

FALL 2020

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# THE FLYE

MAGAZINE

STAYCATIONS:  
TAKING TIME OFF  
TO STAY HOME

MOTIVATION  
VS. DISCIPLINE

TOP 5 WAYS  
TO FEEL  
GRATITUDE

&

THE FORGOTTEN  
ROAD BOOK REVIEW

LYRICISM IN MOTION  
**HARMONY DEVOE**



# THE LYFE STAFF

## Letter from the Editor

To The Lyfe Magazine family,

Thank you to all who made the Summer 2020 issue a rousing success! We hope you continue to read, love, and share our magazine. If you haven't done so already please follow us on social media:

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Be Blessed,

*Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.*

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# Who We Are



On November 14, 2015, Righteous Productions closed a deal with Madhouse Design, Inc. to purchase the rights to The Lyfe Magazine.

The Lyfe Magazine is the voice and soul of men and women. It started as a magazine that celebrated Florida's unique style, beauty, culture, inspiration and achievements. Righteous Productions extended the reach of the magazine to cover Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Texas, West Virginia, and California.

The Lyfe Magazine affirms its identity and shows its readers how to live life and have fun within the bounds of Christianity. Our editorial content, promotion, and brand extensions communicate the appeal of a luxury lifestyle with an authoritative voice and sophisticated design. Our editorial content highlights the best in Christian living, finance, home décor, automotive, technology, fashion, jewelry, fitness, health and wellness, beauty, travel, food, sports, entertainment, and arts and culture.

The Lyfe Magazine affords luxury purveyors the broadest access to a distinctive group of male and female consumers. The Lyfe Magazine is a multi-media venture which provides marketers with traditional and alternative ways to reach our audience at home, work, and play.

In 2017, The Lyfe Magazine took over sole responsibility for ownership and management of The Lyfe Magazine and on January 1, 2017 we released the first issue.

We publish the Lyfe Magazine four times per year (Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall issues). The Lyfe Magazine's target audience expects to reach 10,000 men and women through subscriptions, newsstand sales and direct mail. We provide controlled and targeted distribution in residential buildings, restaurants, lounges, galleries, salons, spas, health clubs, retail stores, such as Walmart, Safeway, Publix and Walgreen's stores. The magazine also will have a special distribution at major lifestyle and cultural events targeting our affluent consumers and at annual signature events.

The Lyfe Magazine expects to go beyond traditional mass media to provide our marketing partners with 360-degree turnkey opportunities to engage its audience and increase sales. We will provide advertisers with direct access to high-profile events, including fashion shows, ride & drive experiences, film and music festivals and charitable events. The Lyfe Magazine will continue to work with advertisers to develop custom programs and promotions suited to their brand and product initiatives.

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## Amazon Reviews for Leah Grace Bedtime Adventures



**CBHUBB**

**Sweet Dreams Princess**

What a sweet bedtime story every princess will love. Looking forward to seeing more from these authors and following Leah Grace on more adventures.

**Amazon Customer**

**A Wonderful Bedtime story!**

Beautifully written and illustrated ! What a wonderful Children's bedtime story...I would highly recommend this to any parent or grandparent looking for that special bedtime adventure with their little ones !

**Amazon Customer**

**Spirited and Fun**

This was truly a fun book to read with kiddos! Leah Grace is so spirited, imaginative and excited about her adventures. I highly recommend to others and we are looking forward to more adventures with Leah Grace!





# THE LYFE MAGAZINE



# Meet

# Jordyn Jones

By Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.

## Jordyn Jones' Bio

Jordyn Jones is an incredibly talented and educated young lady, who is wise beyond her years. She was born and raised in Washington D.C. Jordyn has two sisters; one younger and one older. Her sisters are her biggest inspiration.

At 15 years old, Jordyn has sung around the world and has her own podcast titled "Just an Educated Black Girl". She educates herself and others about topics ranging from politics to music.

Jordyn attends Duke Ellington School of the Arts where she studies vocal music with Sylvia Twine. She is part of the Duke Ellington Show Choir "Voices in Motion" with whom she's done many shows including Amahland The Night Visitors and A Motown Christmas.

Jordyn constantly works on making change in her community and eradicating the "black girl" stereotype. In the Black community, and specifically Washington, D.C., Black teen girls are seen as loud, ghetto, and uneducated. I never want any girl to be placed into this stereotype based on the color of her skin. There are many videos on the internet degrading Black women, especially those

with darker skin, and it is my job to prove that stereotype incorrect.

Jordyn loves musical theater and wants to be a performer. She plans to go attend college and gain a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theater.

Jordyn survived childhood cancer and lost her mother to cancer when she was 13. She uses these setbacks to show that your circumstances don't define you. Jordyn is an all A student with a 4.3 GPA.

Despite the challenges she has already faced in life, she is still a normal teenager. Jordyn loves roller skating, bubble tea, and having fun with her friends. She describes her friends as the best parts of herself. She also loves horror movies and indie music.

Jordyn wants to change the world and believes that everyone deserves equal opportunities no matter what background or struggles they face. She also wants to make a better world for her younger sister and the generations after her. She gives thanks to God, her mother, and her family and friends who molded her into the person she is today.





### **What extracurricular activities are you involved in in school?**

“In school, I participate mainly in The Duke Ellington Show Choir “Voices in Motion”. I’m a junior now and I’ve been in Show Choir since freshman year and intend to continue. This year hopefully I will be joining Student Government and creating a Student Union at my school, led by students for students.”

### **How has life as a teenager in high school been for you during the pandemic?**

“The pandemic has affected my life in many ways. It has affected friendships, schoolwork, and just overall my mental health. I’ve learned a lot, not only about myself but I’ve become immersed in politics and political topics. I feel as though I am the most educated now than I have ever been in my life. I learned a lot about government policies and human rights (which I think should be taught in core classes). I also have researched a lot of major topics such as

sexual assault and the 13th amendment which I go further in-depth about on my podcast. I’ve made a couple new friendships and have further strengthened the ones I already had. Being pretty much alone in quarantine with only my dad and my dog, has been kinda hard when it comes to socializing. I’m not a social person by any means but talking to my friends really helps just make life feel more normal. But on the flipside I loveeeeeee alone time. In quarantine, I can choose when I want to talk to people or respond to people and that is great. If I’m not in the mood to talk, I don’t have to talk. I definitely have more time to do things that I actually want to do such as roller skating, making music, and just rest overall. I actually, surprisingly, like virtual school, even since I was little I wanted to be homeschooled so this is kinda cool. The only weird part is doing my arts. I love to be on stage so not doing that is hard, and not being with my choir and doing in person gigs is also hard. Buttttt, my grades have been even higher during virtual learning. Being alone in quarantine is an interesting experience. I have more alone time which I like but is also sometimes unhealthy for my mental, which is why I spend so much time on the phone with my friends (which I am currently doing while I am writing this). Overall, life has been different but not exactly terrible, it’s kinda neutral.”

### **What would you like to see your generation accomplished?**

“I love this question. Gen Z is so amazing like I love my generation. We’ve made a huge change and almost half of us are under 18. We are very connected and very accepting. Unlike past generations, we’ve led the way to more LGBTQ+ acceptance and representation especially in media. We connect over major issues, such as mental health issues, family issues, and racial issues. We work to fix systemic racism and generational sexism, racism, and homophobia (which is a huge issue). I think what I would like to see Gen Z accomplish is to simply work together to make a better future for our siblings and future children, just everyone after us. Something big that Gen Z has accomplished which isn’t as serious, but was still huge was ruining Donald Trump’s rally in Tulsa. We reserved seats to his rally and

obviously didn't go so there were just empty seats and a very small crowd. The best part was that this was all coordinated over an app called TikTok which is a social media app primarily used by Gen Z. It also made Trump veryyy mad, which is great to see. This made him try to shut down TikTok on the merits that it was a chinese company trying to get hold of the information of its users. But Gen Z found a way around that too, even though he hasn't gotten rid of TikTok. Gen Z knows what's best for the U.S even more than lawmakers and government officials. It sounds crazy but it's true. Gen Z has been left to repair the problems of past generations, and we don't want that for generations after. I don't know if i'll see equality in this lifetime but I would like to make things better.

### **What are your thoughts on the upcoming election?**

"My thoughts and opinions on the upcoming 2020 election in November are complicated to say the least. My heart believes that Joe Biden will win but my mind doesn't believe he will. If we all band together, Biden will win. The biggest part is getting everyone to the polls, Trump is making that very hard by defunding the post offices. He's being a big baby and not accepting fair defeat so he's using any means necessary to try to cheat and win this election. They are turning away people at the polls, which is a deprivation of human rights."

"It's very hard for me to speak about this election because even though I am more informed than I've ever been in my life, I can't vote and at times it feels like I'm useless. But I have to use my platform to spread awareness and help heighten Biden voter influence. If we allow Trump to win, black families and communities of color will fail, the economy will fall even lower, police will not be defunded and people will die."

"Biden choosing Kamala Harris as a running mate was a neutral idea; not bad nor a good idea. He's trying to strengthen the black and women vote which is not a terrible idea. We also have to look past the bad things about Kamala because it doesn't matter how good or bad she is, Trump cannot win!"

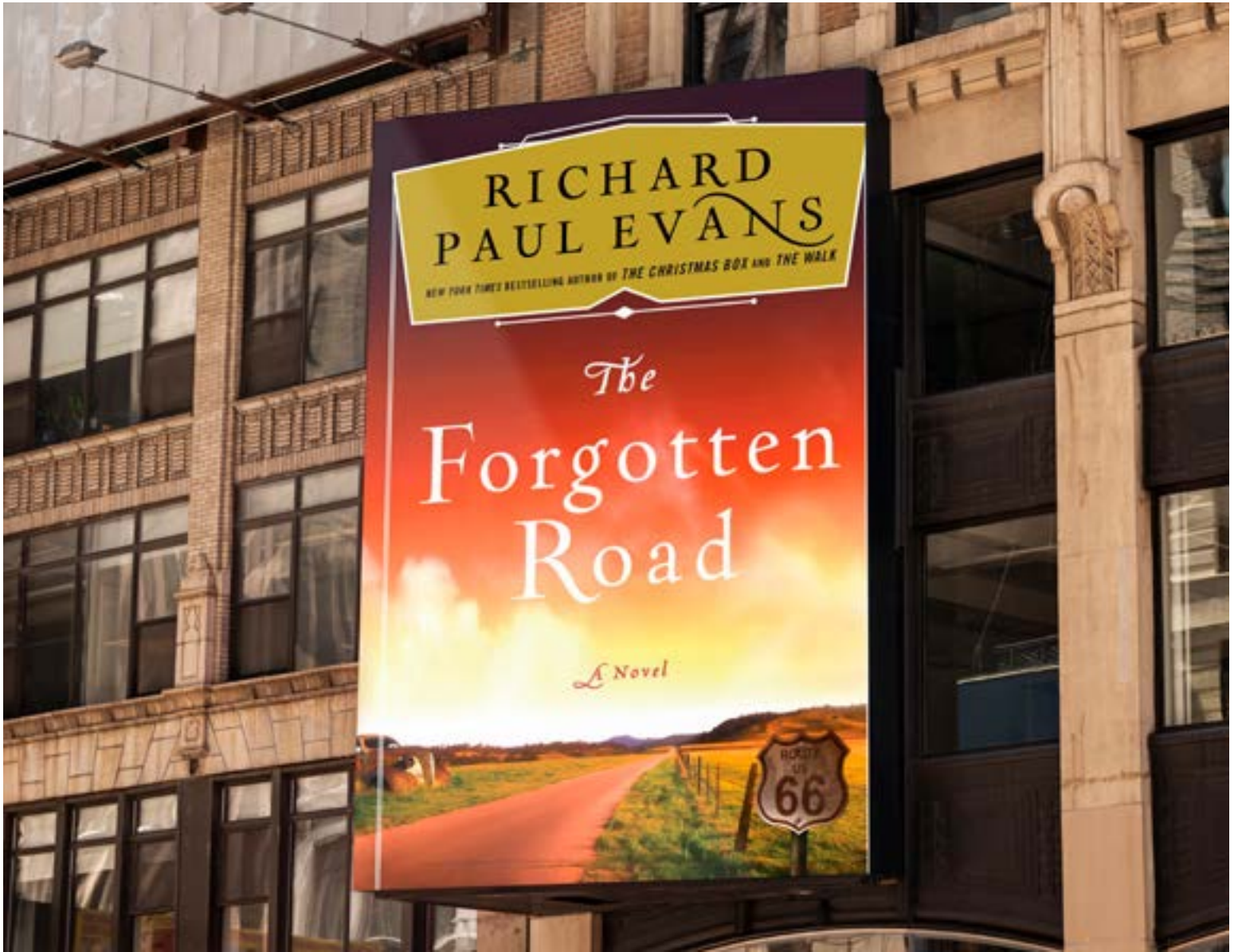
"Honestly, if Biden wins, his first 100 days will be very successful, at least in my opinion. He has a great (though very expensive) climate change and economic plan. I just feel we will still have to advocate hard for



nationwide defunding of the police because that still could be a challenge."

### **Links:**

- my podcast: <https://anchor.fm/aneducatedblackgirl>
- It's also on Spotify!
- my instagram: [@jay.the.dreamer](https://www.instagram.com/jay.the.dreamer) and [@aneducatedblackgirl](https://www.instagram.com/aneducatedblackgirl)
- my link-tree with many links to support petitions and donations to many causes: <https://linktr.ee/jay.the.dreamer>, <https://linktr.ee/aneducatedblackgirl>
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# Just a Thought Book Review



By Beryl Brackett



The New York Times best-selling author Richard Paul Evans has delivered yet another thought-provoking novel that leads the reader to self-discovery and redemption.

“The Forgotten Road” is a best seller and is book number two in the series “The Broken Road”. This novel is an easy read and takes the reader on roads he has forgotten exists. In the novel, the character Charles James forgot what it was like before he lost everything. In his journey to find himself, he discovers who he really is and what life is really about. He will walk thousands of miles and meet people along the route that will stir things up with emotions he had long forgotten about.

Charles James is a celebrity pitchman who missed a flight to his next conference. The plane crashed and killed everyone on board. However,

**“He couldn’t go back to being the man he used to be. He wanted to become the man he should have been when he was married to his wife.”**

no one knows that Charles missed the flight. He is counted among the passengers that died. This came as an enormous shock to him to learn that he escaped death by minutes. He was grief stricken yet very relieved. He sees an opportunity to change his life, to start over.

He quietly leaves the airport and heads back to his place. He packs a few things, grabs a map and precedes out of his front door, heading to the hotel around the corner. Grief and regret smack him in the face as he gets a room at a hotel for the night to ponder his next move. Should he tell anyone that he missed his flight and is alive, or should he seize the moment and start over? Charles James did the latter. With only \$13,000 in his pocket, he starts his journey on foot, walking from Chicago to Santa Monica on Route 66, hoping to get a second chance at life with his ex-wife.

The author, Richard Paul Evans, transports the reader to what used to be as Charles travels Route 66. He encounters individuals along his journey as if he was taking a tour in a semi-famous museum, being led by knowledgeable tour guides. The information he learned about the history of Route 66 opened his eyes to an alternative way of thinking about life. Although Charles had many obstacles in his way, he never deterred from his planned. He was going to see it through. He couldn’t go back to being the man he used to be. He wanted to become the man he should have been when he was married to his wife.

There are many roads we travel during our life’s journey. Whether it’s a Route 66 or a dirt road, things happen in life for a reason. We will encounter forks in the road that will be life altering. Life choices are tough, but in “The Forgotten Road” the author takes you through each emotion and every decision the character makes. He gives you a chance to think about your mistakes and make better choices.

What choices are you going to make?

# Motivation vs. Discipline

We all want to be motivated. We all want to be disciplined. You might be thinking, "What's the difference?" But according to many self-help gurus, there are differences. But, are there any differences?

At the beginning of the year, you're motivated to make some changes. You're going to find a better job, lose 30 pounds, exercise each day, or read a book each week. You're so excited at the beginning of the year.

You purchase a gym membership, some new cross training shoes, or join Amazon Prime,

because you know you're going to be ordering a lot of books, and you'll make good use of that free shipping.

Fast-forward to early March and you realize that you've only read two books, haven't been to the gym in weeks, spent \$30 on Amazon prime, \$90 on your gym membership, and gained exactly one pound.

You were motivated at the beginning, but you lacked the discipline necessary to carry on when your motivation flagged.



Many believe there are differences between motivation and discipline:

1. Motivation is the emotion of wanting to do something. You might wish that you were motivated to go to the gym or to paint the spare bedroom. Of course, you're motivated to go fishing if you love fishing. There are many ways to create motivation and to motivate yourself.

2. Discipline is doing the thing that needs to be done, regardless of whether you feel like doing it or not. Discipline requires discomfort. If it were comfortable, you'd already be motivated to do it.

3. You'll never be free without discipline. If you require motivation to do something, you're at the mercy of your emotions. There are too many things left undone if motivation is necessary for you to take action. To have real control over your life and yourself, discipline is necessary.

4. Discipline is limited. You can only force yourself to do something you don't like for so long. Some people have quite a bit more discipline than others, but everyone runs out of it eventually unless someone is standing over them with a stick.

5. Discipline is most useful for developing habits. Habit formation requires discipline at first. However, once a habit is established, discipline is no longer required. You don't need discipline to brush your teeth, for example. Use your discipline where it can have long-lasting effects by developing powerful habits.

#### Another Way to Look at It

Discipline and motivation can be the same thing, too. Consider that discipline is largely the ability to self-motivate. You wouldn't make yourself do a task in the first place if there were no benefit to you. You either believe you're going to receive something enjoyable or avoid something painful.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that those people with discipline are actually those people with a high level of skill in the art of self-motivation. Those with the ability to motivate themselves can do the seemingly impossible.

The person that can drag themselves out of bed on a cold, rainy morning to go for a run is someone that is able to focus on their long-term objective. They are good at reminding themselves why they need to put on their shoes and head out the door. They focus on the benefits instead of the misery of getting up and facing cold, wet weather.

Keep the benefits on your behaviors in mind, rather than focusing on the task itself. Learning to motivate yourself is more important than any concepts of discipline, motivation, enthusiasm, and willpower.

If you can motivate yourself, any goal is within reach. Every action you take or avoid is due to some level of motivation.

“The person that can drag themselves out of bed on a cold, rainy morning to go for a run is someone that is able to focus on their long-term objective.”



# Top 5 Ways to Feel Gratitude in Challenging Times

By Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.

Times of trouble can make it more difficult for you to find gratitude in your heart. They can make you turn to anger or resentment. However, you can still show gratitude despite challenging issues in your life.

If challenging times are affecting your ability to see gratitude, consider these ideas:

1. Search for the positive. You may be going through a stressful or difficult period in your life, but it shouldn't stop you from seeing positive things.

- What are the positive areas in your life that aren't being affected by your current challenges? Do you still have your home and health? Do you still have a job that provides for your family?
- By focusing on the positive aspects of your life, you'll find areas in which you can still feel thankful.

2. Treasure the small details. It's easy to lose sight of the small details if you're overwhelmed by a difficult situation at home or at work. However, if you learn to treasure the details, you'll welcome gratitude back into your life.

- Are you happy with a new paint color at home? Are you proud of a small project at work? Did you finish a long book? These small details can make a big difference in your gratitude levels.
- You can show your appreciation for the little things by making a list of everything that needs your love.

3. Search for joy. It's important to add joy to your daily schedule. Watch a comedy, read a comic book, or share jokes with friends. Add laughter to your routine.

- Laughter can help you notice the areas that need gratitude in your life.
- Joy can help you feel appreciation toward your family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors.

4. Put your pain in perspective. Make it a point to avoid getting lost in the negative emotions of your challenges by looking at others.

- If you can put your pain in perspective, you'll discover that there are others who have even more challenges than you. If you're worried about your house, job, or health; think about those who have even less.
- Perspective can help you understand that everyone faces difficult challenges. You're not alone, and you can still feel grateful for other things in your life.

5. Understand the power of change. Change is a regular part of existence, but when you're struggling, you might feel as if your life will never change.

- Remind yourself that changes occur all the time, and change can lead to gratitude.
- You can show your gratitude by recognizing that changes occur and can lead to better things. If you feel trapped and stagnant, keep in mind that a transformation is possible. It may take time, friends, effort, and perseverance, but you'll get past your difficult situation.

Your ability to find gratitude doesn't have to be limited during challenges. Search for the positive areas in your life, even as you struggle in other areas. Remember that you're not alone and that everything changes. Soon, you'll find yourself feeling the gratitude that you seem to have lost.







# Staycations: Taking Time Off to Stay Home

Staycations were first discussed a few years ago when the economy grew shaky. Workers worried about keeping their jobs. Travel costs and gas prices increased. Although people had time off coming, they couldn't afford the behemoth vacation expenses. Many just stayed home.

Thus, staycations were invented.

At first glimpse, a staycation might not sound like much fun. However, when you consider all the activities you can squeeze into your staycation at vastly decreased costs, you'll see that staying home is a great way to spend your vacation.

Once you and your family decide to take a staycation, make some plans in advance about how all of you wish to spend your time together. Because you'll be staying home, you have the opportunity to select several different activities over a few days or weeks. You may want to start with suggestions from the list below as you think about how to spend your staycation.

1. Get to know your own community and what it offers. Ever wanted to check out some of the tourist attractions in your hometown? Make a list of the local attractions you want to see and then go to the ones that interest you most.

2. Visit a local business you want to experience. For example, what about that new, expensive restaurant across town? You may have thought

you wouldn't ever go there, but it's certainly less expensive than a traditional vacation!

- Because you don't have to spend hundreds of dollars on travel, hotels, and 3 meals a day for your whole family, you may have enough financial resources to try a new restaurant or another local business that intrigues you.

3. Re-connect with family and friends who live locally. So often, life just seems to take over. Before you know it, it's been months or even years since you've seen your friends or family members.

4. Consider having a family game day on your staycation. Pick at least one whole day to do nothing but play games and have fun with your kids and/or spouse.

- Allow each of your kids to select an activity he/she wants to do with you.
- Have fun together as a family.
- Cherish these special times you have with one another.

5. Spend some quality time with your partner. A day at the beach, a dinner out or a walk in the local park can do wonders for your relationship. Enjoy each other without having to worry about travel and expenditures, or about how to pay off your credit cards when you get back.

6. Have you wanted to see some movies at the local theatre but haven't had the time? If you're movie buffs, catch a few new flicks. If you prefer performing arts, check out the local theatre, opera, or symphony.

7. Speaking of movies, you can also have each person in the family select a DVD of his choice for the whole family to view together. Get the snacks and gather in the family room for your own homegrown movie night.

8. Complete a home project. Although it's not for everyone, doing some work around the house might bring you and your family a newly updated room or perhaps a lovely outdoor living area.

- If you decide to do a home project on your staycation, discuss it with your family in advance to hear their views about it.

- It's wise to limit the number of staycation days you spend working on your home project to allow for leisure and recreation, too.

9. Plan and carry out a garage sale, indulge in your favorite hobby or help the kids have the sleepover they've wanted. The list of activities you and your family can do during your staycation is endless. Use your creativity and imagination to come up with some of your own ideas.

Spending your vacation at home can be adventurous, fun and full of leisure. Taking a staycation just might fit in with your work schedule and home budget this year. Try a staycation. You'll love it!







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# ONE ON ONE WITH HARMONY DEVOE

## *Lyricism in Motion*

By Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.

The West Side of Detroit has never been the same since it produced a talented, beautiful and down to Earth songstress, who goes by the name of Harmony Devoe. Harmony's sweet, sensuous sound caresses your spirit and makes you fall in love with her Rhythm & Blues, Neo Soul, and Gospel tracks.

Harmony calls her style "Lyricism in Motion"; a unique soulful and sultry sound that can only be presented by this skilled Queen. Listening to her story captivated me, and I was impressed

by her excitement and passion to sing and help people. This passion shows through in her lyrics as she merges a soulful melodic vibration with metaphoric rhymes that takes the listener to another place. Harmony's music provides the perfect recipe for soothing the body, mind, and soul.

The building blocks that created Harmony started from birth. She didn't arrive in this world on her own. She has a twin brother. At the young age of 13 she encountered the hard side of life with the unfortunate loss of her father. Her mother

was left to raise two children on her own. This event led Harmony to put her feelings down in writing. At 15 she started writing poetry. Losing her father so young caused her poetry to emanate from a dark place. Harmony was a "Daddy's Girl," thus her poetry expressed the grieving process she experienced as a teenager. Harmony said, "Everything I wrote about [during the loss of her father] was about dying because I wanted to be with my Dad. So it was a very dark period, you know of grief, in my life but the blessing of it is that's where I developed my pen and the ability to be become metaphoric."

Harmony had dreams of becoming a modern dancer and join the Alvin Haley Dance Company. Being an athlete, she also envisioned herself as the first female who would dunk a basketball. She admired former NBA player Spud Webb and wanted to be like him. She played sports in high school but her intelligence lead to a shortened high school experience. Harmony skipped her junior year in high school and graduated at the tender age of 16.

While attending college at the early age of 16, Harmony found herself surrounded by older kids. Her flamboyant personality continued to reveal itself as she became the life of the party. No party

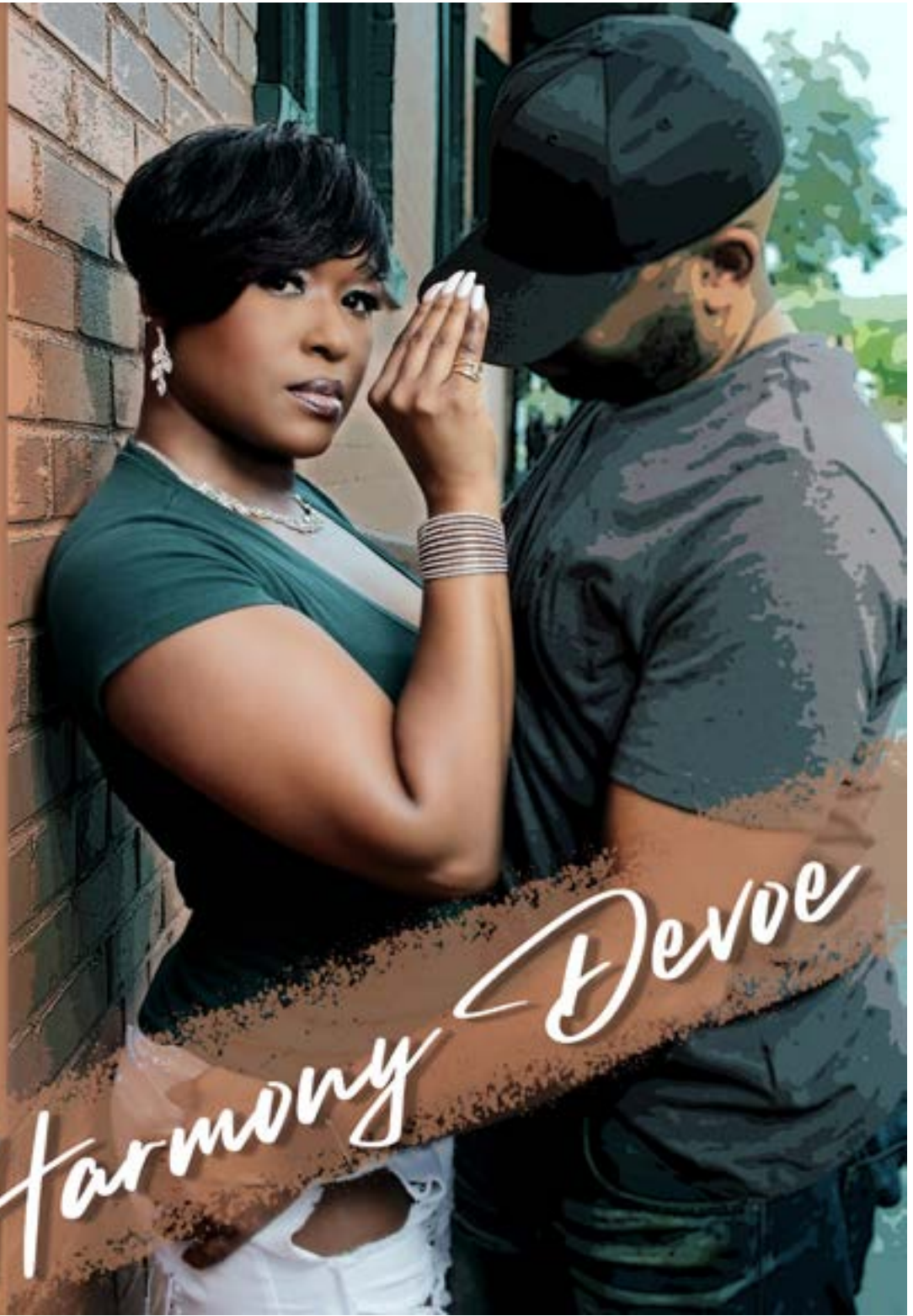


THE

# FRIENDS

ZONE

*Harmony Devoe*





occurred without Harmony in the house. However, the partying lifestyle came at a price. Harmony's grades dropped and she returned home to the Motor City.

This didn't stop Harmony. She enrolled at the University of Toledo in Ohio. It wouldn't be easy for her to get accepted into the university but she stood before the board at UT and pled her case. The board allowed her an opportunity to prove herself in the 2 Plus Associates program. That's all Harmony needed. She took that opportunity, excelled in it, worked her way through college, and proceeded to graduate Sum Cum Laude with her Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice.

Following college, Harmony initially wanted to be a Judge, but later realized she didn't want to go that route. Instead, she chose to be a Parole/ Probation Officer. When asked why, Harmony said "The criminal mind and deviant behavior; those things always fascinated me in my younger years and I wanted to help those on death row. I wanted to prove to people that it was more expensive to execute a person than it was to house them for the rest of their lives. I wanted to be an advocate and prove that with my research."

Harmony moved back to Detroit and started her first career as a Parole/Probation Officer. She was initially recruited with the Michigan State Police who, at the time, had little to no black women. She was then recruited by Michigan Department of Corrections, deciding that she could make more of an impact, by helping others. She recounted efforts to recruit her into law enforcement, but Harmony envisioned a goal to alter people's lives.

After 12 years in Detroit, the Holy Spirit led Harmony to move to Florida. She visited Titusville, Florida and fell in love with it. Being born and raised in Detroit, she was familiar with snow and hated the cold. The experience of Titusville, Florida and the year round warmth won her over, but she couldn't move without God's permission. Harmony then prayed about it and asked God lead her.

Harmony stated, "God made a way for me to transition to Florida and build a house." At this point in her life, she was a single mother with two little kings (sons). "I wanted peace, so I walked away from a life of comfort and financial security to start my life over again. It was a very uncomfortable and a humbling situation to be in." Harmony further stated, "I went from China to paper plates, Toys for



“Aim for the moon, and when you land, you will most definitely be amongst the stars!”



Tots, and Food Stamps!” Some of Harmony’s best Gospel songs emanated from this period of time.

This was an example of Harmony’s strength. As a woman and survivor of a dysfunctional marriage, she decided to walk out away because to her, “peace was priceless.” She decided the best thing for her and her kings was to move and rebuild her life in a new place. This decision would ultimately lead to the development of her music career.

### **The Songstress Rises**

Harmony began singing in church, directing choirs and playing the piano. She had an ear for the piano which developed into her being classically trained for approximately 14 years. Harmony stated she also played the organ but hated learning both instruments and quit. She regrets that decision today but contributes her experience to her songwriting and singing abilities.

Early in life she was handpicked to be part of a Gospel group. The group needed a secular song and Harmony was the only member of the group who listened to secular music. The group signed a deal with a known record label, and they were scheduled to open up for Twinkie Clark. Harmony says, “The intent was to have us open for Twinkie Clark. I re-wrote the DeBarge song, All This Love and called it All God’s Love.

She added, “We recorded that song and we were getting ready to go forward but they [Record Label executives] were telling us not to quit our day jobs because gospel music didn’t pay well.” After a couple attempts the group realized it couldn’t work out. Harmony eventually moved to Florida, right after she wrote 3 songs for an artist in Detroit.

Harmony Devoe cultivated her aspirations to impact millions through her music from a very early age. In 2005, Harmony recorded her first project and was introduced to Gospel Music Instrumentalist, Michael Mindingall. After presenting her creative works to Mindingall, he was impressed with her ability to merge her poetry with music. Mindingall took Harmony on as his protégé and began directing her artistic works.

Harmony began to broaden her brand and was then introduced to Grammy Award winning Producer, Michael J. Powell. That meeting birthed an opportunity for Harmony to blend her poetic lyrics, with beautiful music compositions for other artists. Expanding her musical talents, Harmony explored additional opportunities as a vocal arranger and background vocalist for other entertainers throughout the United States.

In 2015, she collaborated with multi-instrumentalist, Nathan L. Mitchell, and completed her hit debut single, Your Piano. About Your Piano, Harmony said, “It is the most beautiful metaphoric love song I have ever written. This song made me realize I knew I had a lyrical gift. It is my greatest piece lyrical work, in my opinion.” Your Piano is a musical arrangement that entailed a kiss on the ebonies and ivories, the exquisite



*Harmony Dewee*



*Harmony Dewee*



strum of the bass, and Harmony's sultry alto sound with seductive lyrics, resulting in an explosion of indescribable "floetic" symmetry. Your Piano scored big with fans and radio audiences worldwide!

In March 2017, Harmony released her exquisite R&B EP, *Chronicles of a Lyricist*. At the same time she released my favorite song by her, the Neo-Soul Gospel single, *Lord Ur Love*, produced with Tobias Tankard Sr. *Lord Ur Love* takes her back to her Gospel roots and I was captivated at the first listen of this ballad to God. Harmony's Neo-Soul Gospel single is smooth, catchy, uplifting, and inspirational.



*Lord Ur Love* reached listeners of secular and Gospel music and continues to be a hit.

Harmony describes herself as a multi-faceted lyrical creator, who can enhance any musical composition of any genre. Harmony's sultry sound is poetic, passionate, and provocative. In 2019, she dropped a dope club-banging, bass bumping single entitled, *Never Low*.

Refusing to be one dimensional, Harmony expended her talents into the talk show world. In February 2020, she introduced her innovative blog talk series *Grown Woman Talk*, via YouTube with her alter ego avatar, HD!

The pandemic didn't halt this talented artist as she released her latest singles, *The Friend Zone* and *America So Strong*. *America So Strong* is in direct response to COVID-19.

Harmony's floeticizm steps out with new music entitled, *The View*, which is now available for download worldwide on all media platforms! Harmony stated that the music video for the song will be stratospheric and scheduled for release and can be seen via her YouTube page, in October 2020.

This emerging artist, poet, and songwriter is destined to enrich the lives of many throughout the world with her remarkable brand of music as well as her exciting new blog show. Harmony continues to emerge, and her style of music will have you humming the chorus lines.

One of Harmony's favorite sayings is, "Aim for the moon, and when you land, you will most definitely be amongst the stars!"

When I asked her what advice, she would give an up and coming artist, Harmony said, "Invest in yourself! Never quit or take no for an answer! Trust God! Walk in faith! See the vision! Ride the wave and stay on your surfboard! Trust God in all you do! Never sacrifice you in the process!"

That's good advice we can all benefit from.

All photos courtesy of Allen J. Johnson

# HARMONY DEVOE THE VIEW



AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY @ HARMONY MUSIC

YOUTUBE @ HARMONYDEVOEOFFICIAL

Mockup psd created by freepik

# WHO STOLE MY LIFE

By Vanessa Rainey-Johnson



It is dark outside. You can no longer distinguish between the rising of the sun and its going down. The moment the sun rises, the earth yields to its light. The sky has fallen into a complicated black hole. Does this sound familiar? Depression affects more than 80 % of Americans in the United States. In the African American community, depression is the most prevailed sign of a failed American. African Americans have been traumatized by an undetected fog, called COVID-19. The great pandemic has robbed African Americans of their innate ability to survive. Although, many have crafted survival; those individuals are hanging on to a bond seeping from the souls of their ancestors. Depression does not only come in the midnight hour, during the stillness of the night. Depression abounds during the daylight while you walk among the living, inhaling the toxicity of gloom. Where do I go? How do I get there? What is wrong with me? These are questions many asked to unmask the aroma of demise.

The light at the beginning of the tunnel is the same light that will take you through the tunnel; when you are unsure of your faith and God's ability to help heal your pain. African American strength has always been in the bosom of God. God's supernatural power has allowed women and men to survive and maintain their household. Churches are closed in many communities across the U.S. The closure has left a sense of disparities and a loss of hope. Research has unveiled, once hope has diminished from the souls of man, they lose their sight. Depression robs the inner core of the body while decreasing the body's adrenaline and lessen the mind's reasoning.



How do we square the issues of financial loss, systematic racism, abuse, and inequalities without responding to the noise in our souls, society, and institutions? We must learn to reflect on positive restorations that have carried us through life cycles. Emotional exhaustion affects our mental health; therefore, learning to validate our thoughts for what they are, will help break the bondage. Take a pause break, get out of self, and do something meaningful for a stranger. This task will create a sense of purpose and place a smile on your face. When there is a smile, the heart becomes warm. Another tip is, set realistic expectations for the future. There is always room for improvement in life. Chunking allows you to break up those overwhelmingly large tasks into smaller successes. Lastly, feed your

soul, body, and spirit daily with exercise, quiet time, and positive affirmations. Use the I statement to acknowledge who you are and your abilities. After all, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

In a world where we are experiencing a lot of dilemmas, find contentment in knowing, "you are not alone and never alone." It's time to recreate your life. Change your pattern and shake up the world. Once, you begin to shake things up for the good of your world, blessings will overflow. Collaborate with like-minded individuals and get a new dialogue started about preparing for your future aspirations. Remember, paint the picture, do not allow a picture to paint you. Your mental health matters!



# The Lyfe Magazine's Spotlight

*Featuring*

**CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT (RET)**

*Avis Dillard-Bullock*

By Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.

## **Where You Start is not Where You Finish**

Being a veteran of the United States Air Force is one of the proudest decisions I ever made in my life. I met a great deal of people, and many of them proved to be truly outstanding people.

In May 1985, I made another decision. That decision was to change careers. I left the Staff Support Administration career field to join the elite career field in the Judge Advocate General's Department as a Paralegal.

I arrived in Biloxi, Mississippi to begin my training in my new field of endeavor and met a friend who I would grow to know and admire. If ever I have a question or a concern, I know I can reach out to Chief Master Sergeant Avis Dillard-Bullock (Ret). Chief Dillard-Bullock proved to be one finest Air Force members I had the pleasure of serving with. Chief Dillard-Bullock hails from St. Louis, Missouri where she attended McKinley High School. She graduated in 1979 and entered the United States Air Force to begin her 28 year career.







Being a teenage mom provided the motivation for Chief Dillard-Bullock. She said, "I wanted to make a better life for my daughter and make my parents proud." She described a better life as desiring not to be just a statistic as a teenage mom. Coming from a family of ten Chief Dillard-Bullock's parents didn't have the resources to send her to college. Following her uncle's advice, she joined the Air Force.

Chief Dillard-Bullock entered the Air Force as a strong-willed young Airman Basic, so basic training wasn't much of a challenge to her. She remembered getting her town pass taken away because of something she said, but it didn't bother her because her technical training was at Lackland Air Force Base, the same base as the Air Force's basic training.

After basic, Chief Dillard-Bullock entered Law Enforcement technical training at Lackland. She

planned to become a Law Enforcement Officer and when the time came, she would request to re-train into the Paralegal career field with the goal of becoming a lawyer.

After being in the Paralegal career field, she decided she didn't want to be a lawyer. Her self-motivation and the desire to be an example for her daughter provided what she needed to excel to the highest enlisted ranks.

Chief Dillard-Bullock recounted the time when kids teased her daughter because of her rank. She was a Staff Sergeant (E5) at the time. Instead of getting angry at the kids, she used that teasing as more motivation. She remembered telling herself, "If I'm a staff sergeant I will be the best staff sergeant I can be and I will make rank."

I asked Chief Dillard-Bullock about being a Black woman in the military. She recalled her time in



Law Enforcement. There were times when she was the only female on flight and sometimes she felt discriminated against based on gender and color. She remembered surpassing some peers in making rank and how it didn't go over very well with them.

Chief Dillard-Bullock pointed out that the military is a subset of society. "That means you have the same beliefs and people just in a smaller and more control environment. Whatever people are doing in society, there will be people doing it in the military." I asked Chief Dillard-Bullock who mentored her, and she answered Chief Carolyn Hairston. At Offutt Air Force Base, Chief Hairston took her under her wing and poured into Chief Dillard-Bullock. Chief Dillard-Bullock pointed out that Chief Hairston mentored all the paralegals under her supervision. Chief Hairston taught Chief Dillard-Bullock the steps it would take for her to move up the ladder of success. Chief Dillard-Bullock learned from Chief Hairston how to build people up. Chief Hairston had no fear or intimidation of anyone suppressing her in life and she passed this trait on to Chief Dillard-Bullock. Chief Dillard-Bullock arrived at Offutt as a technical sergeant and she moved into the Senior NCO ranks with her promotion to Master Sergeant.

Two other mentors of Chief Dillard-Bullock were Chief Clemencia Jemison and Chief Alvin Hall. Chief Hall was a peer, but he mentored Chief Dillard-Bullock even though he didn't know it. Chief Dillard-Bullock met Chief Jemison through Chief Hall, and she became Chief Dillard-Bullock's role model. As Chief Dillard-Bullock moved from base to base and promotion to promotion she saw the change in herself. Learning from her mentors, this change led her to be the great leader of people I knew she would become; a mentor and role model for others.

However, that transformation didn't happen without one primary element in her life... God. At Langley Air Force Base, Chief Dillard-Bullock joined Calvary Community Church, and they had a bookstore. She stumbled upon a book by John C. Maxwell entitled, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*.

The book inspired her, and she went on to read *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leaders Day*, also by John C. Maxwell. These two books helped Chief Dillard-Bullock bring together her Christian life and her professional life. *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leaders Day* chronicled people from the Bible. It showed their walk through life and the leadership styles they employed. The book inspired her walk in the military and how that walk blended with her Christian faith.

"Everything you need to know is in the Bible and that book helped me understand how to view myself. It taught me to understand my role as a Christian, a leader, a friend, a wife, a mother, a mentor, a co-worker and a supervisor. It helped me to turn the page in my life and understand that it's not about me. I saw the bigger picture of life."

After she learned it wasn't about her, Chief Dillard-Bullock focused on what was important. "I knew that if I took care of people, they would take care of me. I knew if I follow the path that God put me on that He would take care of me. Do what's right and right will follow me."

Many of us reach a point in our lives where we desire to focus more on God. For Chief Dillard-Bullock that point came at Aviano Air Base, Italy, where she attended the base Gospel Service.

Like many, her growth began with baby steps. Giving more in church, attending Bible study, etc. When God shows you He is moving in your life; that revelation empowers you to transform into something stronger for the kingdom. For Chief Dillard-Bullock, that event occurred during a tremendous physical challenge.

Chief Dillard-Bullock signed up to run the Venice Marathon. She never ran a marathon in her life, and it would challenge her physically and mentally. But like most challenges she faced in her life, she would overcome it. This decision would be the catalyst that kickstarted her closer walk with God. She trained hard and even sacrificed attending church some Sundays to workout. The week of

the marathon she wanted to have the Chaplain pray with her and take communion; he could not see her. Her husband wasn't at the race because of a last-minute military commitment. The day before the marathon she tried to reach her mom, and she wasn't able to get in touch with her. She wasn't able to sleep, her spirit was in turmoil. She tried to talk herself out of it, fear filled her spirit, but she prayed and pressed forward.

She started with two friends but got separated from them. She found herself alone, running and praying. She witnessed several people getting on a bus reserved for those who couldn't complete the marathon. She refused to get on that bus. This is a testament of her life. She never quits and she finished the marathon to a resounding cry of her name from her co-workers and friends waiting at the finish line.

Two days later the Chaplain came to Chief Dillard-Bullock's office and told her, "I came because God has a word for you. He wanted you to know that he has you, and the only way that he could show you that he was watching over you, was to take away those people you thought you needed. God wants you to trust that He will move obstacles out of your path."

That turning point ultimately led to Chief Dillard-Bullock's moving from Master Sergeant to Chief Master Sergeant over the next few years.

I asked Chief Dillard-Bullock what advice she would give young female enlisted as they start their journey into the military and she said, "Your success is a journey and not a sprint. Be the person that you want to see in others i.e. kind, thoughtful, knowledgeable, patient, thorough, dependable and trustworthy. Every fight is not a battle, choose your battles wisely—it is not always about you."

As I said earlier, I met Chief Dillard-Bullock in 1985 when we both were training to become paralegals. I knew then that she was special and great things would lie ahead for her. She proved me right. She doesn't know but to me, she is an inspiration.

Chief Dillard-Bullock is an example for many women, but especially those in the military. You can rise above your situation to attain the highest accomplishment in your field. For Chief Dillard-Bullock it was her promotion to Chief Master Sergeant, for you, it might look different. The only thing to remember is to keep your head high and follow Philippians 3:14, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."







**THANK YOU  
VETERANS**

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

FROM ALL OF US AT  
THE LYFE MAGAZINE

BACKGROUND VECTOR CREATED BY FREEPIK - [WWW.FREEPIK.COM](http://WWW.FREEPIK.COM)

“Since I was a baby, I have been very engaging and always trying to put on a show. I’ve been going to an arts school since Kindergarten. I have performed in more than 30 live performances.

My dream since I was nine has been to become a professional actor. While in quarantine, I’ve applied to more than 20 productions, and have had callbacks for films and commercials. Besides acting, I’m very interested in comedy, and I consider myself a comedian. I’ve done stand-up comedy performances on YouTube, in virtual talent shows, and I write jokes every week. The arts have always been something that I cherish.

In recent times, I have seen protests and police brutality on the news. Being the son of an African American man, I have been very impacted by the social injustice occurring in our country. I have protested at the Women’s March in 2018, and have talked about the Black Lives Matter Movement on my channel, and on social media. I am tired of the continuous hate and violence hurting my people, and I want a change to come in our country. I am proud to be Jewish and Black, and I want to help change the world.”

**What are your thoughts and opinions on the upcoming 2020 election in November, the candidates, and your hope of what will be gained with the election results?**

“I feel that this upcoming 2020 election in November will be the most important election since (President Abraham) Lincoln. This election, our choice is to elect an experienced former Vice President, or a country ruining President who could destroy even more if he’s elected for 4 more years. I believe that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are the best pick, for they both have the experience and knowledge to unite our country. I believe that President Donald Trump has been one of the worst Presidents ever, and could create even more damage if re-elected. The reason we’re still dealing with a pandemic is because of him. I hope that more Americans vote this election, and that they aren’t influenced by false news. We gotta get our act together, and we gotta do it soon.”

YouTube Channels:

Sloan Da Nerd: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxyKcLFibw6NMUHGbOpfMzA?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxyKcLFibw6NMUHGbOpfMzA?view_as=subscriber)

That Boy Good Productions:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW8V-t0B2UHekQ00Lgukd0w>



“My dream since I was nine has been to become a professional actor”

*Meet*  
**Sebastian  
Sloan**



“Sloan  
Da  
Nerd”



# REVEALING AN ILLNESS, THE AFFLICTION OF A BLEEDING HEART



By Vanessa Rainey-Johnson

Intimate Partner Domestic Violence (IPDV) is widespread in the United States. IPDV is an act of violence perpetrated by a romantic partner that lives in or outside of the home. Domestic violence is an act of violence between two people living together. Both forms of violence aim to maintain power over another person. IPDV does not discriminate against a person's age, race, socioeconomic background experience, or education. According to the CDC, IPDV is a "health crisis" that disproportionately affects about 1 in 4 African American women. Every 9 seconds in the US, a woman is assaulted or beaten. And, studies suggest that up to 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually. IPDV is a crime that goes unreported due to the matters of the heart, fear, children in the relationship, community/church status, or financial dependence. The violence can start as a verbal

confrontation escalating into physical attack or death. A partner may leave the relationship to avoid the abuse; however, later decide to get back involved with their abuser. Unfortunately, victims sometimes died at the hands of the abuser, if the abuse is consistent and lethal.

IPDV affects a victim's psychologically, physically, financially, and spiritually. Not only does IPDV, has an effect on the victim, all associated with the victim can become a "victim". Stalking is also a form of abuse. African American women in recent years have endured ill-treatment from social injustice, workplace tyranny, and trauma in the home. Intergenerational trauma seeps in the core of their creation, passed on to their unborn seeds. In this article, we will label this horrific act of the spirit as "ILL".

"ILL" is a sickness. When one is sick, they are unable to think sanely, perform to their maximum capacity, and have a loss of hope. A person that reaches this level in their life needs "HELP." Many times, the victim thinks they are the only one that can cure the sickness; therefore, they become co-dependent. This maladaptive behavior is the trick of the trade. The abuser uses this form of empathy to keep the victim in the relationship. Have you ever heard of "contagious?" There are some "illnesses" that are confined; yet, some are "contagious." IPDV is highly contagious. Therefore, if one has a contagious illness, they require immediate assistance, it is "highly recommended" to quarantine.

Anyone can be susceptible to IPDV, but most often affected individuals are those who have lost themselves into the high frequency of trauma-exposed by another person. Samantha, a single mother of two children, has a college degree, was in an intimate partner relationship



Photo by Engin Akyurt from Pexels

for eight years with Robert. Samantha reported, Robert made her feel complete, loved, and special. "He was a good father to our children, and he took good care of me". Samantha explained how she fell in love with her charming abuser. After Samantha became pregnant Robert, started taunting her, "You are fat", "No one wants you ", "You are stupid" etc. Samantha left Robert for a week. Robert located Samantha and coercive Samantha to come back home.

Two years later, Samantha had another child. Robert did not verbally abused Samantha during that time. Samantha felt protected and safe, until Robert began to push Samantha. As time went by; the pushes and blows became intense. Throughout the ordeal, Robert expressed his sorrow and made excuses for his behavior. Samantha knew she needed to leave again; however, she was afraid. Robert continued to shower Samantha with gifts. Samantha graciously accepted the gifts, and fearfully accepted his blows. One day, Robert punched Samantha extremely hard in the temple, and Samantha blacked-out. Samantha explained, I thought I had died, I could hear my children crying in the background; however, I could not reach out. All I remembered were, screams of helplessness coming from my babies. I will never forget the look of fear in their eyes.

Samantha saw a reflection of herself in a mirror that froze the corridors of her life. She heard the deep sorrow of cries from her spirit. Life was piercing Samantha rigidly; ultimately, she would die if she had not dared to seek help.

There are many women like Samantha in the world, fighting a losing battle with self and another person. It is not easy to create an emotional boundary; however, it is easy to recognize the signs and create a safety net plan. Having an awareness of our mind, body, spirit, and experiences will allow us to set a barometer to protect us from harmful behaviors. Women cannot save the world; however, women can use the innate powers of survival God gave them





to live a purposeful life. Samantha's blackout became a light; in that light, she saw herself, children, and a future she did not want.

Given these realities, we must familiarize ourselves with indicators and take action. Self-punishment is never an option. Below is a list of warning signs. Use this list as an evaluation for your relationship and your health. Safety is a priority:

- Your partner bullies, threatens, or controls you
- Accuses you of having an affair
- Blames you for the abuse
- Criticizes you
- Tells you what to wear and how you should look
- Threatens to kill you or someone close to you
- Throws things or punches walls when angry
- Yells at you and makes you feel small
- Your partner controls your money:
  - Keeps cash and credit cards from you
  - Puts you on an allowance and makes you explain every dollar you spend
  - Keeps you from working whatever job you want
- Steals money from you or your friends
- Will not let you have money for basic needs like food and clothes
- Your partner cuts you off from family and friends:
  - Keeps close tabs on where you go and whom you go with
  - Makes you ask for an okay to see friends and family
- Embarrasses you in front of others, and it makes you want to avoid people
- Your partner physically abuses you:
  - Abandons you in an unfamiliar place

- Attacks you with weapons
- Keeps you from eating, sleeping, or getting medical care
- Locks you in or out of your house
- Punches, pushes, kicks, bites, or pulls your hair
- Your partner sexually abuses you:
  - Forces you to have sex
  - Makes you dress in a sexual way
  - Makes you feel like you owe them sex
  - Tries to give you an STD
- Refuses to use condoms or other birth control

Create a safety plan that will fit your lifestyle. Make sure the safety plan is reachable and practical for all scenarios. A safety plan is a strategy on how you and your children can remain safe while in the relationship, or after you leave. Some websites offer online support. Over the years, I have found these websites to be helpful and safe:

**The National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-787-3224**

**Domestic Violence Resource Center 1-866-469-8600**

**The Center for Family Justice  
Women Law. Org**

**National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Check your local 211 hotline for resources in your area**

**If you need immediate assistance, call 911.**

**Note: The names in the above scenario are fictitious and do not represent anyone living or deceased.**



# My One Thing



By Shawn-Ta Wilson

If you could only speak about one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be? That was the question posed to me recently. The rest of my life, Lord willing, is going to be a very long time. What would I want to talk about as my one thing?

I love my family, but could I talk about them for the rest of my life? I probably could but how would that be of benefit to those I'd be speaking to?

I speak a lot about faith and have published a book entitled, *Survival by Faith*. I initially thought faith would be my one thing. As it turns out, my one thing is the parent principle of faith. The one thing

I could speak about, with passion, that would benefit those I'm speaking to, is hearing from God!

Why is faith the parent principle of that? Hebrews 11:6 explains:

Hebrews 11:6 NKJV

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

For purposes of this writing, let's focus on just five words of this scripture: "must believe that He is".

In order to hear from God, we must believe that He is. That's where faith comes in. We have to know, without a shadow of doubt that HE IS real. He exists. We can't believe it sometimes and doubt it at other times. James 1:8 reminds us that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. We cannot waiver in our belief of God's existence.

He IS and He is:

1. Present. He is there, on the field of life with us from the very beginning to the end and through eternity. (Matt 28:20)
2. Active. He doesn't sit on sidelines of our life until a game winning play has been called. He is in the game with us every day!
3. Caring. The guidance He gives...and attempts to give... is for our benefit. He wants to lead us in the way we should go.
4. Our GPS. Follow me and I will make your fishers of men. (Matt 4:19)



5. For us. Isaiah 41:10 says He is with us will help us, and uphold us with His right hand.

If we don't believe that God is present and active in our everyday lives, or that He cares about the smallest to the greatest of our concerns, or that He desires to lead and guide us, or that He is for us, we will certainly miss hearing Him when He speaks.

The Lord speaks in a variety of ways as I have come to realize through my personal relationship with Him.

- Situations
- Circumstances
- Words
- Scripture
- Unction

I'll give you an example.

God spoke to me four consecutive days and provided what amounted to marching orders at a point in my life. An incident occurred which directly affected me professionally. It was devastating, unfair, and unwarranted. Each of the four days following the incident, the daily devotion I've been receiving for years spoke very specifically to my situation. Through those emails, God literally provided a blueprint for what I was to do and not do:

- Stand still and be quiet – I wanted to fight. What was done was unfair and there was a racial undertone to it.
- Trust me to keep you safe – And He has.
- I will pull you up out of this in an instant – And I feel He is getting close to doing so!
- Refuse to play the role of victim – But I was!



No matter how hard it was, I listened and followed His guidance.

James 1:22 tells us that we are to be doers of the word and not just hearers. That applies for the words spoken to us through scripture but all the more to revelation we receive directly from the Lord.

The fact of the matter, however, is that God gives us free will. Therefore we don't have to listen when He speaks. The choice to obey is ours to make. Choices have consequences or pay dividends. I desire dividends so I am working to get better at listening and obeying. Obedience is better than sacrifice, as 1 Samuel 15:22 reminds us.

I would much rather flow in the anointing of His guidance than pray for grace to endure the consequences of not listening.

We have to remember that grace is given as a gift, according to the measure God sees fit (Ephesians 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ). The grace He extends to one person in a particular area may be more or less than He extends to another in the same area. I don't want my grace to run out so I'm trying to use it sparingly!

In 1986 a talented young man was drafted into the NBA. He had a stellar college career and everyone was looking forward to what he would do in the big leagues. Two days after the draft he was dead of a drug overdose. The medical examiners report indicated it was likely the first time this young man had done drugs and it

appeared his heart stopped "within minutes" of doing so.

There is no way for us to know if the Lord spoke that young man and told him not to do it. Think for a moment that He did. This is why obeying the voice of the Lord is so critically important.

Listening to the voice of the Lord has potentially saved my life, and I mean this in the most literal sense. He helped me more than once avoid car accidents. The cautionary words He spoke put me on high alert which caused me to obey instantly.

On the other hand, not listening to the unction from the Holy One has cost me money in the past. The Lord was impressing upon my spirit not to do a particular thing. I did it anyway. This was not out of willful disobedience. I simply did not understand why I had a "gut feeling" not to do it when doing it seemed to make perfect sense.

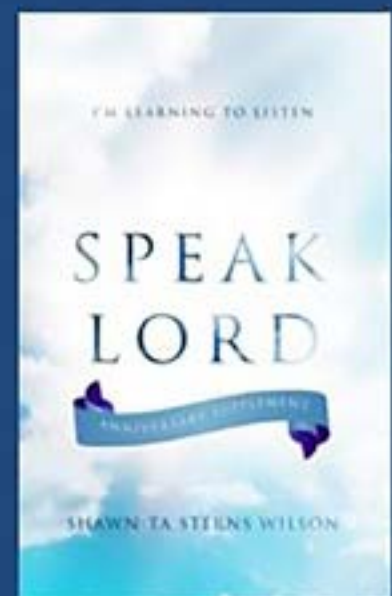
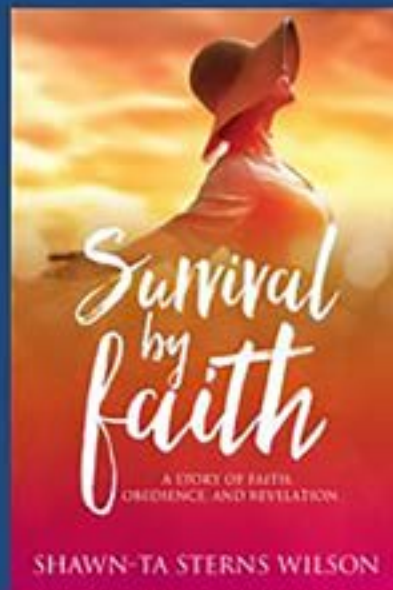
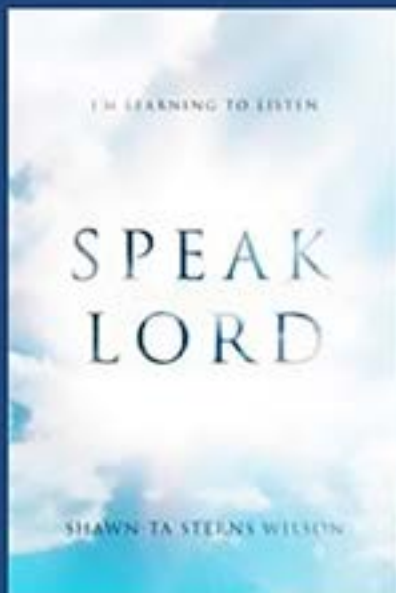
All of these examples, and more, are why hearing from God is my one thing. The one thing I could talk about, with passion, for the rest of my life! His guidance is for our own benefit. He desires to lead and guide us through life but He won't force us to listen.

Obedience truly is better than sacrifice. I encourage you to practice tuning in to the voice of the Lord. You'll be glad you did!



*Author*  
*Shawn-Ta Sterns Wilson*

As her faith journey continues, Shawn-Ta has now published two books and a supplement to the second book. Each is designed to help readers strengthen their relationship with Christ by showing how present and active He is in our every day lives.



All are  
available on  
Amazon

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# Modern Rules for Staying Home Without Gaining Weight

## Modern Rules for Staying Home Without Gaining Weight

You may have heard jokes about the quarantine fifteen. For many adults, spending more time at home is making them gain weight. Almost 50% of women and 25% of men said they've put on pounds due to COVID-19 restrictions, according to a WebMD poll.

There are several reasons for this. Gyms are closed. Emotional eating is a convenient way to deal with boredom and anxiety. Plus, your refrigerator now remains within easy reach throughout the day and night.

Learn how to keep off the quarantine weight gain. Use these tips for eating healthy, staying active, and managing stress when you're stuck at home.

### **Eating Healthy:**

1. Plan your menu. Create new routines that encourage a balanced diet. Figure out what you're going to eat for a day or a week in advance. Planning may also help you cut down on trips to the supermarket.
2. Choose whole foods. It's easier to resist junk food when you fill up on nutritious meals and snacks. Get most of your calories from vegetables, fruits, whole grains, healthy fats, and lean proteins.





3. Drink water. Thirst can make you feel hungry. Cravings may disappear after you sip some water or herbal tea.

4. Limit alcohol. COVID-19 has also caused an increase in alcohol consumption. Schedule liquor-free days each week to cut down on empty calories and other unwelcome side effects. When you drink, choose wine or a Bloody Mary instead of mixed drinks like a pina colada with more than 400 calories.

5. Seek support. Invite family and friends to join you in eating healthier. Share updates on social media, so you'll feel more accountable.

### **Staying Active:**

1. Exercise outdoors. Go outside to work out. Maintain a safe distance while you run through the park or ride your bike.

2. Create a home gym. You can exercise at home even with limited space and funds. Try yoga or buy a jump rope and resistance bands.

3. Go online. Do you miss group fitness classes? Your favorite instructors may be streaming their sessions. Contact local fitness centers or browse online to see what's available.

4. Take active breaks. The hours can fly by when you're working on a computer or streaming videos. Offset your sedentary habits by taking regular exercise breaks. Do a few push-ups or stretch your legs.

5. Move more. Daily tasks count too. Burn

calories and tone your muscles doing lunges while you vacuum. Work in your garden or clean out your attic.

### **Managing Stress:**

1. Sleep well. Your body and mind are more resilient when you're well rested. Go to bed and get up at the same times each day. Aim for a dark, quiet room to sleep in.

2. Meditate daily. Even a few minutes of seated meditation can help you to live more mindfully. Sit down in a peaceful place. Scan your body and soften up any tight spots. Observe your thoughts without making judgements.

3. Breathe deeply. If meditation makes you uncomfortable, maybe you'd prefer simple breathing exercises. Try alternate nostril breathing to fight anxiety. Use your thumb to close off one side of your nose at a time and inhale deeply. Repeat 3 times on each side.

4. Listen to music. Symphonies and pop songs can help you deal with strong emotions. Create a soundtrack to lift your spirits or calm your fears.

5. Try counseling. If daily stress is interfering with your diet and wellbeing, consider seeking professional help. Many counselors are using teletherapy to talk with patients online, so you can stay safe while you receive help.

You can manage your weight while you stay at home. Healthy eating and other lifestyle habits will strengthen your immune system and enhance the quality of your life.



# Kandy Robertson: From Nurse to Entrepreneur



By Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.

Kandy Robertson was born in the great state of Maryland. She became a nurse 15 years ago. In nursing school one of her peers was a model and suggested that she try modeling.

Kandy said, "At the time, I was really insecure and thought, that was a nice thing to say to me." After she graduated she settled into her new career. While nursing was rewarding in many ways, she began to realize she wanted to do something else.

Kandy took her friend's suggestion and pursued modeling. In that pursuit she took up acting and studied the industry. She focused on learning the technicalities such as; make up, production, hosting, and fashion shows.

After gaining extensive experience in the field, Kandy decided to be more than a model. "I wanted to give back to the community and own a business. Which led me to becoming a Covenant House to help end human trafficking."

In the process of creating her business, Kandy networked at hundreds of events, created a podcast about relationships, learned social media marketing, created many small businesses and helped others do the same. "My company now runs a social media consulting firm, a branding & advertising agency, and a luxury hair care brand called Empres."



“At the time, I was really insecure and thought that a nice thing to say to me.”

Empres is all-natural and organic hair products not only smell great, but protect, repair damage, and promote hair growth while providing much needed antioxidants, and much more. Kandy said, “I created my hair care line to empower and inspire women to rule and conquer the world one hair strand at a time. Its focus is to motivate women to never give up on their dreams.”

Kandy hosted events for non-profits advocating against human trafficking including Fashion for Freedom 1 (proceeds went to Nomi Network) at Pure Lounge; Fashion Freedom 2 (proceeds went to Freedom Climb) at Eiffel; and #datingiKandy





Game Show (proceeds went to Covenant House) at Eiffel in New Orleans.

In Kandy's acting career she appeared in FOCUS, Kickboxer: Vengeance, The Mechanic, Daddy's Home, Best in Chow: Gumbo Wars, Ghost Adventures. She's also in several music videos including NeYo, Jay Chan, and Nick Rob. Lastly, she produced a reality show entitled, Kocktales & Kandy which focuses on relationships.

Kandy's biggest inspiration revolved around her upbringing. "My parents were refugees of the Cambodian Genocide in the 1970's where over 2 million people were killed in a span of 4 years. My parents came to America with nothing and did not speak any English. They've worked hard to try to give us a 'normal' life despite suffering from PTSD and other illnesses." Kandy continued, "The most important goal in my life is to have generational

wealth that can be passed down. That would be the biggest and most important accomplishment I could ever achieve."

Kandy also published an eBook entitled, "Top 10 Must Have Resource List to Grow Your Business". Her book was named the Best Book of 2019, and Best Short Read for Business and Money. She is currently writing the novel, "From Peasant to Empress."

### **Social Media**

Website: [www.empresluxurybrand.com](http://www.empresluxurybrand.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/myikandyland](https://www.facebook.com/myikandyland)

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# Nicoshia Wynn

## *Relentless Worship*

By Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.

You may know that the town of Danville, Illinois is a major railroad intersection with at least four different tracks entering town from different directions, resulting in many crossings throughout the town. What you may not know is Danville is the birthplace of an up and coming Gospel star.

It's not often I have an interview with someone where the vibe and atmosphere clicks from the word go, but this was one of them. I have never met Nicoshia but we were talking like old friends catching up. I am proud to be able to share what I discovered about this powerful worship leader.

Nicoshia Wynn was born in Danville, Illinois. She later moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and then on to Minnesota to attend college at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and The College of St. Scholastica.

Married with three children, Nicoshia is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and resides in the Twin Cities. She has been a Christian since the age of 10. She started singing virtually from the minute she arrived in this world. Her family is filled with singers,

songwriters and musicians so it was expected that Nicoshia would be another one in the line. She started formally singing in church when she became a member of the youth choir following in the footsteps of her mother who was a singer and choir director of the church adult choir.

Nicoshia recounted how she grew up listening to many genres of music because her family loved music especially gospel music. In fact, her uncle was a Gospel Radio Broadcaster. She would hear music when it first came out because her uncle would always let her listen to the latest gospel music.

While in college Nicoshia was mentored by the late Reverend Arthur Foy, III who was a dynamic pastor, musician, and singer. His mentorship allowed her to develop into the worship leader she is today. These experiences led Nicoshia to a love for various different musical styles of gospel music and later to a solo music career. However, the inspiration for her song, *Relentless Worship* came from the birth of her son.

### **Relentless Worship and My God Reigns**

Nicoshia's youngest son was born a day shy of 25 weeks, weighing 1 pound and 14 ounces (he was







about the size of a half sheet of paper). He was so small; she remembers she could hold him in her hand.

Her son was in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital for more than 100 days. During which time he was on a ventilator for 8 weeks (touch and go), had heart surgery, infections (pneumonia and e-coli) and was diagnosed with a lung disease called Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia.

"Through this experience was where I realized that you have to be grateful for the things that you have and the loved ones you have around you." Nicoshia continued by saying, "If you are a Christian, the Bible tells us to trust in God and believe in God, no matter what."

Nicoshia talked about the constant rollercoaster ride she and her family endured. At the end, God rewarded their faith. She said, "No matter what we

go through, God still deserves our worship and our praise." This thought started the creative process that would lead to Relentless Worship.

After four months Nicoshia's son was discharged from NICU just prior to Christmas. The hospital staff called him a "Miracle Baby" because he beat the statistics and odds of being severely premature. However, Nicoshia and her family realized God was at the controls and nothing happens without God's permission.

This traumatic experience brought about the creation of Relentless Worship. It started with singing the song in church. One Sunday the Pastor's brother asked Nicoshia about purchasing the song and that he was looking for it on the internet to download all night. She remembers laughing and telling him, "The song hasn't been recorded yet."

Nicoshia wanted to record the song but wasn't equipped to do so until she met a friend, Sean

“Smitty” Smith. Smitty was the new drummer for the service and with his help Nicoshia recorded the hit song Relentless Worship.

“My single reflects the essence of God’s goodness and His faithfulness. I hope that this song will encourage and inspire others to never let their circumstance outrun their worship and love for God.”

Not stopping with Relentless Worship, Nicoshia will be releasing another song in the very near future. This song, My God Reigns, is written to inspire listeners to never give up, never give in, put your trust in him and with God you are unstoppable, unmovable, and unshakable. “You can’t stop me because I am with God. So many people need to hear this message. Life knocks you down, but you can get back up. You will win in the end right.” Nicoshia wants the people of Christ to be reminded that they are of God and though life can bring them down, it’s not eternal. It’s only a season.

“My songs are about proclaiming the name of Christ with messages of encouragement and reminders that your God is with you.”

### **What You May Not Know About Nicoshia**

When asked what songs Nicoshia sings around the house she answered that she sings various songs from different genres. She often sings songs from the 90s and she loves Jazz music.

Next, our conversation moved to the internet’s influence on music. Nicoshia feels the internet has impacted the music industry tremendously...in a good way. She says, “Listeners have more ways to access music than they did before. Artists also have more ways to reach listeners and, with the internet, it’s easier than before for artists to get heard.”

Nicoshia went on to talk about the church and reaching people. She said, “From a spiritual perspective, you now have more ways to reach people around the world via different platforms. I

said this a couple of years ago on Facebook that if the traditional church is not willing to change the way they deliver worship services, they will not be able to reach the masses. Fast forward to 2020 and we have the pandemic.”

She was spot on with those comments. In today’s world we have to reach people through the internet and those churches that were prepared had a jump on those that were not.

Being in the pandemic necessitated a comment from Nicoshia on our current situation. The pandemic impacted Nicoshia and her family. She and her husband were already debating on whether or not to homeschool their children. With the pandemic, the choice was all but made for them. She is using this time to spend more time with her family, write more music, and introduce her non-profit, Relentless Academy.

Nicoshia is the founder of Relentless Academy, a non-profit for youth, arts, and education whose mission is to prepare youth for academic success and provide resources to build generational wealth for the future.

I finished the interview by asking Nicoshia what was the best advice she was given and what advice she would give others. Both answers were essentially the same, “Never let your circumstance out run your worship.”

Check out the hit single Relentless Worship at [www.nicoshiawynn.com/](http://www.nicoshiawynn.com/)





# The Lyfe Magazine Relationship Feature

## How Long Should Someone Wait to Date After Divorce?

By Jade Seashell

Divorce is hard.

Research shows that the fastest way to feel better after the divorce is to move on. But how long should you wait to date after the divorce?

There isn't a fixed schedule for everyone.

If I give you a schedule which says you must wait for at least six months to date someone else after the divorce, that would look like a joke. Please let me explain.

Everyone's situation is different. Thus, I can't give you a fixed schedule in this regard. However, I can show you some principles (not rules).

First of all, you should give yourself enough time to heal. Remember: time is a great healer. Just give yourself a lot of time that you deserve.



Second, when you are still recovering from the pain, it doesn't mean you have to stay home all the time. In fact, this is actually a good time to go out and date someone else because interacting with somebody that you are attracted to is very therapeutic.

#### **More rationale:**

When a professional athlete is injured, they don't stay in bed for months. Actually, they would have a good rest first and then begin to slowly & gradually train again, in spite of the injury – because if they stop training altogether, their muscles would not be properly maintained.

I'd like to encourage you to use the professional athlete's attitude when it comes to dating after the divorce. Don't use the hangover approach, i.e. stop dating altogether / have meaningless flings with strangers in order to numb the pain.

It also depends on when that marriage actually ended.

Usually, the relationship ended before the divorce happens. A study in the United States and Canada shows that when most couples get divorced, their relationships actually ended at least 6-12 months before they sign the divorce documents. Some couples have considered getting divorced at least one year before they start to talk about it.

Let's say your relationship ended 10 months before you sign the divorce document. In that case, you are probably ready to date again immediately after the divorce. That's absolutely fine.

But if your relationship ended 3 weeks before you receive the divorce certificate, maybe you need to wait for a few months and then you will be ready to join the dating scene again.



Do you know what you want?

Before you start dating again, you would be well-advised to clarify what you actually want from a partner.

Most people logically think they want A, but emotionally they actually want B. That's very common.

For example, Jessica thinks she wants to find a handsome, capable and loyal man. But what she actually responds to is hot men who are players – good-looking men who can't say no to other women. In her subconscious mind, when other women also want this man, his perceived value is higher.

That is not Jessica's fault; that's a very common pattern when it comes to female psychology.

But it is Jessica's responsibility to realize this fact and take action accordingly. She has got a divorce because her very handsome ex-husband was having

multiple affairs. If she doesn't know what she wants, she may repeat the same pattern again in the future.

Therefore, Jessica hired a relationship coach and figured out a plan:

- Read 3 books about dating and relationships. Understand male psychology and female psychology.
- Write down a list of non-negotiable standards that her ideal partner must meet.
- Start to date new men. Always remember her non-negotiable standards. If a handsome man violates her standards, she will not ignore the red flag.

(Jade Seashell is a relationship advisor. When she is not working with clients, she is reading books about male psychology and female psychology.)



# The Lyfe Magazine Relationship Feature (Bonus)

By Jade Seashell

Okay. I won't bore you with some cliché such as "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus". Don't get me wrong. I don't have anything against that book. I mean whenever people have problems with their relationships, it's usually because they don't have practical tools that can help them understand their partners effectively.

Disclaimer: This article includes some information that might seem a bit unpleasant because when we analyze male psychology and female psychology in detail, we have to choose realism which sometimes may not sound pretty. So, this article is not for the faint-hearted. If you're ready to be courageous and face the truth about how the male/female mind actually works, please keep reading now.

The real reason why so many women like playboys (or popular men who don't care about them):

Well, you may argue that women don't like playboys because that's what women told you. But in actuality, what women logically think about is

## Female Psychology vs. Male Psychology in Dating & Relationships



oftentimes different from what women emotionally respond to. Please let me explain.

A lot of ladies would tell you that they would like to meet nice guys. Yet that's not what women respond to in reality. A lady's logical brain says, "I'd like to meet a nice man". But her emotional brain says, "I want that guy because other women already want him – he must be a high-value man." (Probably she is not aware of what her emotional brain is saying.) Now you can see why 'the nice guy syndrome' is an issue.

### **Rationale:**

When other women also want that handsome man, his perceived value is higher because of pre-selection. By that I mean this attractive man has been chosen by other women already, so his high value has been proven.

Another example: If a man has a girlfriend or a wife, other women tend to think that he must have

some good value to offer. Otherwise, why would his girlfriend or wife want to be with him?

Let me give you this analogy:

When a company is looking for a candidate as there is a position available in the company, which candidate would the employer hire?

Candidate A: Someone who has never had relevant work experience.

Candidate B: Someone who has a lot of relevant work experience; this capable person is currently employed by this company's competitor.

Obviously, Candidate B is a much better candidate, right?

Now you'll fully understand this scenario: When a man goes to a party with a lady, other ladies actually pay more attention to him. Other ladies are thinking, "Who is more beautiful, me or that woman?" "Why

does that woman have a man to go out with? How about me?" In other words, when a guy is already with a lady, his perceived value is higher.

What do men really want?

When a man knows that his lady is able to leave the relationship at any time as she can attract other men quite easily, he secretly respects, likes and admires her more. Let me explain.

Please have a look at these two women and ask yourself, "If I were a mature man looking for a wife, which woman is more attractive/suitable?"

Woman A: A 38-year-old woman who has never had a relationship in her life.

Woman B: A 38-year-old woman who was married before (now she is divorced).

Most men wouldn't logically analyze women in this way. But here's what a man's subconscious mind says to him, "Woman B is a better candidate because she lived with a man before. If a guy married her previously, that means there's nothing wrong with her – someone chose her already!"

By contrast, Woman A can look worthless/problematic to some degree because other men never chose her in the past. Sad but true.

### **Bonus ideas:**

- A confident, competent and secure man wants an exclusive relationship because this woman brings variety, spontaneity, playfulness and fun to him.
- In dating and relationships, if a man has more money, status, power and better looks, he needs less attractive behaviour. In contrast, if a man has less money, status, power and worse looks, he needs more attractive behaviour.





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# THE LYFE MAGAZINE'S

**FALL  
SCRIPTURES  
TO PRAY ON**





# **ECCLESIASTES 3:1**

**THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING,  
AND A SEASON FOR EVERY ACTIVITY  
UNDER THE HEAVENS:**

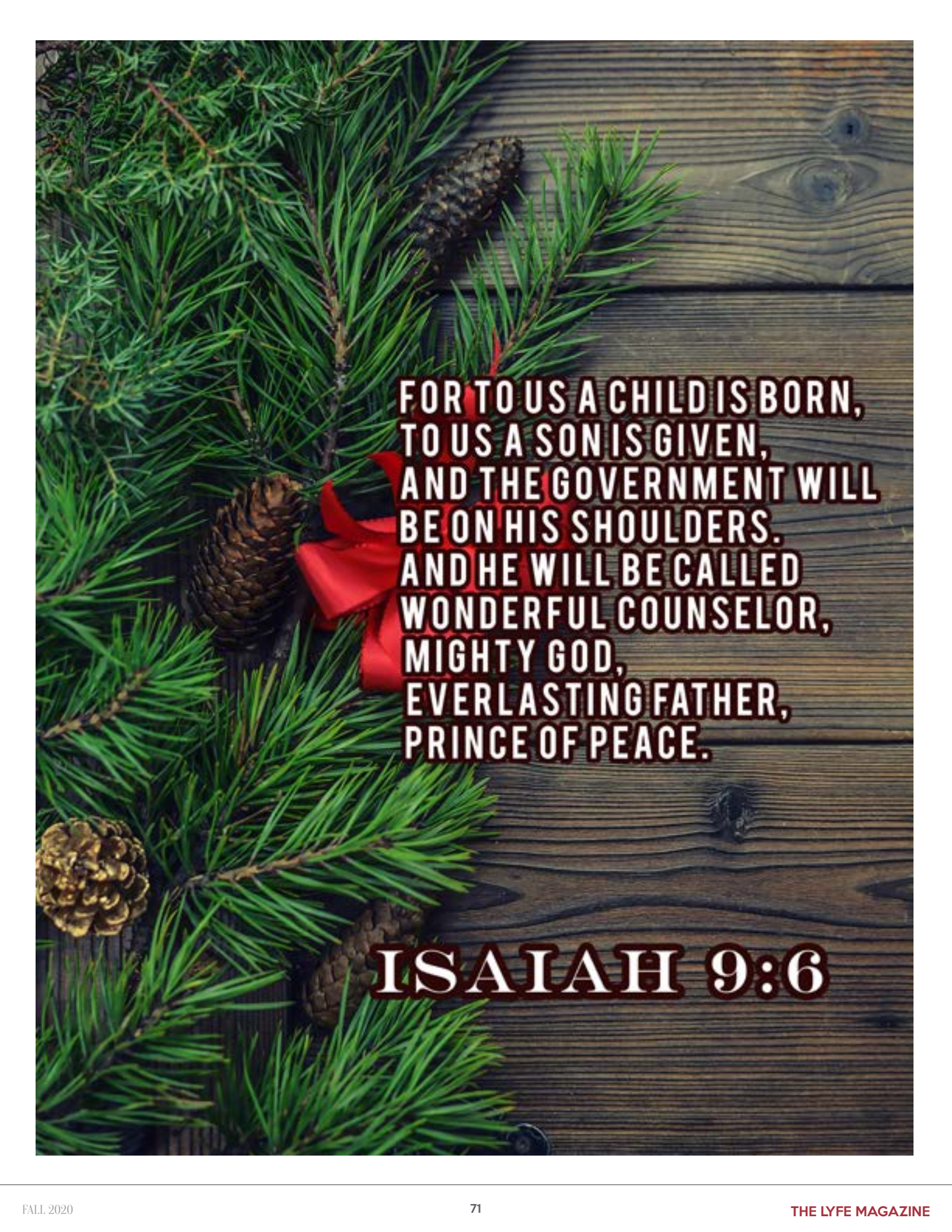


# PSALM 136:1

**GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD,  
FOR HE IS GOOD.  
HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.**







**FOR TO US A CHILD IS BORN,  
TO US A SON IS GIVEN,  
AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL  
BE ON HIS SHOULDERS.  
AND HE WILL BE CALLED  
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,  
MIGHTY GOD,  
EVERLASTING FATHER,  
PRINCE OF PEACE.**

**ISAIAH 9:6**



# BLACK HISTORY: DENZEL WASHINGTON

By Renata M. Smith

Mount Vernon, New York produced one of the finest Black actors of our time. I have watched almost all of his movies and it is an honor to recognize Denzel Washington as The Lyfe Magazine's Black History focus for the Fall 2020 issue. Denzel was born on December 28, 1954 and rose to be celebrated for his engaging and powerful performances. His rise came during a time when critics believed Black actors could not draw white audiences.

Denzel graduated from Fordham University in 1977. He played in two made for television movies (Wilma in 1977 and Flesh and Blood in 1979). His first appearance on the silver screen came in the comedy Carbon Copy in 1981. Denzel plays the role of Roger Porter, a 17-year-old high school dropout who arrives at the office of Walter Whitney (George Segal), a 41-year-old executive at Unilectron Corp., a mammoth electronics firm. Roger claims that Walter is his biological father from a two-decades-ago relationship he had with a recently deceased woman at Northwestern University during the unwed couple's college years.

Denzel's success would flourish after portraying the role of South African activist Stephen Biko in the film Cry Freedom (1987). This film brought Denzel's first nomination as best supporting actor. Two years later he would receive an Oscar for best supporting actor for his performance in Glory (1989).

What I most remember Denzel Washington for is his portrayal of one of the best known activists in the world, Malcolm X. This film is a biographical epic of the controversial and influential Black

Nationalist leader, which covers his early life and career as a small-time gangster, to his ministry as a member of the Nation of Islam.

Denzel's portrayal of Malcolm X left me with a strong sense of knowing who Malcolm X was and what he stood for. Roger Ebert said in his review of the film, "Denzel Washington stands at the center of the film, in a performance of enormous breadth. He never seems to be trying for an effect, and yet he is always convincing; he seems as natural in an early scene, clowning through a railroad club car with ham sandwiches, as in a later one, holding audiences spellbound on street corners, in churches, on television and at Harvard." (<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/malcolm-x-1992>)

It's easy to see why Denzel Washington is considered an icon in Black history. His groundbreaking performances led the way for others in the industry. For me personally, I have this quote for how Denzel affected my acting career, "The reason Denzel is an inspiration and role model, beyond acting, is he's a person of integrity, self-morals and believes in uplifting others to be their best."

## Upcoming Movies Starring Denzel Washington

The Little Things" coming in January 2021.  
MacBeth coming in 2021

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CEO OF THE GENTLEMEN'S COURSE INC.

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# Hear the Cries

Poem By Teze Jones

There's a man downtown bothering the passersby  
He means no harm; that's just his cry  
Woman on the corner you say should be ashamed  
She means no harm, just wants to hear her name

Sassing child, little tongue as sharp as a knife  
That's just his cry; he doesn't really want to fight  
Look a little closer; see the longing in their eyes  
Listen with your heart; hear the cries

Somebody over town just took their life  
Radio announcer says a man shot his kids and wife  
Hear the cries of sadness and pain  
"Somebody love me! Somebody stop the rain!"

Young girl hanging out, her future in God's hands  
Life's promise runs out like the hour-glass sands  
Look beneath the actions, see why  
There's a reason for the happenings, a cause for the cry

Hear the cries, bring gladness when you can  
Give some of yourself to your fellow man  
A smile, a kind word, it doesn't take much  
Concern, time to listen just might be the magic touch





# The Perception of “Hear the Cries”

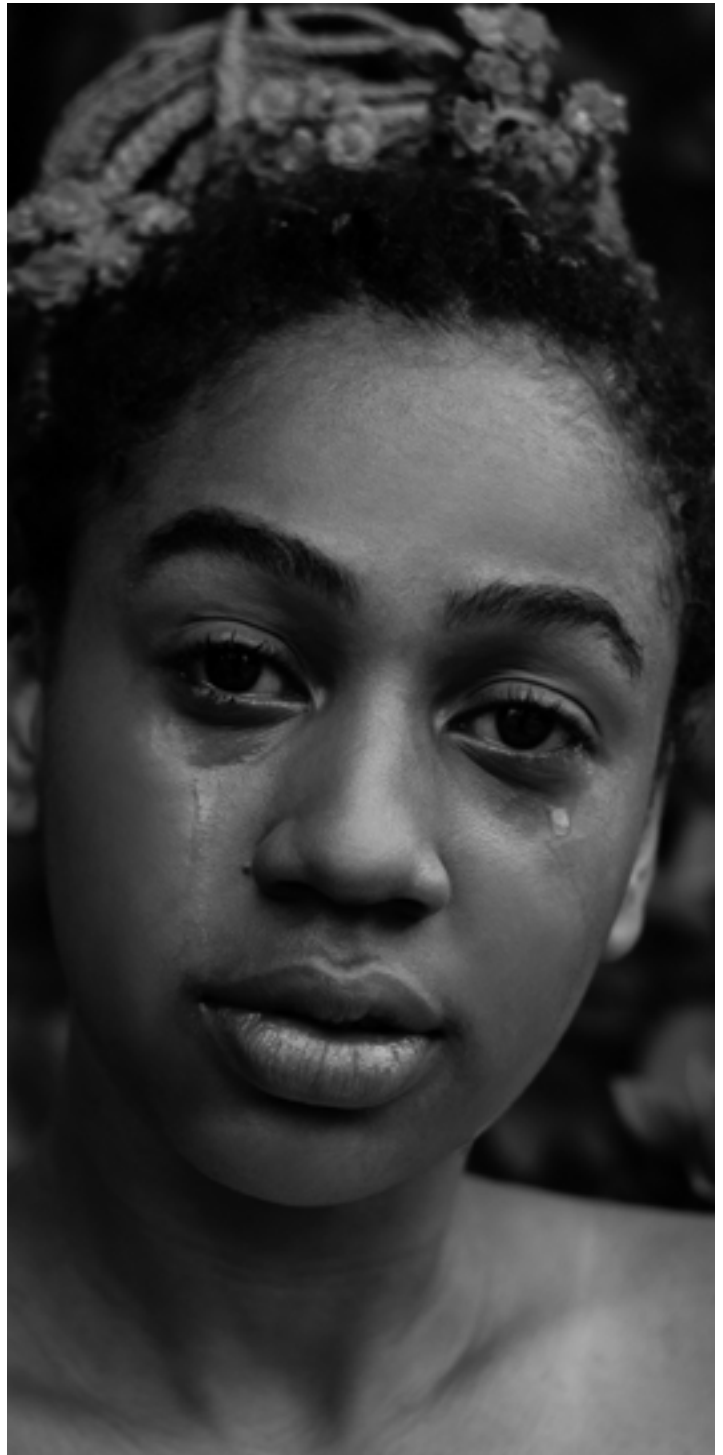
By Teze Jones


My commute to work at a screen-printing shop in the late 1970s was a two-buses-each-way ordeal. I always carried a canvas tote bag with a clean shirt inside for the return trip, along with a writing pad and book to fill the time during the tedious ride. My first bus, the #5 Jackson Heights to downtown rarely had an empty seat by the time it got to my stop.

Usually, I stood in the aisle, clutched the metal overhead pole for balance as the bus jerked along, avoided eye contact with the seated passengers, and prayed for one of them to leave soon. On that particular morning, I was pleasantly surprised to spot two vacant rear seats. I sat next to the window and placed my bag on the other seat, then took out my pad and started editing poems.

Instinctively, I looked up as the bus slowed to a stop. A man boarded, looking as if he hadn't combed his hair or bathed in years. He dropped some coins into the chute and started down the aisle as everyone cringed and looked away from him. He began cussing the passengers, slinging profanities from left to right, stumbling toward the one empty seat—right next to me! Pity and panic were on the faces of the men and women as they looked at me, obviously bracing to witness whatever terrible thing that was about to happen.

Well, what was I going to do? My first thought was simply not to act scared. My mind raced. I had wrapped the blade of my knife in toilet paper and positioned it in my bra, as I usually did after getting dressed in the morning. I've





always used it only as a last resort, but God above knew I would not hesitate to use it!

As the man approached, I removed my tote from the seat and put it under the tablet on my lap. A picture of him flinging my bag and scattering my stuff flashed briefly. He plopped down and I looked directly in his eyes, smiled, and cheerily said, "Good morning!" He looked shocked and slowly nodded his head in a return greeting. I went back to editing poems.

He deliberately pressed his shoulder against mine as he leaned over to see what I was writing. I felt like throwing myself out the window, but instead repositioned the tablet so he could read along without craning his neck (or touching me). He mumbled and nodded at the page, his way of asking if I wrote the poem. Once again, I looked in his eyes and shook my head yes. He gave a look of approval; we smiled, and I turned the page.

As he read, or pretended to, I reached up with one hand and took the pack of Juicy Fruit gum from my shirt pocket. I unwrapped a stick, popped it in my mouth, and pushed one up with my thumb for him to take. We chewed our gum and continued through a few more pages, riding along with only the sound of the engine breaking the silence.

Finally, he motioned for me to pull the bell cord for the next stop. As the bus eased to the curb, he stood. I smiled and said, "Nice meeting you, have a good day." He looked down at me and nodded, smiled back, then made his way to the front, not like he had entered, but striding quietly with his head held high. The doors had barely shut behind him when a wave of awed comments rolled from the driver to the back of the bus.

No one could believe that all hell hadn't broken out after all. One old man blurted out, "That was so good how she handled that!" A lady waved and said, "Baby that was so nice!" Those people probably thought I was just the kindest person anyone could ever hope to meet. What they didn't know is that I would have recoiled too if I'd had more time and space. I was forced by a lack of both to be friendly to that outwardly repulsive person.

They were also clueless to the fact that, despite my pleasant disposition, I was probably the most dangerous person on that bus. My solemn vow, after a childhood of abuse, was that never again would I be victimized without a damn battle! It was truly a blessing that things went the way they did that day. Had he started going in on me, that poor man would have paid for the old and the new.



That incident profoundly changed my perception of people and their situations. Every individual, even one who has dropped out of society's norm, is more than mere flesh and blood. That day, I took a closer look at myself. What did it cost me not to recoil? Did I lose anything by extending the courtesy of a greeting? No, in fact, I gained something money could never buy. A simple "good morning" in passing can make all the difference to a person who feels disconnected from the community.

I have often wondered what brought that man to the point of giving up on even the most basic care for himself. How did he come to expect rejection? Was there one devastating event, or a succession of things that wore over time? Either way, I believe we both changed for the better after our encounter with each other. When self-respect has been lost, it can be found again if the washed and well-fed would just remember— "There, but for the grace of God...."





# The Phone Call



By Beryl Brackett

No one wants to hear the words You... have... cancer. The National Cancer Institute predicted that in the year of 2020 over 1.8 million people will hear those words. The institute analyzed the statistics which include 276,480 women and 2,620 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Can you imagine that?

Ten years ago, in 2010, my life became a blur. I always made sure that I kept my health in check by getting regular physicals. That included getting a yearly mammogram. Before making my appointment, I discovered a lump in my breast. I thought nothing of it because I had no family history of breast cancer. I made the appointment and went about my day, preparing for the dreaded test. I remember the day I received my mammogram results as if it were yesterday.

"Mrs. Brackett, we have the results from your mammogram and the test did not detect the lump you mentioned. However, let's take a closer look

and repeat the mammogram, just as a precaution", said the doctor to me.

Still, I'm not thinking too much about it, and was happy that the radiologist wanted to take a second look to be sure. She wanted to put me at ease about what I found. After the mammogram came back a second time with negative results, the radiologist was still not pleased and wanted to do a biopsy on the lump which was very noticeable. After the biopsy, I resumed going about life as normal, until I received a phone call from the doctor.

I was teaching on this day and waiting for my students to come back in from recess to prepare to go home. My cell phone rang, and I answered. "Mrs. Brackett, this is Dr. Johnson and I have the results from your mammogram. You have breast cancer, and we would like for you to come in so we can develop a plan for your care."

At that very moment, I felt as though someone had punched me in my chest and I felt deflat-



ed like a balloon with a pin stuck in it. As my body continued to deflate, I felt my spirit leave my body and run down the hallway screaming and making its way to my car. I hung up the phone in disbelief. How could this be? Cancer? Breast cancer? There is no history of it in my family. I sat down, trying to process what I heard. How will I make it through the rest of the day when the students come in from recess without letting on that I have received devastating news? What am I going to do?

The journey I was about to embark on would not only include me. It also included my loved ones; my family, friends, neighbors, church family and most of all, God.

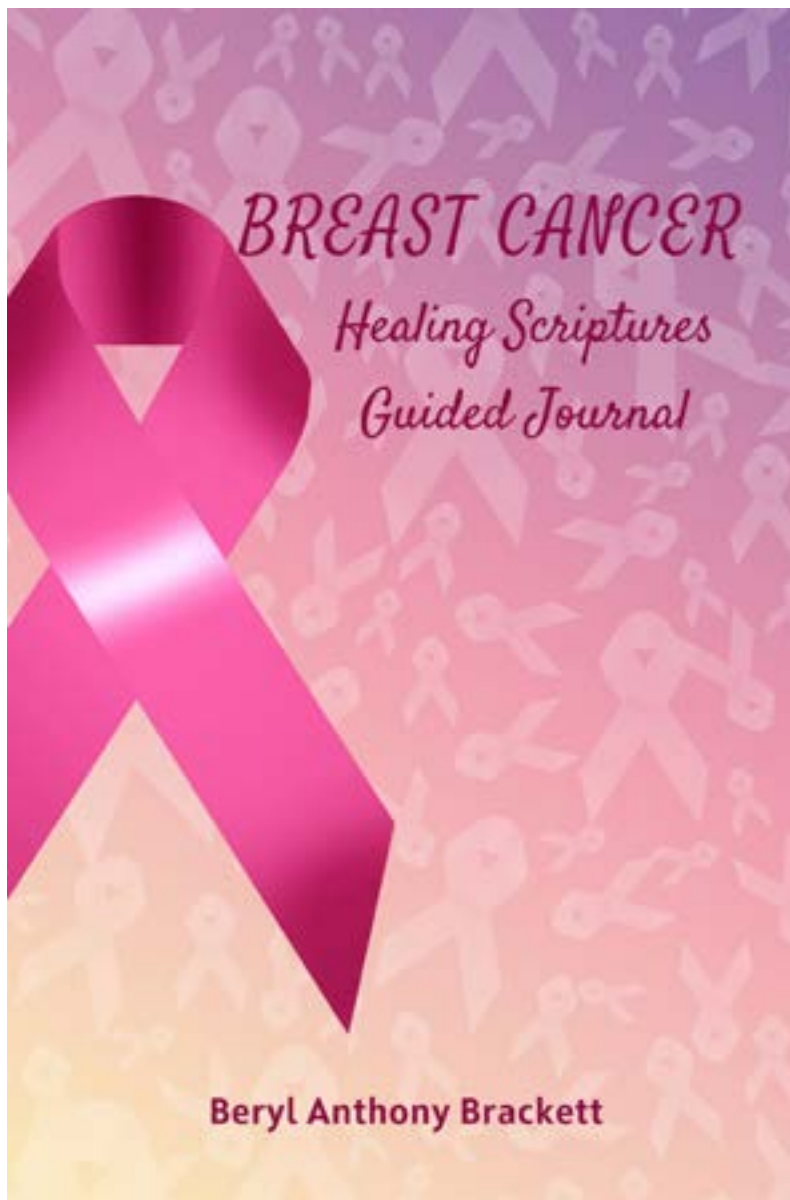
I didn't know how I would tell my family I had breast cancer. How would they react? Would they be okay? I was very concerned about my husband and children. How would they feel? What would they do? What emotions and concerns would they have? I was more concerned about them than about me. I knew I was going to do everything in my power to survive. The prayer that I prayed was, "Lord, take care of my family. Lord, I am going to need your help because I can't do this journey alone. One last thing

Lord, if I have to go on this journey, I don't want to look like I'm sick, please let your light shine through me."

Sometimes, the road we must travel includes family, friends and loved ones, even if they don't want to go. They take the journey regardless of their fears and uncertainty.

After telling my family and friends about my diagnosis, I rented what I refer to as a spiritual RV to take whoever wanted to take the journey with me. I knew I couldn't do it alone. I packed scriptures, water, songs, laughter and food. It wasn't easy; however, we all piled into the RV, got as comfortable as possible and strapped in for the long ride. Not wanting to show the uncertainty and fear that was trying to invade our space, we smiled, laughed, and did a lot of praying.

The first stop along our journey was almost like gathering information for a science fair and testing your hypothesis. We had to gather all the evidence and information to devise a plan not only for care, but for survival. There were many tests, appointments and questions to answer on our first stop.



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Questions like, “Is there a history of breast cancer in your family? Do you smoke? Drink? Do you have migraines? I sat there answering the questions as best as I could. Still trying to process the words, “you have breast cancer.” I was still in denial and I wanted to scream... “There is no breast cancer history in my family!” However, I stayed calm and answered every question, knowing that we all had to work together to come up with a treatment plan that would eradicate the cancer that was trying to take over my body.

They tired me out. I trudged back to the RV and stepped on board, securing my seat belt as we sped up faster and faster towards the next stop. When the crooks and turns in the road started to bend, I knew it was going to be a bumpy ride from here on out.

There were many more stops along the way, which included the surgery center, chemo center, and yes, the hair loss/restoration center. My worry wasn’t about losing my hair. I was told I was not my hair; I was much more than my hair. God supplied all my needs. He enlisted people along my journey to help with various things, and I am so grateful for that. No matter what you are going through in life, trust God!

It has been 10 years, and I am grateful for my life. They say God doesn’t put more on you than you can bear. I say, “I am healed by His stripes because He said so!” It is now time for me to pull over and return the RV that I rented long ago.

May God give you strength and wisdom to change the things that you can and courage to trust Him when you can’t.



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# BREAST CANCER

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OCTOBER AWARENESS  
MONTH

EARLY  
DETECTION  
SAVES LIVES

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# The Lyfe Magazine Black Owned Business Focus Free Your Greatness

## Owner: Keisha Yearby

I have been teaching in public school for 18 years. I have always had a great rapport with children and have been able to analyze children in a way that allows me to determine their individual learning styles and learning needs. From there I created instruction that makes each child successful and I have not had a student fail in my class in over 10 years.

Three years ago I began watching motivational speakers, reading self-help books, and working on my self-confidence and self-esteem. I brought my growth into my classroom and began teaching my students the things that I was learning. I started calling them 'Great Ones', which I learned from legendary motivational speaker Les Brown, and I started teaching them the steps they needed to develop a power of possibility mindset.

Last year in April I launched "Ms. Yearby's Reading Adventures." I would go live every Tuesday night to read a bedtime story to children, model comprehension strategies, and end with a motivational message. I received responses from children and well as parents, teachers, and adults with no children on how much they loved my readings and how the information I shared was enlightening to them. This also resulted in me being featured on WHRO Radio, in The Virginian-Pilot, on 13 News Now, in The Washington Post, BBC News, and CBN News.



Finally seeing how valuable my techniques were and finally believing in myself, I decided to create Free Your Greatness which offers tutoring and mentor services for children and life coaching and parent help for adults.

**Recent Projects:** Free Your Greatness opened January 2020. I held two training at my school called "Creating A Motivated And Inspired Classroom."

**Significant Accomplishments:** I have been featured in The Washington Post, on BBC News, CBN news for my reading programs.



Les Brown's speeches and techniques caused me to make the shift I needed to leave an unhealthy marriage and to get me to the place I am mental which has led to me speaking and being an entrepreneur. I went from wanting and visualizing working with him last year to fascinating, working with, and being able to call him my friend. This is a significant accomplishment because it proves with determination and persistence you can create your dreams.

**Career Goals:** I want to take Free Your Greatness from a small tutoring and mentoring services to several Free Your Greatness centers where children can come for tutoring, homework help, fitness, mentoring, and networking.

I want adults to have a safe place to go for help with parenting skills, babysitting services, clarity about school services such as IEPs and 504s and counseling, and networking.

**Upcoming Events:** One-on-One tutoring services. Group tutoring services on Saturday. Mentoring services for children and coaching services for adults,

### Social Media

Website: <http://www.freeyourgreatness.net>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Keishalcyearby>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Yearbysreading>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/freeyourgreatness/?hl=en>

"With so much going on in the world it is easy for us to become consumed with negativity. I want you to do something for you. Everyday, ask yourself, what am I doing that is making me better. Thing set a goal to do something that you will be proud of."

- Keisha Yearby



*Meet*

# Marc Anthony Castro



Marc Anthony Fitzgerald Castro is the son of Neo-soul recording artist, Lahlá-Hadiya. He reigns from a family of singers and musicians. A scholar in his last year of middle school, he currently attends Benjamin D. Foulois Performing Arts Academy where he majors in chorus. He is the youngest male and middle sibling of six children. In a family where all of his siblings are into the arts, Marc found it easy to transition into his natural gift of singing and playing instruments. Though a chorus major, Marc has also seemed to master the

saxophone, guitar, keyboard, bass guitar and drums. He reads music fluently and composes as well.

Under the wing of his dad, he has stepped into music production and songwriting. On any given evening or weekend, he can be found in his family's studio or his make-shift studio in his room, creating musical tracks and/or writing songs.

Though musical talent seems to be an inevitable trait, Marc has also tapped into his anointed gift of leadership. As a mentor to elementary students at his school, Marc exercises his passion by speaking to other young people as well as his close friends about the issues that plague his culture, community, and our nation. He is devoted to standing firm in his faith in God and representing the light he believes is purposed for him to shine.

He enjoys talking about his personal relationship with God and can always be found equating life situations to lessons intended for us to learn for survival. His passion for his faith has led him to be one of the prominent voices in his youth church group entitled, 'G-Zone'. It is here where he meets virtually, along with his siblings, to discuss how to relate his purpose to his life's journey. He has even been instrumental in inviting several of his close friends to become more involved in the true meaning of 'church'.

Even with Marc's strong desire to enlighten others and bring awareness to each other's purpose and place in society, he actively follows, understands and speaks his opinion on issues in today's world. Social injustice is one of the issues that he is very compassionate about. Even being professionally trained in martial arts and holding a third degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do as well as being trained as a boxer, Marc feels that the



struggles of today in our culture have dampened the skill of self-control and brotherhood and sisterhood. The challenge of growing up in a society where your own culture has developed a learned hatred for one another has perplexed him but has also given him the drive to be a difference maker. Being a young 'Black' male in today's society can be both scary and compelling from many angles. The uncertainties about the protection of one race can be discouraging yet, Marc finds the courage to still hold on to the prayers of his elders, the hope of his parents, and the strength of his generation. He believes that one day, change will come. Marc pulls on the muscles of those dynamic Black male role models in his life which is instrumental in keeping his head held high.

Though only twelve years old, Marc has always been wise beyond his years as evidenced by his top rank in his class. Marc continues to bring awareness to his peers the importance of knowing one's true history. He remains diligent in following the different incidents of social injustice. He believes that everyone has a part to play in this movement to create a better world. Understanding that he is not yet of age to vote, Marc still keeps up with and follows the platforms of many of the politicians running for office in this coming election. He is very passionate about sharing the importance of exercising one's right to vote. He even plans to participate in a mock election with his three older siblings for this year's election.

When Marc isn't thinking of a master plan on how to save the world from itself, he enjoys playing basketball, singing with his siblings, and going camping in his backyard with his family. Marc plans to finish out his eighth-grade year with honors and attend high school where he

will continue to major in chorus. In five years, he hopes to attend the university of his choice where he can study music theory, musical theater, and sociology.

If he could leave a few words of wisdom to the younger generation behind him, it would be to "Recognize problems, find solutions, and be open to possibilities."







Excellent advice from a young man who is truly wise beyond his years.

**“What are your thoughts and opinions on the upcoming 2020 election in November, the candidates, and your hope of what will be gained with the election results?”**

As the elections are coming up, it is hard to even try to ignore the tension growing between communities. I know no one is perfect yet. I also know when something wrong is done several times, it is unacceptable.

Since my dad watches certain news channels, I am aware that the media can contort things such as quotes, videos, and opinions. As a glimpse of the future, I understand that the leaders of today

make laws for tomorrow. If our future president were to create a law that discriminates or does not include a certain type of people, it could ruin things such as equality and diversity in the future.

Hearing the comments from certain politicians changed my assumptions. I genuinely used to think politics was supposed to be a popularity contest. Yet in my more recent years, I understand that the polls are designed for you to choose the most intelligent, most compatible, and the best role-model for the president of the next generation. Politics is something that I wish to read more and more as I get older. I want to be able to have educated conversations about the history and future of our nation’s leaders and governments.

# Lahla's Music Review

## Shawn Cromartie

By Lahla-Hadiya

The new kid on the block... bringing back old familiar feelings of love... re-igniting the flame of authentic love jams

Breaking the barrier and destroying stereotypes of a young Black man from the hood, this young new artist has arrived on the scene to make his mark in the music world. He destroys the trend that all Black male artists rap and sing about the exploitation of a woman's worth, portraying the false ideal that women should be seen as mere sex objects. Shawn Cromartie comes to the yard with confidence that he is more than capable and willing to treat a woman the way she should be treated. He also acknowledges the past hurts and disappointment women have endured. He makes it clear that he is a better candidate for the job but, also he makes it known that he realizes many times, people end up dishing out the same hurts they endure.

His single, Had Enough opens with a smooth seductive vocal arrangement that immediately captivates your emotions sending you into a trance as the bass begins to thump. You actually feel the sense of urgency, understanding a woman is worth loyalty, honesty, stability and much more. I can imagine that a man listening to this song



would feel empowered, yet restricted, especially if he is a man of genuine love and romance. In the wake of this 'new era' of being in relationships, women often say they are

tired of the games men play. Yet they end up adopting the same manipulative ideals that entangled them from the start.

The writer of this song, KB The General, is clearly saying that if a woman has truly had enough of the games, she should give her attention and loyalty to the man that really wants to invest his time and attention into her. This song is like finding the perfect Hallmark card to describe how a real gentleman feels about a woman he truly is into.

In the first verse, he jumps right into the fact that he is putting in the work to make a beautiful life for them. He is schooling this queen on the games that fellas play with her heart. He gently and confidently tells how he would treat her if she were his. Even though it is clear with the title that this woman is fed up and has had enough of dealing with games, he expresses his exhaustion in the fact that she keeps wasting her time on other guys when he is right there trying to prove to her that he is all she'll ever need.

When I first listened to this song, I started slow dancing to the music as soon as the beat dropped. It was actually a breath of fresh air from the norm. It's been a long time since someone new on the scene has married hood and romance in a song and straight finessed it. Listening to this song, I could imagine my man standing there with a white tank, grey sweats and some fresh buttas, pouring every ounce of his thug passion into the lyrics. As simple and as smooth as this song glides, it absolutely hits hard making you feel every note.

Beyond just romantic relationships, this song makes you think of any situation where you've ever felt devalued or unappreciated. You get to the point where you've had enough of people taking advantage of you. Whether it be a job, a relationship, a





friendship, a business partnership, etc. You are at a crossroad where you just can't take it anymore, but KB and Shawn help you realize that it is so easy to become the very thing that you felt oppressed by if not careful.

Had Enough closes out with the repeated phrase... "...had enough" As it fades out, it leaves you floating on a love cloud. I literally played this song over eight times repeatedly before I was slow danced out. If after listening to this single you don't feel empowered to reevaluate your current situation, making a determination whether you are being properly valued and adored, then you obviously didn't pump it loud or long enough.

It was a wise decision to let this one come out of the gate first. It leaves you wanting more lyrical and musical genius from this writer and artist. The thirst for the rest of the album is real; anticipating whether you'll continue to experience eargasms of this style of singing or whether he'll come harder taking the music arena by storm. September 26, 2020 is the long awaited and expected release date for the album, Had Enough from this rising star. If he keeps this trend up, he just might re-ignite the true sounds of R&B.

Great job on this one king!

Link: [Shaun Cromartie](#)



# Breast Cancer Awareness: A Male Point of View

By Beryl Brackett

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. We often hear stories of women and their families fighting against breast cancer. We hear many accounts of their struggle, faith, friendship, hope, and strength that tugs on the hearts of all who listen. Although breast cancer develops mainly in women, it can also occur in men.

The Lyfe Magazine sat down and had an open discussion with retired Colonel James C. Epting about his breast cancer journey.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** How did you find out you had cancer? What happened, and what led you to go get checked out?

**James:** My son was in high school and he played on the football team. We would often throw the ball around outside. One day we were outside throwing the ball around and I missed it. The ball hit me in my chest. Later that evening, I noticed my chest was a little sore, but I attributed it to the fact that I got hit with the football.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** After playing football and having the ball hit your chest, what did you do next?

**James:** I didn't think much about it. I went on another six months to a year after the incident happened. However, one day I was getting out of my car and the door hit my chest in the same spot previously that the football hit. The spot was sore.





**The Lyfe Magazine:** At the time when the door hit your chest in the same spot, you didn't think you should go see a doctor?

**James:** No, I didn't, because I figured I hit my chest on the car door and that's the reason it was sore. However, my wife thought the knot looked larger and recommended I have a doctor check it out.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** And you still went about your daily routine?

**James:** Yes. The military requires an annual physical. So, in 2004, I made my appointment at the Pentagon to start the required physical examination. During the exam, I mentioned the knot on my chest, left of the nipple, and it concerned them. I went to see the dermatologist, and the dermatologist examined the knot and asked, "How long has this been here?" I replied, "What?" She said, "This knot here?" She placed my finger over the spot and that was the exact spot the football and door hit. After completing the physical. She was very concerned and instructed me to go to Fort Belvoir's medical facility and have it checked out.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** At that point when the doctor mentioned you should get it checked, what were you thinking?

**James:** I really didn't give it much thought, I was doing what I was told. I headed to Fort Belvoir and I got in right away. The doctor immediately told me I needed to get an ultrasound right away. I walked into the room, looked around and realized there was nothing but women there. Why am I here? Why am I getting an ultrasound? I call it an ultrasound, but in reality, it was like a mammogram. The technician was trying to get all the pictures by squeezing my chest and having me position my body at different angles. I walked out and waited on the radiologist to come and discuss the results with me. While waiting, I started talking to a young lady in the waiting area. She had breast cancer and had to have surgery; a double mastectomy. My mind was running like okay, I understand why she is in here, but why am I in here?

After the ultrasound were done, the doctor instructed me to make an appointment to discuss the results. He took a tissue sample before I left.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** So he did a biopsy?  
**James:** Yes, something like that. It wasn't very painful.

**James:** Two weeks later, my wife Angela and I went to the appointment. We looked at the x-rays and wondered what was going on. Imagine an octopus head and the tentacles of his legs—it was all running towards my chest wall. He explained what was happening and how the mass was spreading. It was penetrating my chest. He said, "We are very concerned about this." We asked, "What is this?" His response was, "Dermatofibrosarcoma Protuberans". The only thing Angela heard was sarcoma. She said, "Excuse me, are you saying he has cancer?" He answered, "Yes." She said, "That is not good, is it?" He said, "No, we have to be aggressive with (the treatment of) this cancer." It was going toward my chest wall on the left side. They didn't want it to penetrate the chest wall in fear that it would go to the heart. He said, "We need to schedule surgery right away". We scheduled surgery and talked about the treatment plan. No radiation, no chemo. For this cancer you just really have to cut it out.



I had the surgery 2-3 weeks later. They had to go in and cut out a part of my chest. The doctor said, "We think we got it all". Late October, early November time frame, we received a phone call from the doctor. It was one of the worst phone calls I ever had. He said, "We got the results back and we do not have clean margins." Angela said, "That's not good." The doctor said, "We didn't get all the cancer we have to go back in again." After the first surgery, I felt like Superman because I did it and survived and knocked it out.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** How did that make you feel knowing you had to go back in a second time for surgery.

**James:** From a psychological standpoint, you do not feel invincible anymore. You do not feel like Superman—you feel very vulnerable. I started saying and thinking this is very serious. There is no other way to approach the situation. Can't do

chemo or radiation. There were no chemicals to take. The only option we had was to go back and have surgery again. The first time was hard enough. Going back in the second time really took me out.

I think everything started in October and I didn't go back to work until March. They had to go deeper into my body to ensure they got clean margins. Leading up to the second surgery wasn't a good moment, probably the lowest point in my time.

Christmas was near and I love Christmas. My birthday is in December and I love the holidays. The doctor kept telling us we had to be aggressive because the recurrence rate was very high. I had to go into a recovery period. It took me down emotionally and physically. I lost a lot of weight because the cut was deeper into my body.

They sent off a tissue sample and it came back with clean margins. That was good, but at the same



time, I wasn't working. A real good friend came to see me from Virginia. She said, "Boy, you better not die on me; you better get up out of that bed and keep moving." It had taken me to a very low point. All of my friends and the people I knew were not coming around. You figured when you have a life altering issue people would come around and help you through it, but that wasn't the case. People stayed away from me as if they thought they would catch what I had. However, it was this one guy who came by every day and is a real good friend of mine today. He would ask, "How are you doing?" Another person at that time was my boss, a three-star General. He told me not to worry and that everything would be alright. He looked at me and told me I needed to shave, that I was looking bad. He brought laughter in my life. He told me I needed to get it together and that I needed a haircut according to military standards. The happiness and the joy these two people brought to my life was amazing. Yes, I had my family, and

they were there with me. However, when you have other people come around and give you a different perspective, it fires you up and motivates you. They gave me a reason to get up and get going.

When I finally got back to work in March 2005, my boss said, "You are an inspiration to me. My father is fighting cancer."

It woke me up for life to say you are not in control; it is something bigger than you. I am so grateful that I didn't need to have chemo or radiation. The second surgery was a success in getting clean margins. I'm also thankful the cancer did not penetrate my chest wall to my heart.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** How did your family and your wife, Angela cope?

**James:** It was hard for Angela because her very vibrant, energetic guy, always making things



happen, was down for 4 months. She knew how much I celebrated the holidays and I was down during the most exciting part of the year and that brought her down a little bit. We went out to dinner at the Cheesecake Factory and opened up about how we both felt about the situation.

She said, "I am going to give you 15 minutes to talk about death and burial arrangements so you can get that worry off your chest. After that, I don't want to hear anything else about death because we are going to make it through this."

A year later, I wanted to go back to the Cheesecake Factory. Angela asked why I wanted to go back there. I said I wanted to go back to end the evening and start our life on a high note. This experience taught me that every moment Angela and I have is precious and we try to make it the best moment in our lives.

Having Angela by my side gave me power. She was on that same journey. She stayed with me through everything. She was my inspiration, my

prayer warrior, and she is the love of my life. She supported me and reassured me we would get through this together. It was amazing how she stood by me the entire time.

**The Lyfe Magazine:** If there was one thing you could tell men reading your story, what would you say to them?

**James:** My hope is by me sharing my story that it will encourage other men to stop being hard-headed and take care of themselves. If not for them, for the people they love and the ones that depend on them. Don't short change anyone in your life.

"I am so grateful and fortunate. God has been good to me and my family."

~James C. Epti

## What Is Breast Cancer in Men?

Breast cancer occurs mainly in women, but men can get it, too. Many people do not realize that men have breast tissue and that they can develop breast cancer. Cells in nearly any part of the body can become cancer and can spread to other areas.

Breast cancer starts when cells in the breast begin to grow out of control. These cells usually form a tumor that can often be seen on an x-ray or felt as a lump. The tumor is malignant (cancer) if the cells can grow into (invade) surrounding tissues or spread (metastasize) to distant areas of the body.

To learn more about how cancers start and spread, see Cancer Basics at <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-basics.html>

**Taken from [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)**



**THE LYFE**  
MAGAZINE

**THANK YOU FOR READING  
OUR MAGAZINE**

**TO ALL THE VETERANS WE SAY,  
"THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!"**



# Who Else Wants to Take a Virtual Vacation?

Planning a vacation has become more complicated these days. Airlines are offering fewer flights. Schools are unable to predict when they'll be open or closed. You may be tightening your budget while you spend more time at home.

Still, taking time off is essential for your mental and physical health. That's especially true when you're struggling with stressful situations.

Even when Disneyland is closed, you can create your own magic. Try these ideas for making your next vacation a virtual adventure.

## Enjoying a Virtual Vacation Online

The internet gives you instant access to any venue or experience. Design an itinerary based on your personal interests.

### **Consider these ideas:**

1. Appreciate art. Gain free admittance to great museums around the world and in your neighborhood. Browse for special features including lectures, artist talks, and family friendly crafts.

2. Explore history. Journey back in time. Investigate famous battlefields and ancient dynasties. Check out digital collections at the Smithsonian Institution or guided tours of Machu Picchu.

3. Tour national parks. Connect with nature. Bring home the scenic beauty of more than 32 US national parks, courtesy of Google Earth and Google Arts & Culture. Choose from favorites like the Grand Canyon and Yosemite.

4. Watch animals. Could you watch cat videos for hours? Get up close to wildlife with webcam feeds from zoos and aquariums.

5. Ride a roller coaster. Skip the long lines. Take a 360-degree video walkthrough of popular rides at the Virtual Disney World YouTube Channel. While you're there, search for similar experiences at other theme parks.

6. Travel to outer space. NASA has posted several special tours for aerospace fans. That includes the International Space Station and a full Exoplanet Travel Bureau with amazing visualizations of other planets and stars.

7. Continue learning. If you want a more in-depth experience, take classes online at almost any college or university. Also, many public libraries offer free access to The Great Courses where you can study computer coding or fine wine.

### Enjoying a Virtual Vacation Offline

Today, you might assume that anything virtual involves a computer. However, it can also refer to something that falls a little short of being an exact match. Unplug and experience the benefits of a getaway without actually leaving home.

#### Try these activities:

1. Camp out. Sleep under the stars in your backyard. Pitch a tent and toast s'mores. Tell ghost stories or sing show tunes.

2. Get spa treatments. Pamper yourself with a spa day. Relieve stress and lift your spirits with massages, facials, and a manicure.

3. Play sports and games. Physical exercise is another great way to eliminate tension and encourage restful sleep. Grab your croquet mallets or organize a scavenger hunt.

4. Grow a garden. Produce your own food and flowers. Gardening is time consuming, but practical and satisfying. If you're a beginner, pick plants that require little care. For best results, ensure that they're appropriate for your area by checking the USDA Hardiness Zone.

5. Film a movie. Let the hours you've spent streaming movies and TV shows inspire you to produce your own content. Give each family member a role in the project from script writing to editing. Share your work with family and friends online.

6. Paint and sculpt. Maybe you prefer another medium for your creativity. Work on visual arts or experiment with piano playing and flower arrangements.

7. Go on a retreat. During challenging times, it's natural to think about your life purpose and turn to your faith. Praying and meditating at home can be just as effective as sitting on a mountaintop.

Refresh your mind and restore your energy with a virtual vacation. There's a whole world of entertaining and enriching activities you can do at home. The only limit is your imagination.



# Celestine Oliver-Stokes

## *In His Arms is Where She Wants to be*

By Gerald C. Anderson, Sr.

Celestine Oliver-Stokes: In His Arms is Where She Wants to Be

I had the pleasure of meeting this wonderful young woman in January of 1999 while serving as the musician for the Ambassadors for Christ choir at Andrews Air Force Base. I watched her grow from a teenager to a wife and mother of two. So when I tell you I am proud to know her, believe me, I am proud. She is a talented young lady who will light up God's Kingdom with her beautiful voice. I knew she could, and would, do it. Now, I'm glad she has done it.

Celestine was born into a military family and traveled extensively until her parents landed in Maryland. Gordon and Marilyn Oliver are great people and it is an honor knowing them. It doesn't surprise me that Celestine is a talented singer because Marilyn is as well. The apple did not fall far from this tree.

Celestine started singing when she was a toddler. Her mom heard her singing "Jesus Loves Me" and

said, "Oh, she has a voice on her." She was right as Celestine would grow up and share her gift in various choirs.

A major accomplishment of her teenage life came on the heels of a letdown. Celestine tried out for the Poms Squad in her middle school but didn't make it. Little did she know God had something better for her. Around the same time she auditioned for the Children of the Gospel, a 100 person choir in the Washington, DC area. She made the choir and was positioned as a first soprano.

Celestine recalled her days in the choirs she performed in and stated they impacted her life in a positive manner. She recalled her time with Andrews' Ambassadors for Christ choir and realized her skill as a singer improved over those years. Alicia Patterson, former Director of the choir said, "I always found her [Celestine] voice to be soft and sultry but strong and beautiful. She was one of my best leads in the choir."

In May of 2019, Beryl A. Brackett of BAB Productions and I were attending an expo in Washington,





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DC when Celestine and her mom arrived at our table. We enjoyed the usual banter that old friends typically engage in when they run into each other. However, Beryl felt something else inside. It was at that moment that Beryl felt in her heart that Celestine was the one to sing "In His Arms".

Beryl recalled the experience as, "hitting her the instant Celestine walked up to our table." She didn't mention it to me at that time but later she would tell me she had a song for Celestine, and I was excited for both of them. That moment at the expo laid the foundation for Beryl to ask Celestine to sing the song.

Beryl approached Celestine shortly after the expo and told her she had a song for her and she felt it would be great for her voice. Celestine was happy for the opportunity but didn't think it was real until she got the lyrics and track. She recalled smiling and saying, "Oh, this is real." Her husband, Trevor has been supportive and continues to inspire Celestine's drive to greatness.

After learning the song, Celestine headed to Nightsky Studio to begin the recording process. It would be her first experience in a studio. Celestine was impressed with the studio and reality of the experience continued to sink in for her. Beryl said, "Celestine was nervous in the beginning but then she relaxed and found her own voice."

That statement coincided with Celestine's recollection of her experience with the song. She remembers reading the lyrics and identifying with the song. She could embrace it because of her life experiences. She also envisioned herself being in the

arms of the Lord. Once the inspiration took control she easily belted out what is going to be a hit song.

I asked Celestine how the pandemic has affected her life and her family. She said, "We have had to transition from jobs and my kids have been in virtual school. My youngest is in kindergarten and I have to help her with everything. My oldest is in fourth grade but more tech savvy, so she handles it on her own."

Celestine mentions her family, parents, grandparents, and her Uncle Keith Oliver are her biggest cheerleaders. When I asked Celestine's parents about her accomplishment they said, "We are very proud of her. We're not surprised; we knew she could do it." Her husband and children sing her song around the house and that inspires Celestine.

The specific release date has not been set for "In His Arms" but we know it will be in November of this year. I had the pleasure of hearing it for the first time this week and, I must say, I am excited for Celestine.

I closed by asking Celestine what advice she would give to others coming behind her in the music industry. She said, "I think the best advice I could give someone else is the advice I gave myself. That is not to overthink things. Step out and have the courage to do it. Just be you."

*"We are very proud of her. We're not surprised; we knew she could do it."*





# ABUNDANCE

*is About More Than*

# MONEY

Some people equate financial success with abundance. Having enough money is a significant part of abundance, but there's much more to it.

Abundance is a mindset and a belief system. It's a way of viewing the world, the people in it, and yourself. It's making the decision to believe that God will provide, as long as you hold up your end of the bargain.

You can be wealthy and be alone. You can have money and be in poor health. You can be financially successful and be miserable. You can be the wealthiest person in the world and still not experience abundance.

Consider these ideas and experience abundance in your life:

1. Abundance is an attitude. Money is money, but abundance is a mindset. It's a decision to believe that you can have whatever you need, in the quantities you need it. It's the belief that there is always enough.

2. Abundance is having an excess of important resources. True abundance isn't just money. It's also about having enough of the other necessary resources in your life. This can include things like free time, love, and happiness. Money is important,

but there's much more to abundance than money. 3. Abundance is the belief that there is enough for everyone. Those obsessed with wealth are often competitive and believe that there's only a finite amount of wealth to be divided among everyone. Abundance is the belief that there's enough for everyone.

4. Abundance has a greater impact on happiness than wealth. Abundance greatly increases the likelihood of happiness. Great wealth is no more likely to make you happy than a decent middle-class income. There's research to support this idea. You can't make yourself happier by accumulating great wealth.

5. Abundance avoids attachment. Abundance lacks attachment. There's no reason to hold on tightly to what you have if you believe there will always be enough in the future. With an abundance mindset, you feel comfortable allowing everything to flow into and out of your life.

6. Abundance allows you to dream bigger. Abundance allows for the biggest of dreams to become a possibility in your mind. Money provides opportunities, but only for those things you can afford. Abundance takes the possibilities in your life to another level.

7. Abundance avoids resentment. With abundance, there's no reason to be jealous or resentful of someone else's success. The success of one person can't negatively impact the success of someone else.

8. Those with an abundant mindset are grateful. Gratitude is part of abundance. You can't experience abundance unless you're grateful for what you have. Gratitude creates the possibility of receiving even more in the future. How grateful are you right now?

9. Abundance leads to positive expectations. When you believe in abundance, you are positive about the future. You expect good things to happen and to continue happening.

How much abundance do you have in your life? How would you measure abundance? What does abundance mean to you? You can't acquire what you don't identify.

Resist the urge to believe that all of your challenges will be solved with money. Once your money issues are resolved, you will likely come to realize there are other problems to deal with. You may not have been able to see them because you thought it was all about money.

**“Abundance has a greater impact on happiness than wealth.”**



Image by Linus Schütz from Pixabay

# DIVORCE & LOSS



HOW THE  
LOSS OF  
A CHILD CAN  
EFFECT A  
MARRIAGE

PHOTO BY NEOSIAM 2020 FROM PEXELS



By Vanessa Rainey-Johnson

I recently spoke with Mae concerning the loss of her child; due to an illness. Mae actually suffered two losses; a marriage of 15 years and her child. Mae explained, she nor her husband could not cope with the loss of their son. They both felt responsible. Mae struggled to make sense of what happened. She recalled how she stopped celebrating her birthday because her son died on her birthday.

Studies reveal empathic isolation, coping strategies, and psychological exhaustion have a grave effect on African American families during the loss of a child.

After 40 years of carrying the burden, Mae felt relieved she was able to talk about the circumstances surrounding her divorce and the loss of her child. Mae smiled with a look of gratitude. She emphasized that if she could have done things differently, she would have tried to keep her family together and seek help for guidance.

Her loss came in a time where there was stigmatization placed on counseling. African American fathers going to counseling were portrayed as weak or mentally confused. It is sad that the stigma remains today. Understanding God's divine order, grace, and mercy will help us to grow and walk in love as we help others to create a balance in their lives. We know there is a higher power that can help us in our time of distress 2 Timothy 3:14 tells us to, "... continue in what you have learned..." (NIV).

Studies show over a million couples divorce each year in the United States. The divorce rate in the United States is higher than any other country and is a problem. Divorce after the loss of a child is around 16%. When there is a loss of a child, both parents feel the impact; however, they mourn differently. As in Mae's case, she left because she was unable to understand what had happened and felt responsible for the child's death. Mae found it difficult to express her pain and help her husband deal with his suffering. It was easy, at the time, to deal with their suffering separately; although marriage is a cohesion.

African American men wear a mask of strength and courage. They feel a need to control their emotions, whereas women need to be nurtured and loved. However, during the time of psychological, physical, and spiritual meltdown, both are in need of support to overcome.

The death of a child brings a lot of mixed emotions to the surface. One spouse may blame the other for the loss and feel as if the connection is lost in the family. Shutting each other out becomes a defense mechanism, the adjustment is not easy. Researchers found there is a link between worry and difficulty resolving grief as a product of decreased relational independence.

Grief is like a rollercoaster, and everyone is on a different ride. In a relationship, individuals lose themselves in a particular role. If there is a loss, they find it difficult to change positions. The thought of the loss can bring on feelings of shock, disbelief, helplessness, aggression, guilt, and loneliness. Intimacy diminishes for fear of being hurt again. When this happens, destructive anger can prevail. Both partners are in need of comfort, and feelings needs to be validated. Consequently, the lack of coping strategies is related to this complicated mental adjustment, leaving one or both partners in a state of depression.

There are many reasons why divorce may happen when there is significant trauma in the family, especially after the loss of a child. An emotional ambiance in a relationship reflects the inability to bounce back. At some point in our lives, we each will experience an emotional "shake up".

Grieving can be used as a time to reprioritize life goals and what life means to you or your family. After all, healing should not be a lonely process. The process should incorporate the needs of everyone.

Relationships are a bond that life cannot live without; birth, life, love, time, purpose, and death, all work together. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "Only in the darkness are we able to see the stars." A person must go through suffering to see the beauty and meaning of life. Acknowledging fears,

negative thoughts, and trauma is difficult for most of us and should be dealt with compassionately.

John Denver once wrote, "I know that it's over, but I can't discover a way to erase how I feel."

After a divorce :

- Allow yourself time to feel your feelings; focus produces purpose.
- Journaling (heals the mind, through internalized writing).
- Get to know and love who you are; practice self-care.
- Seek help from support groups, family, and friends.
- Change your space and make it your own.
- Seek counseling.
- Communication is vital. Check-in with each other throughout the day (15-20 min)
- Continue Intimacy (remember what brought you together)
- Have patience with self and your partner (don't be judgmental)
- Share memories of your child
- Most importantly; breathe the process will take time.

Whichever method you use to comfort your spirit, I wish you the best. Remember, time will lessen the pain; allow yourself time to heal. Define yourself as whole and worthy, and everything whole and worthy will be yours.

Vanessa R. Johnson









# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE?

BY GERALD C. ANDERSON, SR.

I recently had the occasion to talk with a friend I met back in 1976. Forty years ago we lost touch with each other, so this conversation gave us the chance to catch up.

It didn't take long for the topic of my joining the United States Air Force to come up. She thanked me for my service and I politely said, "You're welcome." But inside I had this feeling that I have always had. That feeling that I didn't deserve such a thank you.

When people talk about a person choosing to make a sacrifice and join the military in service of their country, you think they are truly a patriotic person. That was not me. My sole reason for joining the Air Force was to get away from home. I did not understand what it meant to serve my country, sacrifice my life for my country, or what it meant to be patriotic. All I knew was that I wanted to get away from home. I wanted to leave Tampa, Florida and go as far away from home as I could.

At a point in my career, I thought about the oath I took when joining the Air Force. It read, "I [state your full name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States

against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

I didn't think of the words the first time I took that oath. At 18 years old, my world only spanned the East and West sides Tampa. The Constitution was something we learned about in school, but I asked myself, "I don't have to really defend it, right? Faith is something you hear in church, so that's probably just fluffy words." I convinced myself that the oath was nothing but a bunch of flowery words that no one really took seriously. Remember, I was 18...and I was wrong.

Serving, no matter the capacity, is serving and when you take that oath you are not saying that you just want a job and that's it. You are pledging to put your life on the line each day to protect the United States of America, its property, and citizens. It doesn't differentiate which citizens; it covers all citizens.

It took me a few years to grow up, and I thank the Air Force for that. But I eventually realized what I signed



up for. After I did, I didn't bat an eye and I continued to sign up for subsequent enlistments. I still wanted to serve my country. When Operation Desert Storm started, I deeply felt the level of commitment I signed up for. Many of my friends were heading off to the fight but I wasn't one of them. Three times they chose me for deployment to support the Operation. However, each time a reason that was out of my control arose and prevented me from joining my friends.

It was no longer a job for me. It was service to my country. I looked around at the men and women who I was serving with and admired many of them. We all came from different walks of life, and we all had our initial reasons for joining.

However, they, like me, realized that initial reason was meaningless and serving our country mattered most.

Happy Veterans Day to all my brothers and sisters past, present, and future! We are the peacekeepers of freedom in America.





We all strive for a healthy, fulfilling relationship. Unfortunately, many can fizzle out for one reason or another. When one ends, the journey to healing can be a rocky road.

As a result, learning how to get over a relationship that didn't work out is a highly valuable skill.

Use these strategies to move on at the end of a relationship that didn't end well. Rise from the ashes stronger than ever:

1. Break off all contact. The best way to get over a relationship is to remove that person from your life completely. Of course, if you have children with the other person, a complete elimination of all communication isn't possible, but you can minimize your contact.

- No texts, social media contact, emails, or phone calls. Get rid of any photographs. Tell them their stuff is in a box in front of the garage door.
- If you can't bring yourself to get rid of photographs or other mementos of your relationship, at least put them in a box and store it in the attic for now.

2. Find a new way to fulfill your needs. Your relationship partner satisfied some need, or they wouldn't have been in your life in the first place. Think about the benefits you received from the relationship. It might have been friendship, emotional support, financial support, an activity partner, intellectual stimulation, or any other benefit you received. Start working on new and healthy ways of satisfying those needs.

3. Own your mistakes. No one is perfect in a relationship. Your ex made mistakes. You made mistakes. Acknowledge them and learn from them. Each relationship provides the opportunity to be better the next time around.

4. Start a self-improvement project. When a relationship ends, you're likely to find yourself with more free time than previously. This is a great time to work on yourself: get in shape, read a book that will take your life to the next level, or learn a new skill.

- We tend to date people at our own level. That's just where we feel comfortable.





# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR MOVING ON WHEN A RELATIONSHIP ENDS



- Improve yourself, and you'll feel more comfortable dating others who show some of the same qualities as the new, improved version of yourself.

5. Create a new list of attributes for your next partner. What did you learn from your last relationship? Make this list while your last relationship is still fresh in your mind. Consider these questions:

- What qualities do you need or desire in a partner /relationship?
- What qualities in a partner /relationship do you want to avoid in the future?

6. Explore. Use your new-found free time to try some new activities. Delve into activities that interest you but have remained unexplored. Maybe

it's time to take golf lessons, try your hand at photography, or learn how to snowboard.

7. Establish a new social routine. One of your major sources of human interaction is now gone. How are you going to make up for that loss? You might want to spend more time alone for a while, but you'll still need other people to interact with on a regular basis.

8. Take your time. There's no rush. Jumping from one relationship to the next is rarely a good idea. Take your time and enjoy your new single status.

Relationships end for a variety of reasons. The end of every relationship requires a recovery period. Take advantage of it. It's a wonderful time to work on yourself and do a little exploring. You can come back better than ever and ready to love again.



If you're paying a mortgage, at one time or another you've probably thought about what it would be like to pay it off. You've likely dreamed about living the life you desire, unfettered by the ball and chain of having to pay a monthly mortgage.

Before you make a decision to pay it off early, take a close look at your financial options to determine if it really would be a wise financial move. In some situations, it's better not to pay it off early.

Consider these reasons, both for and against, an early payoff in your situation.

### **Benefits of Paying Off Your Mortgage**

1. You'll save big on interest. Depending on where you are time-wise in the term of the loan, you stand to save thousands of dollars which you would have paid in interest over the life of your loan.
2. You won't have the monthly stress of a house payment. This can be a great relief!
3. As retirement approaches, paying your house off means you won't have to struggle with house payments on a reduced income.

4. You'll have hundreds of dollars to spend or save monthly. It's empowering to know that whether you want to take a couple more trips a year or concentrate on saving for the kids' educations, you'll have money to put aside for it.

5. Your confidence about your financial situation will increase. After all, if you pay off your mortgage early, you're likely doing something right with your budget. You have a lot to be proud of!

### **Why You Might Not Want To Pay Off Your Mortgage**

Taking all of the above into account, sometimes you can still come out ahead without paying off your mortgage early.

### **Here are some reasons why:**

1. Paying interest has its advantages. With mortgage rates being so low now, you might be paying only 3 or 4% on your mortgage. Yet you might find an investment that pays you a 10% return. So you would make more money if you used your extra funds to make a higher rate of interest from an investment rather than pay down your mortgage.

Bear in mind that if you're getting an income tax deduction on your mortgage interest, that interest is costing you even less overall.

2. Keeping your dollars in hand may be wiser. Paying off your mortgage in one lump sum might not work in your best interest. Doing so doesn't increase your net worth because you'll have less cash.

This means you'll have substantially fewer liquid dollars. You would have to sell or refinance your house to get your cash back if you needed it. It's unwise to use all your cash to pay off your mortgage, especially if you could be earning interest on the money instead.

3. If you are planning to pay the mortgage off with your 401(k), there could be penalties, especially if you're less than age 59-1/2. Plus, all the money you take out is taxed at your ordinary income rate.

4. Paying off loans with higher interest rates first makes more sense. It's smarter to pay off a higher interest debt than your mortgage, if your mortgage has a lower interest rate.

Answering the question of whether to pay off your mortgage early takes some deliberation. Ensure you take into account your specific situation. Strive to determine how you can save or make the most money and you'll be happy with your decision.





# WHAT IS A VEGAN DIET?



The rise of new diet plans and fad, fitness routines has left many people to think, “Do I really need any of this?”

Understanding what some of these diets are and how they work will help you decide which, if any, is best for your goals and lifestyle.

A vegan diet is one of the most popular diet plans to hit the scene. Vegetarian lifestyles have been around since the beginning of time, but only recently have people started to look at removing dairy and other animal products from their diet.

## What Can You Eat?

With a vegan diet, you can eat anything that is not made from animal sources or uses animal products in the product creation process.

This means no meats, eggs, or dairy products for a start. Also, avoid whey, cheese flavors, and other

ingredients typically seen in processed foods that contain animal-based ingredients.

This leaves you with a world of fresh fruit, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts, seeds, legumes and other food that does not contain animal products.

## Why Go Vegan?

There are a host of reasons why someone would choose to switch to a vegan diet.

Typically, there are three main reasons to go vegan:

1. Personal health. Research shows that a vegan diet can be beneficial for a healthier heart, lowering the risk for heart disease and even some cancers.

- A plant-based diet that has a shortage of animal products has also been shown to lower inflammation and reduce the risk of obesity caused illnesses.

- If you are concerned about the effect that a particular food has on the human body, a plant-based diet could be beneficial for you.

2. Ethical perspective. Many people disagree with the concept of animal agriculture. They see the need for animals dying for food as cruel, unnecessary, and unsustainable.

- There's no doubt that confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs), in particular, are very cruel to the animals.
- For some, the ethical argument is resolved by using only meat from animals that are treated humanely.
- If you are concerned about the health and welfare of animals, switching to a vegan diet could help you to feel more ethically secure.

3. Environmental sustainability. Recent research has shown that animal agriculture is a contributor to global climate change. Many factory-farmed animals such as chickens, pigs, and cows outnumber

humans by over five times. This number of animals could be unsustainable to feed and grow.

- In other words, growing this number of animals requires a large amount of water and food supply.
- In addition, CAFOs produce huge amounts of pollution to a large area surrounding the facility. For example, the runoff of pollutants into the land, nearby streams and rivers, and the water tables is disturbing.

### Is a Vegan Diet for You?

You now have a brief overview of what a vegan diet entails, and why people would choose to switch to eating plants over animal products.

A vegan diet is not for everyone. Additionally, it's not a quick fix for an unhealthy lifestyle.

Yet, when performed properly, a vegan diet can be one of the most effective ways to ensure that you are lowering your risk for chronic diseases, living longer, and giving back to the earth in a sustainable way.



# I Wonder

By Shawn-Ta Wilson

My mother passed Friday morning, February 6, 2015.

There are days, like today, I literally have to suppress the scream I feel brewing deep down in my soul.

The only thing which stops me is what the Lord told me when I woke up the morning of Saturday, February 7, 2015. He said, "She's breathing easy now." She was no longer struggling to breathe due to COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). Her pain ended when He called her home the morning before. With her last breath however, my pain began.

Some days I wonder if it would be better if I let it out. Is that a selfish act? Would it be perceived as a cry for her to still be here and suffering? She is in a much better place than I. Would letting it out serve a purpose? Quite frankly, I think I'm afraid to let it out.

I was told "It gets better". To a degree, it has. The day she gained her rest in eternity I experienced a pain like none before. In the five years since, I've had that reoccur just once. Every other day, however, I feel her absence.

So much has happened in five years. I wonder what advice she would have given me in certain situations.

I wonder if she knew how much she was loved. I told her. I tried to show her; but did she know? I wonder if she would be proud of me. Yes, at 53 years of age, I am still concerned with whether or not I am representing my parents well.

I wonder if the day will come when I don't reach for the phone to call her.

I'm not the only one. Many of you have lost a parent, or both. You understand the agony there are no words adequate enough to describe. We function because well, we have to. Yet there are days we just want to cry out from the depths of our soul.

I wonder if that feeling will ever go away. I wonder about a lot of things. Yet there is one thing I know for sure; I am Val's kid, always and forever. And her name will not be forgotten on earth!

Rest easy, Valerie Sterns.





# 1,000 Men March

## “Silent No More”

By Baron Jamaal Bell & Darius A. Stanton

All image courtesy of Destini Joyce of Joyce Images

The words from the platform at the Annapolis City Dock on September 19, 2020 were shouted and repeated by the audience, “We will have justice; we will have peace!” We are no longer asking for justice and peace; we will have justice and peace!”

This beautiful spirit filled sunny day where over 1,000 people; primarily Black men, women, children and others of various descent, participated in the historic Anne Arundel County 1,000 Men March. It was one of many marches and protests around the world to advance the African American’s struggle for justice and equality.

Annapolis, the capital city of Maryland, was the perfect place to hold such a protest because the Annapolis City Dock is also the port that brought Kunta Kinte and other enslaved people from the country of The Gambia to the United States in 1767.

The march was organized by the United Black Clergy and the NAACP (both of Anne Arundel County), along with The Caucus of African American Leaders, and a host of other organizations. The diversity in age, religion, and even race was impressive as the march started from the Naval Academy Stadium with stops for prayer for the State legislators, Governor and other elected officials. The marches climax was at the top of Main Street with Annapolis Mayor





Gavin Buckley, the first Black Mayor of Bowie, Maryland, Timothy Allen, and former City of Annapolis Alderman Carl O. Snowden gave the history of the phrase, “I can’t breathe.”

Once the march convened Mr. Snowden passed the megaphone over to the President of the United Black Clergy Apostle Larry Thomas Sr. as he shouted “No justice, No Peace!” Apostle Thomas passed the megaphone to youth activist Harold Mo Lloyd. Mr. Lloyd then led the march behind a Black Lives Matter flag with these words “I Love Being Black”, “I Love The Skin That I’m In”, “I Love the Texture of my Hair” down the center of Main Street.

Onlookers, mostly White, watched as the march continued. Some even joined the march. Others were not silent, and many carried Black Lives Matter signs with the names and pictures of

those who lost their lives at the hands of police officers.

The march ended at the Susan C. Campbell Park where speakers such as Pastor Dr. Karen Johnson of First Christian Community Church answered the question, posed by the organizer of the March Bishop Antonio M. Palmer, “Why we need our black men!”

Pastor Johnson’s words inspired the packed dock to stand on their feet, clap, and even laugh. She struck several chords that spoke about accountability to family and community, as well as the love for what she coined, “The 31 flavors of the Black Man.”

Bishop Palmer acknowledged his son Minister Randy Curtis for birthing the idea of the 1,000 Men March to fight for social justice.



Pastor Curtis said, "I just felt like we had to do something!"

The Anne Arundel County Executive, Stuart Pittman, also spoke at the rally. He did something that is seldom seen or heard coming from White American descendants of slave owners. The County Executive apologized for the part his family from Davidsonville, MD played in owning slaves. He also committed to continue to use his power as County Executive to make sure that our county is promoting equality for all residents.

The 1,000 Men March also brought a large number of state delegates, senators, and other local politicians who stood and took a pledge to work to ensure the blueprint for the Maryland education bill that was vetoed by Governor Hogan. They all pledged to overturn the veto and make it become law. To watch the march and rally, including all of the powerful speeches, you can visit [www.1000manmarch.live](http://www.1000manmarch.live).













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