepresentation-of-women-in-media>.





In Kind

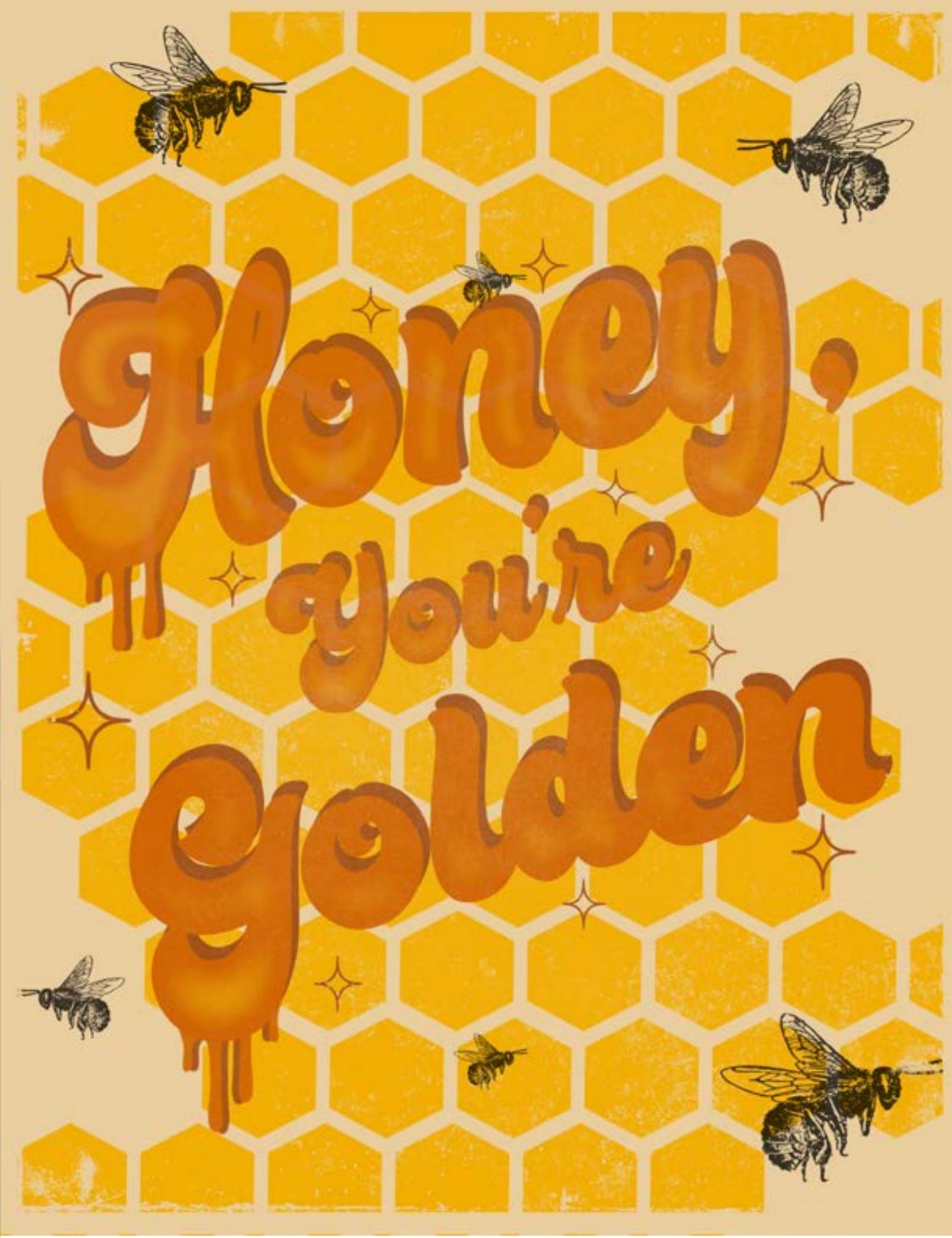
Our goal is to make life a little easier for families by providing them with essential items for baby and mama. We want moms to know that they are not alone. We are here, and we care. Bringing home a new baby is wonderful and amazing, exhausting and stressful. Our hope is to relieve some of that stress by supplying families with a box of carefully chosen, high quality items.



*We are entirely volunteer run by moms who care.*

In Kind was started by a group of mamas on a mission to help fellow moms out. We are a nonprofit helping families in need. The gift box we have curated is filled with high quality essentials because we believe every mother and her baby deserve the same high standard of care. For every gift box we sell, one is donated to a family in need. All donations, and funds made from sales go directly back to furthering our mission. Learn more.

BUY | [www.inkindboxes.org](http://www.inkindboxes.org) | DONATE



# Opportunity. Struggle. The Journey.

First generation students are the first of their families to attend college/university education. It is never an easy decision to leave home, or to do something nobody else in your family has been. In the nerve-wrecking adventure of pursuing higher education, there are many lessons and discoveries to be made.

by Marie Fisher

Reaching your success is always something worth celebrating. Everyone has seen what you have accomplished. However, most do not see the challenges and struggles you faced in getting to that finish line. Achieving a long-term goal can be almost surreal. You put your sweat and tears to get where you wanted to be in life when people doubted you. At one point, you might have thought, "Maybe this wasn't the right choice." But you had your supporters: friends, family, peers—and your biggest supporter of all—yourself. They were all cheering for you at the end of the finish line. You crossed it, and you did what some thought you couldn't.

The most rewarding achievement is being the first one in your family to earn a college degree. A first-generation college student is someone who takes the path less traveled (cue Robert Frost) to give themselves a better opportunity for not only

themselves, but for their loved ones, and other prospective students who aspire to be like them. There are plenty of sacrifices that come along with this: having to leave your family, potentially moving to a different city, state, or even country. In addition, there's adapting to the new surroundings, the new normal. It's hard enough making that step into a new world, but the hardest step is taking the initiative to start a journey no one in your own family has.

Female college students specifically are facing and defeating the stigma of dropping out of school from intimidation and the fear of letting people down, including themselves. These women have faced the obstacles and hurdles by honing in on the light at the end of the tunnel. They knew once they reached the end, it was going to be all worth it. They'll tell their stories on why they chose to break the chain and attend a university, how

they not only found the career choice, but they discovered who they are as a woman and how they are inspiring others to attend college and show that other female, first-gen students are not alone in taking on this path.

I was the first out of my two sisters to attend college. I was immensely thankful to my mom being able to help me with applying and preparing for college by sharing her knowledge and experiences. It was scary to go to a place completely foreign to me. I hated not having my mom and sisters right by my side. At home, we would all eat dinner together and talk about our days. Eating dinner alone was weird for me. Though I had my roommate and other college friends, there was just something different about sharing gossip with your own mother. My mom would call me everyday and tell me how much she missed me, but never did she say it to make me feel guilty. She always told me she was proud of me. When times were hard for me at school, I always thought of my mom telling everyone that her firstborn child followed her mother's footsteps to be something great.

My mother, Nancy, is a Mexican-American, first-generation college student. She exhibited strength and confidence, proving first-generation women can go to college. My mother wanted to set me up for success, so she knew she had to step up to an obstacle none of her family members had previously taken. She attended Ball State University for her undergrad in the late 80s. Although the college attendance rate for minorities was increasing, the university was still predominantly white. She said one of the biggest struggles she faced was the intimidation of being one of few minorities going to college.

She felt like she stuck out and didn't think she belonged there. Although her parents never hadn't attended university, they always supported her in furthering her education. She had the confidence to beat the odds because she knew her parents had confidence in her.

# First-gen students are not alone in taking this path.

"My parents were my biggest supporters, however, our funds were low to support me to go[ing] to school. Although people doubted me of being a first-gen[eration], Hispanic woman, this gave me more strength to keep doing exactly what I was doing. Being a minority gave me more scholarship opportunities to help me continue to go to school. It really made me see the university also wanted to see my success," Fisher said.

Keylin, a class of May 2020 graduate at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), is the first person in her family to earn a four-year degree. She chose to "break the chain" by going to college and making herself a stronger and confident woman. She wanted to show that her mother's hard work and effort did not go unnoticed.

Keylin knew going to school would show her mom that she had given her daughter an amazing opportunity to take for herself. She knew taking on this new journey would make not only her mother proud, but also herself. Being the oldest of two younger brothers, it was important for her to be a role model for them.

“Breaking the pattern would mean that I would be taking a huge step out of my comfort zone, not only for myself but for my family as well. I wanted to set an example for the younger kids in my family, especially my two younger brothers. Show them that we all have the opportunity to make anything out of ourselves. It’s okay to break the pattern and reach our life goals,” Keylin shared.

Leaving home can be one of the biggest struggles when attending college. It moves you out of your comfort zone and can cause feelings of guilt for leaving family behind. Being the oldest of two younger sisters, I felt I was almost abandoning them. My parents were going through a divorce when I was entering college. It was a big stressor, and I worried I wasn’t going to be there to support my mother going through it. My sisters were also facing emotional distress from the divorce, and it saddened me knowing I couldn’t be there for them. However, my mom knew I needed to go to school, and she continued to encourage me to attend school. Through the whole process she was still incredibly supportive of me being hours away from home. The timing of it all was not ideal, but she knew the opportunities a college degree would offer, and she wanted me to pursue my dreams.

Like me, my mom also felt a sense of guilt when going to school. She was the second mother in the family. My mom only spoke Spanish growing up as a kid. She started to learn English when her older brother started going to kindergarten. As she strengthened her English-speaking skills, she passed them down to her mother who knew little English. When she continued learning, she saw how much her family needed her. But she recognized her skills were not just needed by her family, but other kids who wanted to learn another language. My mom quickly realized how beneficial it was to be bilingual. This gave her an edge some of her college peers didn’t have. This inspired her to become a high school Spanish teacher as well as teach college-level Spanish courses. She said, “I loved seeing my teaching get through to students, so it made me feel I was in the right place of study. It let me know that going to college was the best decision I could have made for myself.”

Keylin has also defeated the stereotypes challenging minority first-generation women. Through college, she discovered who she was as a person. At times she had self-doubt, leaving her wonder if she really belonged on campus. When school was hard, she knew she could rely on her mother to be her biggest supporter, and to lift her up and help her recognize the strong and confident woman her mother raised her to be. She’s earned her bachelor’s in organizational leadership, and she’s confident going to college was a great decision for herself.

“It feels good knowing [that] I was able to overcome what many others couldn’t. I am glad I decided to do this because getting my college degree allowed me the opportunity to open many doors,” Keylin said. Cruz wishes for other prospective first-generation women to do what she did and take on the challenge she has now completed. During the journey, she emphasizes the importance of never giving up on yourself—even in the rough of it.

“ Breaking the pattern would mean that I would be taking a huge step out of my comfort zone, not only for myself but for my family as well. ”

For me, college really made me see who was really there for me in the end. Going into school my first year, as an exercise science major, I had classmates telling me I shouldn’t be in this field of study. Grad school professors came into our classes saying the odds of getting accepted into a physical therapy program was very low. It scared me to the point I ended up changing my major. I was told that any other major out of STEM wasn’t “worth my money.” But I didn’t care about getting a six figure job out of college. I wanted to do something I loved.

I chose journalism as my major because I have more passion about my writing and story-telling than I ever did with my hopes of becoming a doctor. I am now doing what I love and with people who supported one another—people who supported me. I am very thankful for my mother who chose to be the first one in our family to go to college. She gave my sisters and me a true example of a minority woman at university, and she shared her hard times as well. She gave me the confidence I needed and helped me with my adjustments living in a rural town to going to a school in a big city.

Keylin Cruz is also someone who has helped me get through school. She helped me realize I wasn’t alone in my situation. She shared her story of being the first in her family to go to school, and it motivated me to keep pushing forward. I had a major identity crisis being both Caucasian and Hispanic. Growing up in a predominantly white town, made me feel like I was “different” from everyone in my high school. When I attended a university with more diversity, I still felt that being mixed made me feel like I didn’t fit in anywhere. Keylin was one of my first friends who accepted me for who I am. She told me I should be the person I want people to perceive me as. She made me proud of my Hispanic roots, and encouraged me to not feel the need to hide who I am. Both of these women have shaped me into the woman I am today. They’ve helped me accomplish life-changing goals, and pushed me to be the one inspiring my younger sisters to go to college. I am forever grateful for them.

First-generation women have truly inspired me. They have shown me the “impossible” is achievable. That just because something may not have been done before by someone they know, they are capable of doing it, even if it’s the first time for their family. They’re showing younger girls your dreams can be made. There are hundreds of women who are cheering you on at the end of your finish line, whatever that may be, but it’s you who needs to take the first step to start your race.

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## about Marie Fisher

Marie has been exploring her creativity through writing and graphic design, and loves to see how people utilize their creativity to connect with people. She frequently attends music festivals; she finds a sense of freedom being part of a crowd where everyone can dance and be who they are. Marie has found relief in writing about her life as she finds it can help one to process and learn more about who they are through the written release of one’s own thoughts.



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# Social Impact

with Mineralogy

As we focus on women-owned businesses, we were able to talk with Theresa, small business owner of Mineralogy: a custom fine jewelry studio and shop based in Chicago. We discuss giving back to organizations that have supported their business and the challenges she's faced working in a male-dominated business world. She also speaks on learning and growing about developing more diversity and inclusivity within Mineralogy.



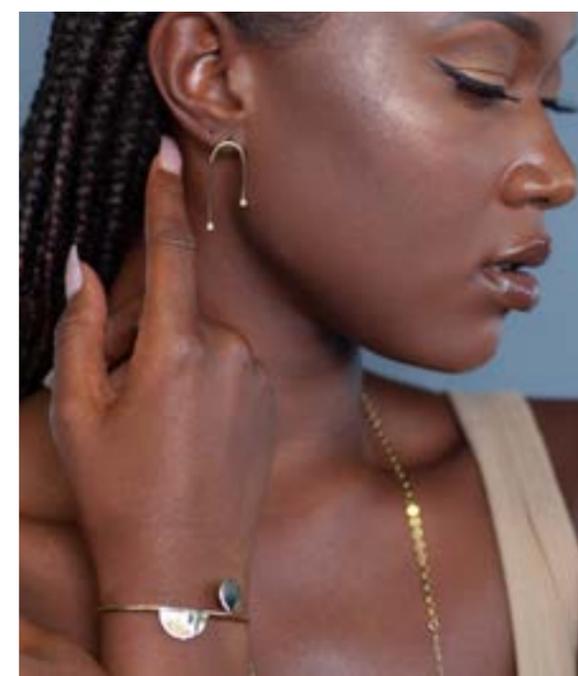
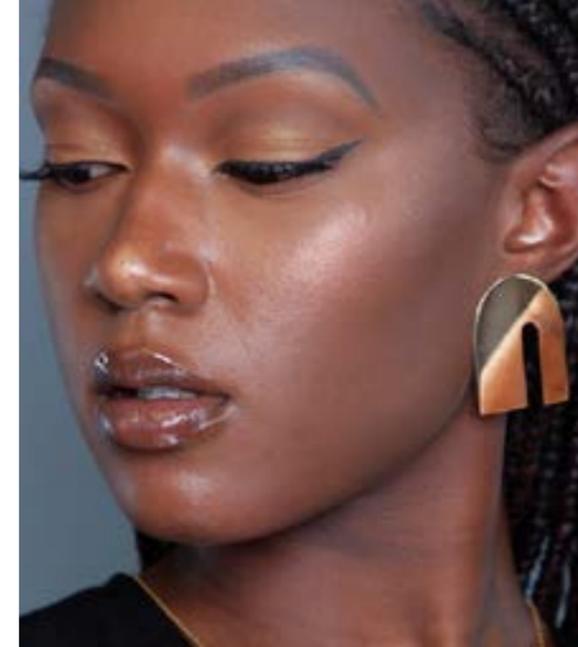
by MORE editors

## What do you think is the best way businesses can give back? Do you think current policies make it easy or difficult for companies to achieve some kind of social giving or following through on their social responsibility?

I think the best way a business can give back is to find something that is close to their heart and see how they can contribute financially or through volunteering their time/services to the organization. It's difficult to give at the beginning stage of building a business, especially if you are working from your own capital and potentially working another job on the side. So many of us start out that way. That's how I started, but once the business began to turn a profit, it was an easy choice to give back. It's challenging when you see other businesses saying that they donate a certain portion of proceeds to a charity and you feel unsuccessful for not being able to contribute at the same rate as them. That's okay, your giving can grow as your business grows. Find out what is comfortable when starting out and continue to reassess quarterly or annually. It can be helpful to do this annually after completing your taxes.

## Why would you choose to emphasize the importance of giving back?

I chose to give back because it feels right in my heart. If you think about the human experience, none of us have gotten to where we are without the help of others. Our parents, teachers, friends, mentors are a few people that have gifted us their resources to grow. It's a good feeling to be able to bring that full circle. We have a page on our website about giving back, but we don't make it a part of our marketing or our business language. It comes from the heart and therefore we don't find the need to talk about it. Our work and our messaging to clients reach the people we want to work with and if they happen to click on the social responsibility page and like what they read, that's just a bonus. If you are going to do good things as a person or as a business, do them when no one is looking and without seeking affirmation.



**As a woman-owned business, are there certain hurdles you feel are still in place for women pursuing a career in business?**

This is an incredible time to be an entrepreneur. Between social media, podcasts, online learning, and the resources available (free and paid) there is so much going for women who are looking to build a business. I started before social media and a lot of that was available, and it was nice to not be starting in an over-saturated market. Challenges vary between industries—a big hurdle can be garnering respect from others, especially in male-dominated industries. Thankfully the jewelry industry (long led by men) continues to grow with female designers and owners with a lot of great men lifting women up. There will always be obstacles along the path to a dream career, but that is what builds character. Every woman with an admirable career has never woken up to overnight success. It takes years of hard work and good luck, and no social media page can accurately portray the true journey. I am thankful for all of the obstacles in my business journey as I am able to look back and see how each one was a crucial step to where I am now and where I seek to go.

**Do you feel there is an expectation for women-owned businesses to give back?**

On top of the personal connection that small businesses forage, I believe that women are excellent at cultivating that type of relationship and are also held to a higher standard of values in their businesses. I believe that women are also inspired or challenged by other female business owners around them to rise up and do good.

**How do you decide which organizations to work with when giving back?**

For the core of what we donate, they were personal choices based on their congruence with my life and things that I feel a connection to. For the one-time donations, they're usually for events I have some interest in or things in our shop's neighborhood. I have been researching a lot with the help of my brother who is an actuary (and general numbers genius) on the most effective type of giving. He's helped me discover organizations operating on lower overhead, meaning more of your money goes directly to help others and doesn't get caught up in salaries, etc. It's possible we'll be shifting some of the core donations in the future—any updates will be reflected on our social responsibility page.



**How do you plan to continue to choose charities that reflect the diversity you want to represent?**

Moving forward, we will be choosing to support BIPOC organizations for our charitable contributions because we want to continue to find ways to make specific, actionable choices that will benefit the protection and growth of BIPOC communities and to take an economic stand against white supremacy systemic racism and social injustice.

**What tools and resources did you use to help reflect on yourself as a business owner?**

I am astonished at the amount of generous knowledge that Black women are serving the online community. Even though I follow different brands and individuals on Instagram, I didn't scroll or engage often since I scheduled our posts outside of the platform. Our Instagram feed did not reflect many Black people or People of Color outside of a few and therefore my suggested feed did not display diversity either.

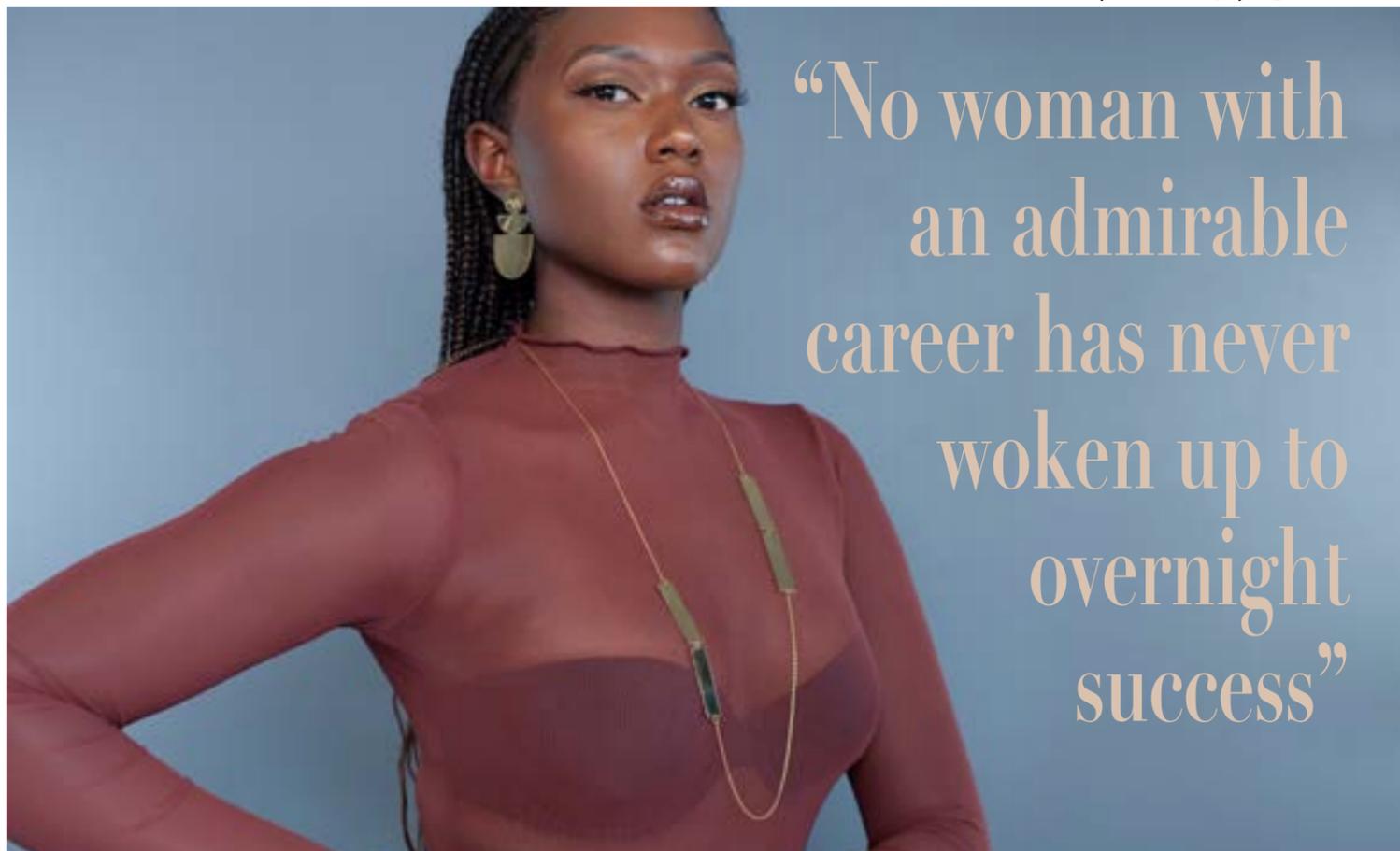
**“It is our turn to soul search, to read, listen, and watch.”**

The immense amount of knowledge circulating through Instagram, specifically amongst Black thought leaders has been so powerful. I am ashamed that there are many parts of their history that I did not know about, nor did I choose to learn more about. They are giving so much of their energy and time to educate the rest of us who have been walking through life with our privilege so far extended that even when we thought we were paying attention, we clearly were not.

I have found the most helpful information from Rachel Cargle's, The Great UnLearn. It's a paid class where she releases a syllabus each month that includes reading, listening, and viewing material as well as writing + reflection assignments. She is incredibly thorough and she has a clear, straightforward approach. It is necessary work. There are a few other Black, female educators whose teachings I have been learning from whose words and thoughts have such deep significance. They speak in such eloquent and thought-provoking in ways I had never even considered. Austin Channing Brown and Erica Courdae are simply incredible.

It is our turn to soul search, to read, listen, and watch reputable information and to then look at how we can implement it in ourselves, our homes, and our businesses in an intentional way. It will be a slow build, but that is what intentional, lasting growth is about.

**“No woman with an admirable career has never woken up to overnight success”**



**How has your education and reflection impacted the value of diversity to you as a person, business owner, and community member?**

Growing up in a small town in Wisconsin did not present much diversity—we grew up middle class in a predominantly white area. Moving to Chicago for art school was my first foray into a more diverse community and it was great going to a school where people were unique in many ways beyond race. I had classmates of color, a lot of students from other countries, as well as members of the LGBTQIA community. My long term serving/bartending job throughout and post-graduation was equally diverse and I had fewer white colleagues than colleagues of color.



As a business, we serve clients in the white, Hispanic, Black, Asian, and Indian communities, gay and transgender couples, and straight couples. Yet, the majority of our clients are white.

I have never used my voice or my branding imagery to be inclusive, either directly or indirectly and for this, I am deeply sorry. I've since learned that doesn't really matter because I am only showing up visually for people who look like me, whether these people are clients or followers of our brand.

I'm understanding what it means to be passively unaware instead of learning about what is happening around me and what has happened throughout history and then looking at my privilege, and seeing how I can do better. I don't have to just photograph pieces on myself. I can hire a stylist, a photographer, a model.

I don't have to do this for every single piece of jewelry I make/design, but I have to look at ways when I can take everyday business activities and see how I can spread them into the community as opportunities, specifically for Black people and People of Color.



**In what ways do you plan on being more inclusive and diverse long-term?**

I am having conversations with other creatives, content creators, family, and clients to see what ways we can create inclusive collaborations. I am looking at opportunities that we have and see how we can elevate them into something that serves someone else along the way instead of only our business.



I want to begin creating more content that shares the diversity that we see not only within our clients and in my family, but in the world around us. The focus is going to be how to create content that is not there to portray diversity for branding, but that is there to tell a story, connect people, to allow those who feel unseen to be recognized and to be seen by us and others. This will be a gradual change as we consider the intentional ways in which we can do this and have meaningful conversations to bring it into action. We do not want to simply hire a photographer to photograph Black people and People of Color for our platform, we want to embody acceptance in meaningful, actionable ways that uplift others and recognize their beauty and their story.

**What ways do you hope to see other businesses change and grow in their diversity, social responsibility, and inclusivity?**

I hope that people can continue the momentum of this movement because it is not a moment nor is it a trend. People's lives are truly on the line. Racism and white supremacy run so deep in our society and it is simply not acceptable to be a nice bystander. We must be active in our efforts to dismantle racism. It is our duty to accept the work of making diversity and equity something real, not just a perception. I think that in the following months, it will be interesting to see the journey for businesses as we all create true momentum and change within ourselves and our businesses to do the work required for social change and dismantling white supremacy.

Everyone should be open to learn and grow about diversity not only in their business, but in themselves. It is important to be aware of how you portray your business to your audience and what you can do to create an inclusive environment.



## Contributor's Choice by Chloe Price

TV Shows with POC Leads

Insecure on HBO

Andi Mack on Disney Channel

She's Gotta Have It on Netflix

Underground on Hulu

Atlanta on FX

### Favorite Movies Directed by WOC + Nonwestern Women\*

*Flower of Oblivion*  
Director: Selma Baccar

*Maria en tierra de nadie*  
Director: Marcela Zamora\*

*Bend It Like Beckham*  
Director: Gurinder Chadha

*W.A.K.A.*  
Director: Franciose Ellong

*For the Love of Ruth*  
Director: Christine Swanson

*Bound: Africans versus African Americans*  
Director: Peres Owino\*

*Survivor*  
Director: Brook Susan Parker\*

*When They See Us*  
Director: Asante Blackk

*Suspended Time 'Zaman Muaalaq'*  
Directors: Alaa Al-Ali, Ayman Azraq, Mahdi Fleifel, Asma Ghannem, Yazan Khalili, Arab Nasser, Asem Nasser, Tarzan Nasser, Ameen Nayfeh, Muhannad Salahat\*

*City of God*  
Director: Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund



*Educate. Inspire. Call to Action.*