

hope + wellth

MAGAZINE

Going Back to Our Roots

Expert advice from
Dr. Katrina Overby

Finding Happiness in a Job You Hate

*Finding Light in the
Darkest Moments*

Faith Broussard Cade

*Learning to Support
Each Other*
**Navigating
Grief Together**



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EDITOR'S LETTER



Hey Friends!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Hope+Wellth, a special edition magazine dedicated to amplifying the voices and unique lived experiences of BIPOC women in wellness spaces. As we embark on this journey together, I am thrilled to share with you our theme for this issue: **Collective Resilience**.

In our increasingly disconnected society, it's easy to forget the profound impact that community care has on our mental and emotional well-being. Reflecting on my own upbringing, I am reminded of the importance of these connections. I grew up deeply rooted in the church, attending church lock-ins, Sunday school before services, and enjoying dinners after church. The time spent with church members eventually made them feel like family. These relationships provided a strong foundation of support, love and understanding and even after decades, I still talk to the church family I grew up with.

My sense of belonging extended beyond the church walls. I was raised not only by my parents but by a network of aunts, uncles and cousins. Additionally, our neighbors looked out for each other, creating a sense of security and unity. This communal upbringing played a crucial role in decreasing feelings of loneliness, anxiety and depression, while significantly enhancing my overall well-being.

Over the years, it seems we have strayed from these roots of community care. The rise of social media and digital connectivity has caused us to compare and compete, rather than collaborate with the community which often leaves us feeling more isolated than ever. However, I believe that by returning to the essence of community, we can improve our mental health and resilience.

In this issue, we explore the power of collective resilience and the idea that we are truly better, stronger, and more resilient when we operate together, especially as BIPOC women. Through shared experiences and mutual support, we can celebrate and uplift each other as we navigate the unique challenges and triumphs of our lives.

Hope+Wellth is committed to nurturing the mind, body, and soul of every woman we reach. Together, we can create safe and welcoming wellness spaces where our voices are heard, our stories are valued and our spirits are uplifted. Let us embrace the strength of our communities and walk this path of healing and growth together.

With love and resilience,

Lynnette Price

Editor-in-Chief

Hope+Wellth Magazine



hope + wellth

INSPIRING HOPE + CULTIVATING WELLNESS

PUBLISHER & FOUNDER

Renee Patterson
Lynnette Price

CREATIVE & ART DIRECTOR

Renee Patterson

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Lynnette Price

COPY EDITOR

Renee Patterson

INTERNS

De'Johné Jones
Jessica Wu

CONTRIBUTORS

Rhayna Berryhill
Erika Brooks
Tammy Davis
Sammesha Dominguez
Joy Ewing
Rae Karim
Arlinda Norris
Marcus Norris
Dr. Katrina Overby
Jemelia Shotwell

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Renee Patterson
Lynnette Price

ADVISOR

Angelia L. White - Stone

Our magazine celebrates and uplifts the voices of all BIPOC women, creating a space where diversity is not only represented but celebrated. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all BIPOC women feel seen, heard and empowered. We believe in embracing the full spectrum of identities and experiences, ensuring that our content reflects the beauty and strength of all BIPOC women, everywhere.

HOPE+WELLTH MEDIA

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Makeup Artist: Me Me Edwards, Beautifully Beat By MeMe, @beautifullybeat_bymeme

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

CONTRIBUTORS



DR. KATRINA MARIE OVERBY

Dr. Katrina Marie Overby is an Assistant Professor in the School of Communication at RIT, specializing in communication, race, gender and identity through a Black feminist perspective. Her research focuses on Black social and digital media, digital discourse about and by Black women and Black women's epistemologies. She recently founded and led the Sister Scholars Connect: Black Women Faculty Writing Retreat in upstate New York. In Spring 2024, she served as the keynote speaker for the 8th annual Gamma Iota Boule Foundation luncheon and recognition program in Rochester, New York. Finally, Dr. Overby recently published her essay *The Familiar Feels Like Family: A Black Feminists' Approach to Placemaking and Gathering for Black Women in the Academy* in Volume 1 Issue 1 of *Gatherings* journal.



ERIKA BROOKS

Erika is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor in the state of Virginia. She has a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has been fortunate enough to have used her professional skills as Crisis clinician for a local community services board, an intensive in home therapist, and an outpatient therapist. In these roles, she developed a great appreciation for all ages and clinical needs. Erika is the owner of Enlightenment Counseling Services, LLC and co-author in the book collaboration, *PEARLS: Wisdom and advice from emerging women leaders*. <https://erikabrookslpc.com/>



JOY EWING, MA, LMFT

Joy Ewing, MA, LMFT, is an experienced Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who is based in Aurora, Colorado. Joy is the founder and clinical director of Joy Life Counseling. She is renowned for being the first Black therapist in Colorado to achieve certification in Emotionally Focused Therapy. Joy employs an integrative therapeutic approach to assist clients in addressing a wide range of issues, including depression, anxiety, trauma, life transitions, marital difficulties, and family issues. Joy's educational background includes a Bachelor of Psychology with a Minor in Social Work from Prairie View A&M in Prairie View, Texas. She is dedicated to working with clients of color and individuals from various cultural backgrounds. <https://www.joylifecounseling.com/>

CONTRIBUTORS



JEMELIA SHOTWELL

Jemelia Shotwell is a Certified Life Coach, Energy Practitioner, Sound Therapist and a second year Masters student in Mental Health Counseling. Her aims and intentions are to help others heal from the past, align with the present and surface profound clarity to build an empowering future. As the founder of “The Sacred Healing Well”, the “Inner Journey Healing Retreats” and “Queen Talk With Jemelia”, she has an extensive background involving energy healing, inner activations and transformational coaching. Her personal mission is to help her clients combat their battles (both internal and external) to cultivate a life filled with balance, happiness and fulfillment.



TAMMY DAVIS

Tammy, owner and operator of Dish With Tam Events is a native of Indianapolis, IN. She is a passionate and skilled personal chef with over six years of professional experience crafting customized, healthy, and delicious meals for individuals and families. She specializes in diverse cuisines, including soul food and health conscious meals with a focus on using fresh, seasonal ingredients. Tammy is known for creating tailored meal plans that meet dietary preferences and restrictions, providing an elevated dining experience in the comfort of your home. You can reach Tammy at dish.with.tam@gmail.com.



MARCUS NORRIS

Marcus Norris is a writer from Indianapolis, Indiana. Having written about music for over six years, Marcus has been well-versed in talking about the intersection of music and mental health. His own website, musiqtherapy.wpcomstaging.com has several reviews of amazing artists, and also includes quick tips on how to improve your mental health. When he’s not writing, Marcus is usually working out, playing video games, or having fun with his Beagle, Titus!

CONTRIBUTORS

ARLINDA NORRIS



Arlinda Norris is a style advisor for MoodWellth, fashion designer, fashion blogger and a mom who uses style to express the healed version of herself. She's more confident, authentic and unapologetic, and loves helping other women reclaim their power, increase their confidence and express their own healing journeys through style. You can find her on the MoodWellth app or at www.rlynda.us.

RAE KARIM



Rae Karim is a certified grief coach and founder of Good Grief Now!™, an international, full-service grief support organization, equipping griever with tools to navigate grief in healthy, successful ways and bringing awareness to grief supporters on how to be effective and efficient in their efforts. For more information, visit www.goodgriefnow.org.

SAMMESHA DOMINGUEZ



Sammesha Dominguez is a healthcare worker in Tennessee and a full-time Health Studies student at the University of Memphis with a concentration in Health Science. In her spare time, she loves to read, spend time with her family and curate creative book content through her various social media platforms. You can find Sammesha on Instagram at [@Lit_Vibrations](https://www.instagram.com/Lit_Vibrations).

RHAYNA BERRYHILL

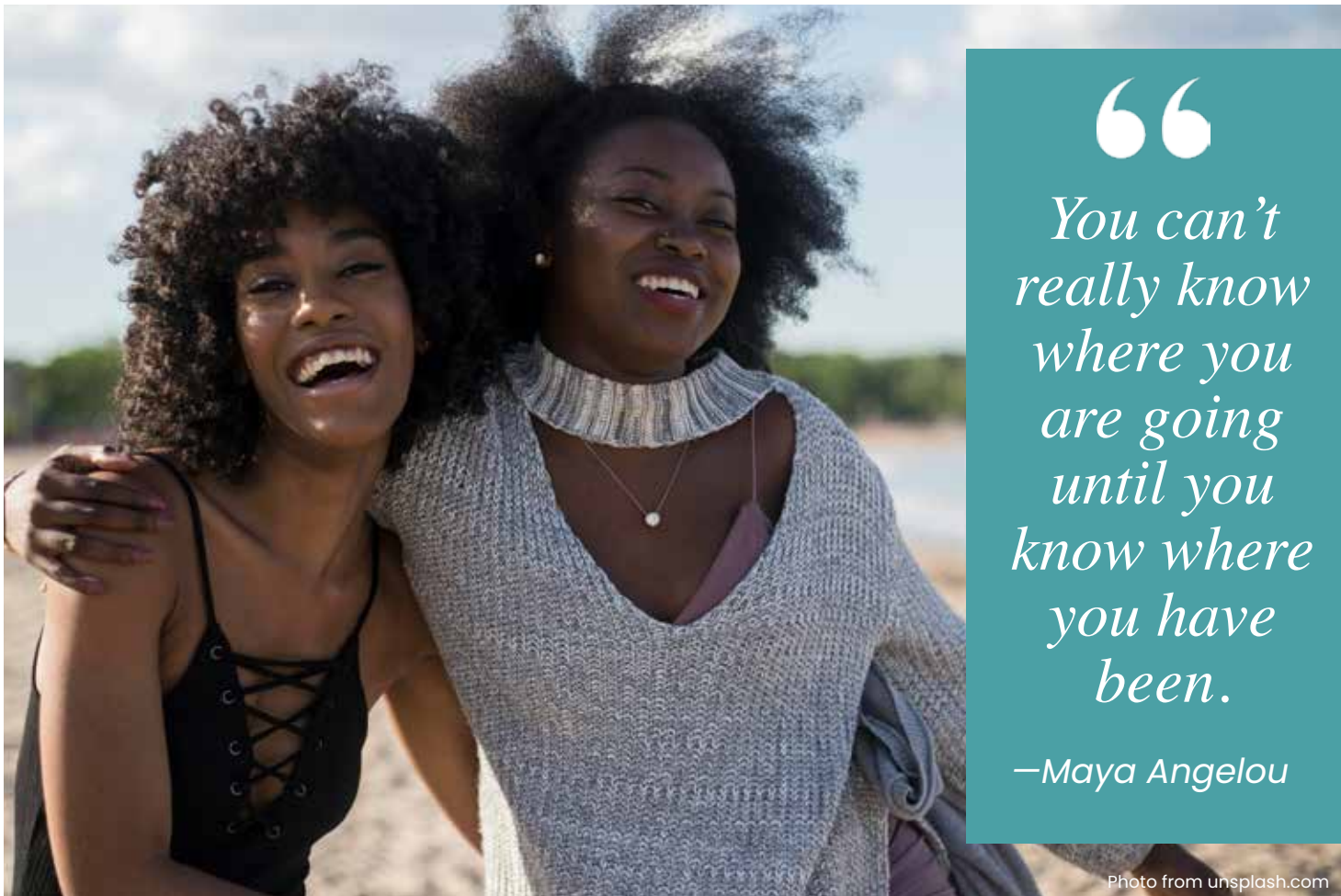


Rhayna Berryhill is a delighted recent graduate from Howard University where she received her bachelors in psychology and a minor in Spanish. Overtime, as she learned more about psychological wellness, she began to look forward to serving the world around her. Caring for herself and others by extension has been a priority in her life for years.

Back to Our Roots

Reclaiming Black Community Care in a Digital World

BY DR. KATRINA MARIE OVERBY



“

You can't really know where you are going until you know where you have been.

—Maya Angelou

Photo from unsplash.com

I have to get there!” I shouted to myself one early Saturday morning as I rushed to log into Zoom. Yes, Zoom.

I knew I'd be warmly greeted by the faces of my community. They would ask, “How are you doing?”—something I desperately needed that morning, as did many others on the call.

Easton's Nook¹, a retreat space for artists and writers, has been hosting virtual Saturday morning writing sessions since the pandemic began. Founded by two Black sisters, Jacquie and Nadine, their mission is to create space for Black writers and artists, rooted in community care and love. This is one example of how I've personally benefited from digital and virtual community care. It shows how, even in an evolving digital landscape, community care can still thrive when in-person gatherings aren't

always possible.

My scholarship primarily focuses on Black feminist place-making, Black academic sisterhoods and Black digital cultures, exploring how Black people create and sustain connection in a world that often forces disconnection. As a Black feminist scholar and activist, I see how we're reconnecting with ancestral practices of community care, and I hope we continue cultivating new pathways for connection in an often isolating and individualized social world.

Drawing from my personal experiences and research, I turn to and deeply reflect on the work of bell hooks, who wrote in *All About Love*²: “There is no better place to learn the art of loving than in community.” My belief is that love brings us to the table to commune and care for one another. Through love, community care

continues to take form—both on and offline.

Historically, Black community care has been about collective efforts to support, uplift, and nurture each other. The National Humanities Center Toolbox Library³ reminds us that “Mutual assistance and self-help have been cornerstones of African American communities for generations.” These efforts were nurtured through family systems, tribes, neighborhoods, churches and other organizations.

Mutual aid societies of freed Black people in the U.S. provided educational support, job training, youth apprenticeships, aid for widows and other social services. For instance, The Free African Society⁴, founded in 1787 by Black ministers, helped meet social and economic needs for Black people in Philadelphia by promoting literacy and religion.

Similarly, Black women educators in the segregated South, as Dr. Audrey T. McCluskey discusses in her book *A Forgotten Sisterhood*⁵, founded schools to empower Black youth in the face of discrimination and inequality.

During the Civil Rights Movement, churches and neighborhoods were essential as safe spaces for organizing social, civic and economic justice efforts. PBS's feature *The Black Church*⁶ explains how Black churches played pivotal roles in protests, combining religious and political organizing to push the community forward.

While these historical practices of mutual support have been crucial in fostering resilience, systemic oppressions—like redlining⁷ and the war on drugs⁸—have contributed to disconnection in Black families and communities. As Maya Angelou's quote suggests, returning to our roots in community care means recognizing the importance of these practices and reimagining how they can evolve in today's digitized and modern world.

Here are a few avenues that I humbly offer to foster community care, both in-person and online:

Cultivate Intergenerational Networks

Use platforms like GroupMe or networks within Black churches, families and Black Greek Letter Organizations to foster resource-sharing and discussions across generations.

Support Local Black Businesses

Invest intentionally in Black-owned businesses committed to their communities by promoting their services, purchasing products or supporting initiatives like free meals for those in need.

Crowdsource for Educators and Mentors


Organize community-driven fundraising for educators and mentors, providing tutoring or meals to underfunded students, not just during the holidays but year-round. Virtual tutoring in high-need areas like literacy and math can also be a powerful tool.

Host Virtual Cultural Conversations

Barbershops and beauty salons can organize virtual discussions, bringing in professionals from diverse sectors (doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs) to share knowledge and address community concerns.

Fund Black Digital Storytellers

Support Black digital storytellers who amplify community voices, ensuring that local issues are seen and heard, while reshaping how our stories are told.

Black community care is vital to our collective progress. With intention and love, we can honor our roots while creating new systems that sustain us for generations to come. 

¹ <https://eastonsnook.com/>

² <https://www.amazon.com/All-About-Love-New-Visions/dp/0060959479>

³ <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/community/text5/text5read.htm>

⁴ <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/free-african-society/>

⁵ <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/a-forgotten-sisterhood-audrey-thomas-mccluskey/1120085697>

⁶ <https://www.pbs.org/show/black-church/>

⁷ <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/redlining>

⁸ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/50-year-war-on-drugs-imprisoned-millions-of-black-americans>



Dr. Katrina Overby

HEALING THROUGH CONNECTION:

A Book Review of Sisterhood Heals by Dr. Joy Harden Bradford

BY SAMMESHA DOMINGUEZ

Let me introduce you to a book you'll absolutely love! The author's writing is captivating, insightful, incredibly relatable and it will stay with you long after reading. Centered around the sisterhood of Black women, *Sisterhood Heals* begins by sending a powerful message: "the gathering of Black women is sacred, it is magical, and it is healing." For many Black women, it can be challenging to form and build the type of sister-friendships we desire or seek to maintain.

Throughout the book, Dr. Bradford thoroughly explores sisterhood among Black women, including how we can save space and show up for one another, build new friendships, be supportive friends, and create long-lasting bonds. For those who aren't aware, Dr. Bradford is the creator behind the amazing podcast and Instagram page @therapyforblackgirls, where she offers great resources and advice for Black women. Her book not only empowers Black sisterhood but also helps readers understand how sacred our sister circles are to us.

You may or may not be struggling within your friend groups, but this book offers so much insight and information that will make you look at things from a different perspective. We don't always realize how much we need our friends or how much it means for us to show up for one another until the time comes when we're in need. "The best way for Black women to thrive is through our healthy relationships with other Black women." One thing that stood out in the book was how Dr. Bradford discusses the life stages our friendships go through and how to navigate them when things change. She also references the TV show *Girlfriends* as an example of the friendship circle, which may have you rewatching old episodes to understand her message. She notes that when Black women are in groups, sisters tend to fall into one of four roles: the Leader, the Wallflower, the Firecracker, and the Peacemaker.

THE LEADER

The friend who creates organization within the group. She is typically the cause of regular gatherings and most likely responsible for the emotional well-being of everyone.

THE WALLFLOWER


The sister within the group who generally sits quietly and listens to others speak, but when she does talk, her words are usually the most impactful.

THE FIRECRACKER

The friend who will say the things that need to be said, but not always in a gentle way. This friend, like the leader, tends to take up most of the space in the group.

THE PEACEMAKER

The sister who will send the "We need to talk" text message. This type of friend may have trouble setting boundaries in the group, resulting in them becoming people-pleasers.

These roles may not apply to everyone, but they were a great example from the TV show. So, no matter what your stance is when it comes to female friendships, I highly recommend this book as your starting point to better understand them. 

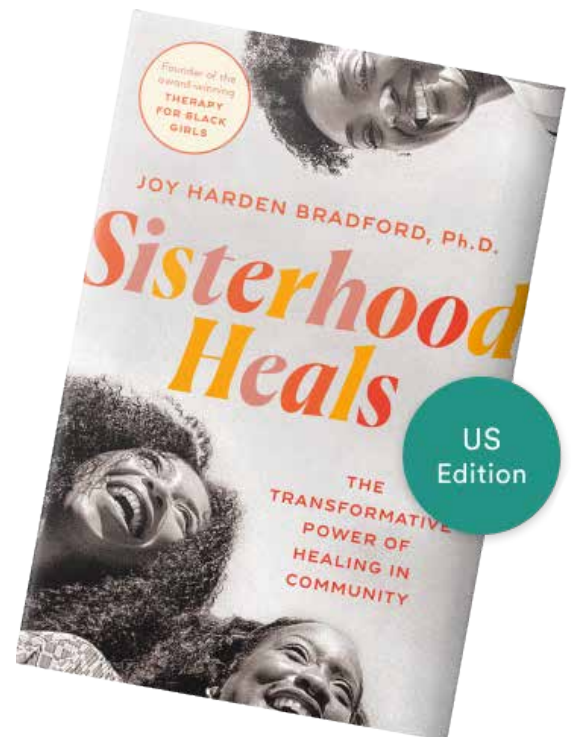
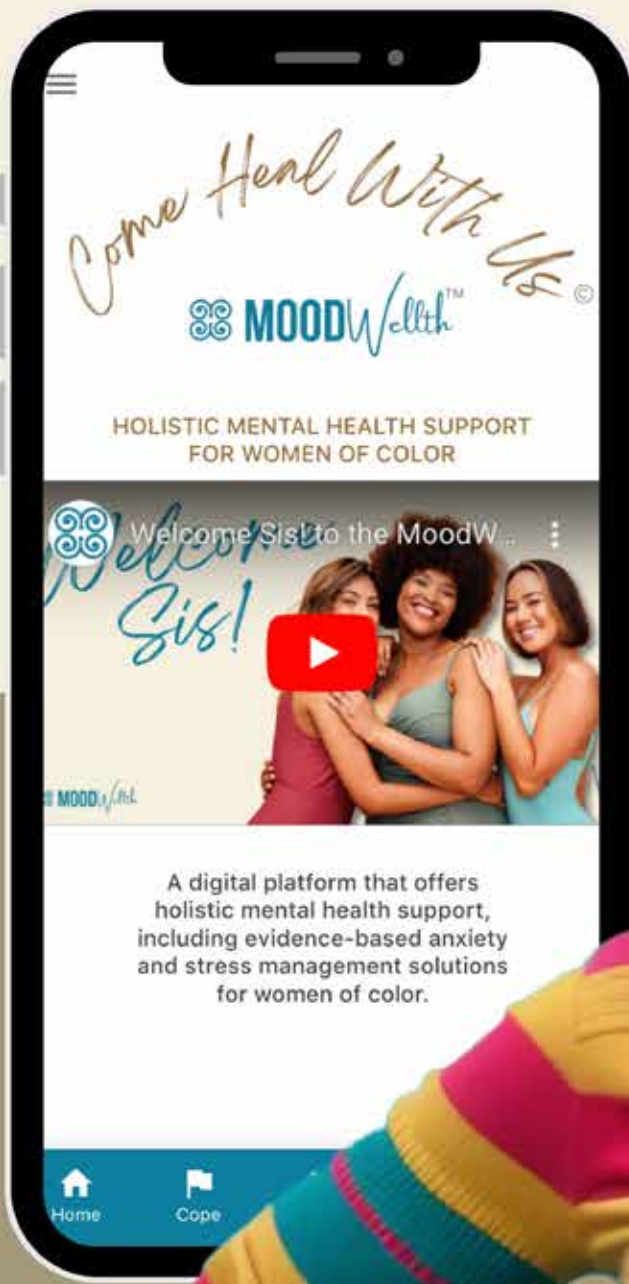


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WELLTHY WOMAN SPOTLIGHT

Courtney Besser of Intune Wellness



Meet Courtney Besser, the founder and owner of Intune Wellness, a meditation and sound healing studio in Denver, Colorado. Originally from southern Illinois, Courtney took a significant leap of faith in 2020 when she was furloughed from her long-standing role at a five-star spa where she practiced massage and esthetics. Undeterred, she embraced entrepreneurship, initially building her clientele through word of mouth and renting spaces around Denver for her one-on-one sessions and group sound baths. By 2023, the perfect studio space manifested, and Intune Wellness Studio was born.

While her journey has been filled with personal and professional growth, it has not been without challenges. Courtney's path has been shaped by faith, intuition and a passion for building a vibrant community. She describes the experience as incredibly rewarding, demonstrating the power of perseverance and self-belief.

THE IMPACT OF SOUND HEALING

Courtney passionately believes in the transformative potential of sound healing, whether through one-on-one sessions or group sound bath meditations. She often reminds clients that because our bodies are mostly made of water, sound can resonate within us on a profound level, facilitating deep healing. Her goal is for each client to remain open to their unique experience, noticing subtle shifts in perception immediately after a session and the potential for life-changing effects weeks or even months later.

She recalls a particularly memorable story of a client who attended a sound bath in April and reached out months later to share that they were still feeling the positive effects of the experience. For Courtney, these moments affirm the profound impact of her practice, from enhanced creativity and meditative states to nervous system regulation and brainwave shifts.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND PERSONAL INFLUENCE

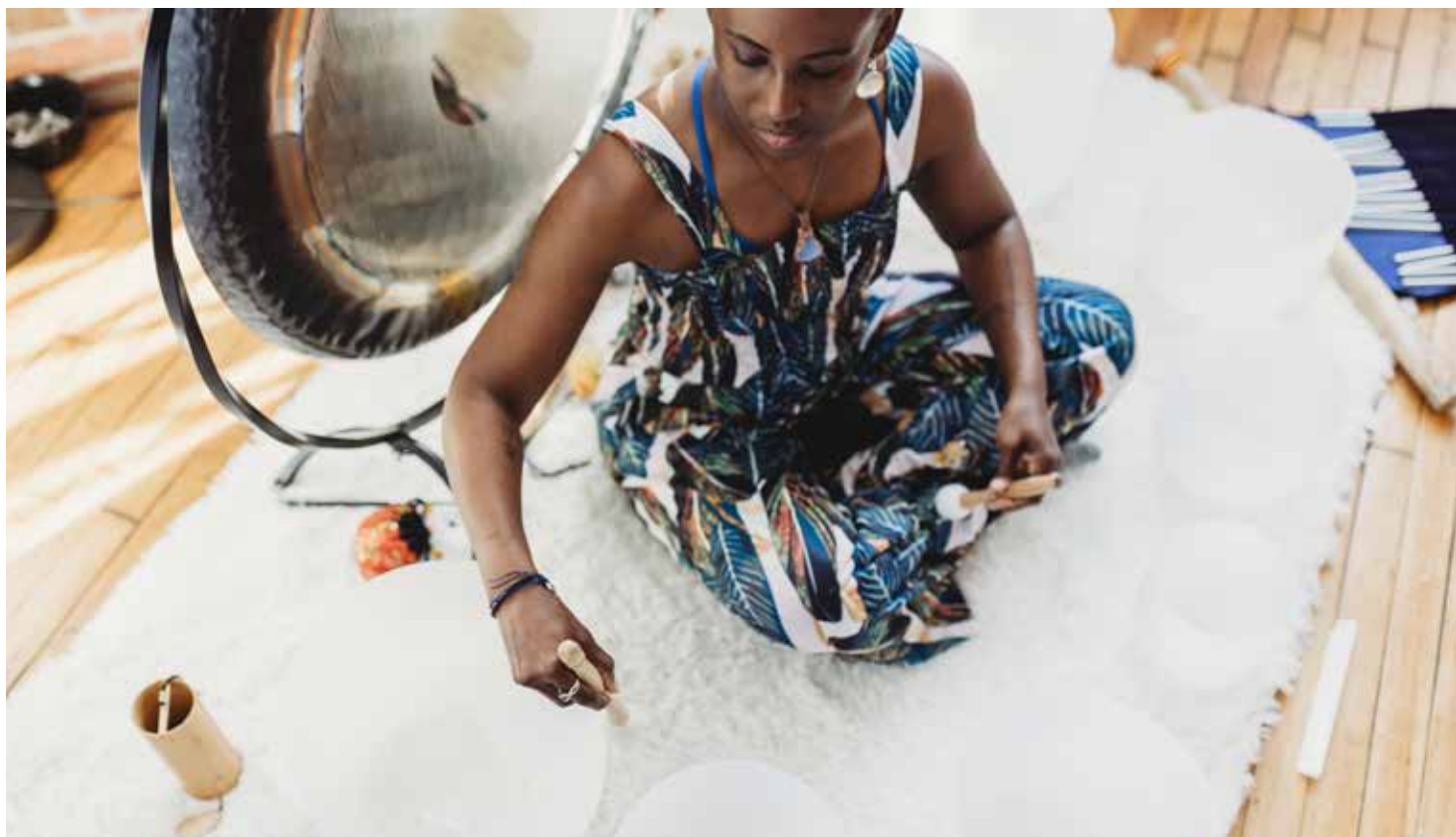
Growing up as a Black woman in a small Midwestern town, Courtney wasn't exposed to wellness practices or meditation until she took a yoga class in college over 20 years ago. At that time, there was little Black or Brown representation in wellness spaces, and the practices were far from mainstream. This experience fueled her passion for teaching and sharing wellness practices, especially with other Black and Brown individuals. For Courtney, representation matters deeply, and she is committed to creating inclusive, welcoming spaces for all.

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY

Courtney's journey in the wellness industry as a Black woman has been filled with unique challenges, from microaggressions to curious, often intrusive questions from those who find it difficult to comprehend her success. Despite these hurdles, she has remained steadfast in her mission, growing more confident in her purpose. She has learned that not everyone will understand or appreciate her work, and that's perfectly fine. For Courtney, it's about staying true to her path and purpose.

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING BIPOC WOMEN IN WELLNESS

For other BIPOC women looking to start their own wellness business, Courtney emphasizes the importance of finding aligned modalities and practitioners that make you feel seen and welcome. She believes you can't truly heal or connect if you don't feel comfortable in the spaces or with the people guiding you. Her advice: study, train, learn, find a mentor and become an expert in your area of interest. And when the time feels right, take that leap!



INCORPORATING HOLISTIC WELLNESS INTO DAILY LIFE

Courtney's mission with Intune Wellness is to guide individuals back to their intuition so they can trust themselves and achieve vitality in all aspects of their lives. She practices what she preaches by maintaining her own wellness routines. Her daily practice includes at least 10 minutes of meditation—sometimes seated, sometimes guided or accompanied by sound healing and sound baths on Spotify or YouTube. She also journals and engages in her spiritual practice. Her key tip: consistency. Even dedicating just 5 to 10 minutes daily to self-care can make a significant difference.

FUTURE GOALS FOR INTUNE WELLNESS

Looking ahead, Courtney is excited about the future growth and evolution of Intune Wellness. While she doesn't have a specific roadmap, she trusts her intuition to guide her. She dreams of expanding her reach through online offerings and classes, and she hopes to share her knowledge through mentoring and coaching. With a deep love for sound healing, she also envisions traveling more and hosting retreats.

A SIMPLE SOUND HEALING PRACTICE FOR WELLBEING

Courtney recommends a simple sound healing practice for readers to try at home: listening to frequency music (such as 888 Hz or 528 Hz) or sound meditations on platforms like YouTube or Spotify, particularly before bed. Additionally, she suggests the Box Breath meditation—a calming technique you can practice anywhere:

1. Find a quiet spot to sit.
2. Close your eyes and place your hands on your heart or rest them in your lap.
3. Inhale for 4 counts (1, 2, 3, 4).
4. Hold for 4 counts (1, 2, 3, 4).
5. Exhale for 4 counts (1, 2, 3, 4).
6. Hold for 4 counts (1, 2, 3, 4).
7. Repeat until you feel more grounded, typically for 2 to 5 minutes.


Through her journey with Intune Wellness, Courtney Besser continues to inspire others to trust their intuition, embrace healing and create spaces that truly reflect their authentic selves. 



Photo from unsplash.com

Courtney is an intuitive, a creative, a misfit and a seeker. Her business Intune Wellness in Denver offers 1:1 session of energetic balancing and attunement using Reiki, sound healing, intuitive readings and mentorship. Her mission is to empower her clients and community to connect to their own intuition through various modalities. Reawakening them to thrive, create a path to empowerment and demonstrate that vitality in their world and the collective. www.intunewellnesscb.com
Instagram: [@courtneyisintune](https://www.instagram.com/courtneyisintune) and [@intunewellnessstudio](https://www.instagram.com/intunewellnessstudio)

STRENGTH IN SOLIDARITY

Navigating Grief Together

BY RAE KARIM



Grief is an experience everyone will have at one point or another in life. There is no way around it, under it, or over it. It is happening. It has happened. It will happen.

Grief is a natural response to loss or change. While most people equate loss only with physical loss by way of death, I am convinced that worldwide events like COVID have brought awareness to the fact that the losses we grieve are not only associated with death. During those times, we experienced the loss of distance, loss of time, loss of finances, loss of joy—the list goes on.

So, how do we navigate such spaces, regardless of the reason for our grief? That's a million-dollar question, and I have a few answers that might win us a couple hundred thousand.

One thing I've learned about grief is that we don't have to journey alone. Now, I know you're probably thinking you'd rather grieve in peace, by yourself. You don't want anyone to see your vulnerability. You don't want to have to explain why you're (still) grieving. You don't want to be judged or shamed because of the way you express grief. I get it, sis, because sometimes those sniffing cries turn into pretty hefty wails... and that's okay. You may also be thinking no one will understand, and you don't want to be a burden.

Well, you're right about one thing—no one will understand. We shouldn't try to, and we definitely shouldn't tell you we do. How can we understand an experience you don't even understand?

Yet, just because we don't understand you doesn't mean we can't support you. What it does mean is you have to be willing to receive support. What it does mean is we have to be willing to offer the support you need, instead of the support we want to give. To that end, Natasha Smith, author of *Can You Just Sit With Me?: Healthy Grieving for the Losses of Life*, offers responses for those asking, "How can I help?" They are: "It helps when you [the griever fills in the blank]" and "Thank you for asking how you can help [the griever names what would be helpful]." It's really that simple, especially because asking how to help versus asking what is needed offers a much softer presence of support.

When it comes to grief support, we have to be willing to sit in moments of awkward silence and moments where grief becomes sudden laughter in the midst of tears. It means we put forth our greatest effort not to try and fix you or take away the pain, as Tim P. Van Duvendyk says in his book, *The Unwanted Gift of Grief: A Ministry Approach*.


If nothing else, it means the best way we can support you is with our presence, and that itself is enough. 

Photo from unsplash.com

FROM VULNERABILITY TO VICTORY: *The Power of Accepting Help*

BY ERIKA BROOKS

Many of you may not know this, but I am fiercely independent. One of my weaknesses has been not wanting to ask for help or appear “weak.” I have often been the person who would search the internet to fix something myself instead of calling a repair person or asking a friend for help. I would stay up late working on projects instead of assigning tasks to people who had offered to assist me. In my mind, I told myself, “I didn’t want to bother anyone,” “I could handle it,” or other phrases that sounded good at the time. Although I would get things done, I often felt frustrated, exhausted, or worn out when finished.

I did this for years, but as I began to tell clients and conference participants about the importance of accepting help, I realized I needed to practice what I was preaching. When I took my own advice, I learned that accepting help was not such a bad thing. Let’s talk about why we don’t accept help, the benefits of doing so, and how to feel good about your decision.

According to *Why You Can’t Ask For Help* (Nelson, 2022), there are several reasons people do not ask for help, including:

Fear of Being a Burden

People sometimes feel that they will inconvenience others or make them feel obligated, which may come from a fear of being rejected later.

Independence and Self-Reliance

Another reason is the fear that asking for help will diminish their ability to manage on their own. They may see it as a sign of weakness.

Social Stigma

There is a societal expectation to be self-sufficient and capable of doing it all. Our society has adopted the notion of the “Superwoman Syndrome,” leading many to believe that asking for help is a sign of failure, resulting in feelings of embarrassment or shame.

So, why should we ask for help? Here are three benefits of doing so:

Emotional and Psychological Benefits

1

Asking for help can relieve stress and anxiety because you are sharing the tasks and responsibilities. If you are working in a committee

or group, it also helps foster a sense of connection and belonging.

Improved Problem-Solving Skills and Creativity

2 Asking for help and working with others can provide fresh ideas, diverse

perspectives, and new skills. When I allowed others to help me, I discovered people around me who had skills I did not, such as using Canva. They were able to create incredible flyers that I couldn’t have made myself, saving me hours of time and frustration.

Building and Strengthening Relationships

3 By asking for help, you open yourself up to meeting new people and strengthening existing friendships and other relationships. You give people a chance to be supportive

and showcase their talents. You also give yourself the opportunity to develop a support system that may last a lifetime.

Learning to ask for help is not a sign of weakness but a demonstration of strength and self-awareness. Embracing support can alleviate stress, enhance creativity, and build deeper connections with others, ultimately enriching both our personal and professional lives. By challenging societal stigmas and overcoming fears of being a burden, we open ourselves to growth, collaboration, and meaningful relationships. Remember, accepting help is not about admitting defeat but about recognizing that we are stronger together. So, the next time you feel overwhelmed or stuck, consider reaching out—you may find that asking for help is one of the most empowering choices you can make. ☺



Photo from freepik.com

Nelson, M. (2022, June 30). *Why you can’t ask for help: Learn why you don’t reach out and ways to start.* Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/how-be-burden/202206/why-you-can-t-ask-help>



Helping the BIPOC Community Live Well Without Shame



www.bipocwellnesscollective.com



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Makeup Artist: Beautifully Beat By Meme @beautifullybeat_bymeme

Shine Bright Anyway

Finding Light in the Darkest Moments

a talk with

FAITH

BROUSSARD CADE

We had the pleasure of speaking with Faith Broussard Cade, a remarkable advocate for self-care, wellness, and personal healing. With 15 years of experience as a professional school counselor and mental health counselor, Faith's journey is as diverse as it is inspiring. She has worn many hats—including a baker and food blogger. Life circumstances, however, eventually led her to her calling in writing powerful, uplifting handwritten affirmations on paper, which she generously shares with the world. Her passion for encouraging others has blossomed into a flourishing career as an author, with two guided journals and her book, *Shine Bright Anyway: 90 Affirmations That Declare You Are Enough When the World Says You're Not*.

Through her social media presence, Faith has inspired over 300,000 people to embrace introspection, gratitude and find peace in the everyday. As a mental health counselor and coach, she helps others recognize that everything they need to create the life they desire already lies within them. With a focus on self-exploration, kindness and gratitude, Faith empowers people to step into their own power and live authentically. In this candid conversation, Faith shares her insights on the transformative power of self-care, her approach to mental wellness and how we can all find strength and solace in the most unexpected places.

Q: Can you describe how your car accident on January 9, 2018, changed your perspective on life and self-care?

A: On January 9, 2018, life came crashing into me out of nowhere and rocked me to my core. I was hit from behind in a motor vehicle accident on my way to work that morning, and I sustained a concussion, and a traumatic brain injury, conditions that continue to challenge me on a daily basis. Shortly after the accident, I began to struggle with migraines, sensitivity to light and sound, chronic physical pain, insomnia, sensory issues, and distractibility. I was unable to return to my career of school counseling that I had been in for over 10 years and was forced to resign. I felt broken and lost, confused as to how I was going to continue my career as a helper, since that was how I had always defined myself. What was I going to do without the occupation that I felt gave me purpose in life?

For years, I struggled with chronic pain and headaches, memory loss, difficulty concentrating, 4-5 day stretches of chronic insomnia, and unshakeable anxiety. In the midst of all of the physical, mental, and emotional challenges I faced on a daily basis, I lost my job as a school counselor which caused an unimaginable financial strain on our little family. We were trying desperately to make ends meet from week to week, and we almost lost our home. The amount of stress we were under felt unfair and oftentimes, unbearable. I struggled to maintain a sense of normalcy for my family: to be the wife and mother I'd always been while also prioritizing my own recovery. My entire world had shifted in a split second and I felt like I couldn't regain a sense of control, no matter how hard I tried.

Q: How did writing daily self-care notes on Instagram contribute to your healing process?

A: I knew I had to find a way to prioritize my mental health in the midst of tragedy. I had to figure something out. FAST. My life was falling apart at warp speed and I had no clue how to even begin to pull myself back together. And without realizing that I'd be learning a lesson about anything, I set out to adjust just a little: how I saw myself, how I loved myself, and how I took care of myself. So I set out to do one thing for myself every day: to honor and nourish myself by writing a self-care note. A positive affirmation. A note of care to encourage myself no matter what that day would bring. It would only take 5 minutes tops. Just one little note - and I'd post it on Instagram for accountability. My intention was to write them for 15 days, and here I am, almost 7 years later, still writing those notes, not just for me, but for hundreds of thousands of others around the world.





Photographer: Rhayna C. Photography @rhaynacphotography
Makeup Artist: Beautifully Beat By Meme @beautifullybeat_bymeme

Because the more notes I shared, the more comments, DMs, and emails I received from people I'd never met. Sharing their whole life stories, their hurts, their struggles with mental health, their personal traumas, and the paralyzing guilt that came with attempting to prioritize themselves and practicing self-care. There was a common thread woven throughout each story: we are all human, we all struggle, and we could all use a little bit of help and genuine compassion. We all want to know that someone cares. And that is how Fleur de Lis Speaks was born.

In telling my story, in sharing transparently with the world, I've discovered that my personal healing has led to the collective healing of so many. I turned my pain into purpose and I wanted more than anything to help others see that they have everything they need inside of them to do the same. I wanted to reach as many people as possible with the idea that caring and compassion can help bring light to even the darkest spaces and seasons of our lives. Having the courage to pursue my personal healing created a platform for mental health and wellness that I never dreamed possible.

Q: Tell our readers more about your new book, *Shine Bright Anyway*.

A: *Shine Bright Anyway* is a true work of my heart. I poured my everything into that book. I wrote it with the intention of letting my readers know, "You are enough!" It's a beautiful daily reader meant to help you acknowledge your wounds, embrace healing, and shine bright again with 90 insightful and uplifting messages and affirmations. The expectations we feel from others on a daily basis can make us feel that we are not enough. That we should want more, do more, and be more. And from personal experience while recovering from a concussion and a traumatic brain injury, I know what it feels like to be in a place of heartache, pain, and debilitating self-doubt. To this day, those feelings still come up for me, they slow me down, and some days they leave me feeling emotionally vulnerable and overwhelmed.

But despite the challenges I face, everyday I choose gratitude, love, and perseverance. And that's what Shine Bright Anyway is all about. Empowering others to do the same. In my gorgeous, full-color book, each handwritten note is paired with a longer message of encouragement to help my readers:

- Overcome the wounds of the past through honesty and humbleness
- Replace feelings of inadequacy with the truth of your worthiness
- Prioritize self-care even when life is demanding
- Celebrate each day with gratitude and appreciation
- Believe in yourself when others say you can't or that you don't matter

If life has left you feeling you are not enough or you are haunted by past choices, circumstances, or labels, Shine Bright Anyway will give you the encouragement to change your narrative. The expectations you live with today do not have to define you. You are enough!

Q: What advice would you give to women struggling to prioritize their peace, boundaries, and emotional well-being in today's hustle culture world?

A: You're not alone, We're all struggling with something, Everyone else doesn't have it all together either, It's okay to feel like you're not okay sometimes, Be intentional about finding bits of joy where you can in your daily life.

Let's start with admitting. Admitting that the jig is up. That we're overworked, overwhelmed, and over-committed. That we use our productivity as a measure of our overall worth. That we're addicted to performing, not only for others, but also for ourselves. That taking a step back and slowing down feels scary to us because it means we have to spend time with the messy parts of ourselves.

And then maybe we can move on to GRACE. Extending grace to ourselves and others. Allowing ourselves to be less than perfect. Less than "on point" all the time. Acknowledging that no amount of pressure we place on ourselves can make us superhuman or extend our capacity to produce when our minds, bodies, and souls are empty. Allowing ourselves to rest in the truth that we do not have to run ourselves into the ground to prove that we are committed to our families, our jobs, or the larger world around us. That our "best" is not what we've given once we find ourselves depleted and burnt out. But our best is what we're able to give and still maintain an acceptable standard of care and concern for ourselves.

Then and only then are we able to give from our overflow, rather than our deficit. Then and only then, are we able to show up in the world as our truest, most authentic selves.

Q: How has your personal journey influenced your professional approach to counseling?

A: In telling my story, in sharing transparently with the world, I've discovered that my personal healing has led to the collective healing of so many. I turned my pain into purpose and I wanted more than anything to help others see that they have everything they need inside of them to do the same. I wanted to reach as

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many people as possible with the idea that caring and compassion can help bring light to even the darkest spaces and seasons of our lives. Having the courage to pursue my personal healing created a platform for mental health and wellness that I never dreamed possible.

I've always been the "helper" friend. The one people

can count on to hold space for them and their deepest, darkest secrets, feelings, and thoughts. I realized during undergrad that this was my gift and my purpose in life: to show up for others and walk beside them during their journey toward wholeness and healing. My goal is to challenge the toxic "hustle mindset" and culture of lack-of-boundaries for the modern woman so that they can live peaceful lives. To offer advice, support, compassion, and empathy within my content so they can feel capable of advocating for themselves, their truths, and what they need.

I've learned throughout my personal journey that authenticity and transparency are non-negotiables. When you are open and honest with people, they feel they can trust you. As a mental health professional, that is at the forefront of what I do. I'm building rapport with my clients. It takes courage and resilience to share your personal life with a complete stranger. It's my job to make them feel as comfortable as possible. To let them know that who they are is okay and more than enough.

Q: What role do you believe community plays in challenging and changing the toxic 'hustle mindset' and promoting a culture of well-being?

A: The community has to rally against the pervasive "hustle culture." As a whole, we have to work diligently to change that narrative. The one that tells us that rest is laziness and we can rest when we die. That's silly. Stress and lack of rest is killing us at an alarming rate. As a community, we must stand together and support one another in doing what is best for each of us.

We must allow ourselves to feel and acknowledge when we're getting close to our limit. To stop silencing the inner voice that tells us not to add that extra appointment to our calendar. Don't send that additional email. You don't really need to make that phone call today. Or attend that social event this weekend. The key to fighting burnout, dear friends, is LESS.

Q: What role, if any, does community play in your own healing journey?

A: My healing journey required that I become relentlessly intentional about what my community looks like. I had to reevaluate a lot of my relationships and determine whether I could continue allowing them to take up space in my life. I accepted that my bandwidth and energy was limited; I'm not the same person I was before the accident. My new normal is full of daily challenges and personal adjustments. That's my unfiltered truth and I must honor it. So the people I surround myself with, my "community," has to be made up of people who understand and respect that. People who know I won't be able to make it to every event or attend every party or answer every phone call or text the same day, no matter how much I may want to. My people are willing to extend the same grace and empathy to me that I offer to them, without judgment.

Q: Now for a fun question. What song(s) inspired you during your recovery or whenever you're feeling down?

A: "Necessary" - Fantasia Barrino
"Just For Me" - Kirk Franklin
"That's When You Bless Me" - L.A. Mass Choir
"God Provides" - Tamela Mann
"God Is" - James Cleveland



<https://www.fleurdelisspeaks.com/>
<https://www.instagram.com/fleurdelisspeaks/>

Photographer: Rhayna C. Photography @rhaynacphotography
Makeup Artist: Beautifully Beat By Meme @beautifullybeat_bymeme

My Mother Did Her Best – But it Still Hurt Me

BY ANONYMOUS

For most of my life, my relationship with my mother was defined by an unspoken set of rules and expectations that felt like an emotional minefield. The constant comparisons between me and my siblings, the silent treatment whenever I dared to deviate from her way and the unrelenting criticism were part of my daily reality. It was a relationship where peace existed only as long as I was agreeable and compliant. But the moment I started seeking therapy and found my voice, everything changed—for her, not for the better.

As a grown woman with a husband and children, you might think I would be free to live my life on my own terms. But my mother has always had very specific yet unspoken rules. I must call her every day, no matter what. I am expected to answer her calls on the first ring. I should always do what she would do, even if I fundamentally disagree. Disagreement is labeled as disrespect, and expressing hurt means I hate her. If I agree with anyone who disagrees with her, I'm disloyal. And above all, I must never tell her she is wrong—I should always affirm how wonderful she is.

These rules created a sea of self-doubt, confusion and people-pleasing behavior that took a decade of therapy to begin to untangle. Even now, I sometimes feel her grip tightening, and I find myself wondering if I'm "in trouble" for breaking one of her irrational rules. At other times, I feel a pang of compassion or even pity for her. She often reminds me that she's "doing the best she can" and that she's just trying to help. A smaller part of me believes she genuinely doesn't know any better, shaped as she was by a mother who was void of emotion and a family



Photo from unsplash.com

that only praised her for achievement and problem-solving. This undoubtedly shaped her perception of herself and her worth—and how she projected those beliefs onto me. She taught me that my value was conditional, tied to how well I could fulfill her expectations or mirror her desires. It's a painful realization, one that took years to confront. But now, standing on the other side of years of therapy and self-discovery, I understand something vital: it's not my responsibility to heal her or to compromise my mental well-being to protect her feelings.

Growing up in a BIPOC family, I've come to understand that some of the unhealthy dynamics I faced with my mother were shaped by cultural beliefs that have deep roots. In

**“My mother’s trauma
and her resulting
behavior are not mine
to carry.”**


many BIPOC families, women are taught to be the pillar of strength for everyone around them, to prove their worth through endless performative efforts and to suppress their true emotions under the guise of strength. This idea of strength, where sacrificing your needs and emotions is glorified, contributes to unhealthy parenting and generational trauma.

It's a cycle where emotional needs are often ignored or invalidated, passed down like heirlooms from one generation to the next.

Reflecting on this, I can only imagine the resentment my mother must have felt growing up under such immense pressure, with little emotional support or understanding. Her worth, too, was measured by what she could do, what she could achieve or how well she could suppress

her own pain. She learned to be “strong” in a way that left little room for vulnerability or genuine connection. I see now how these cultural expectations played a role in shaping her into the mother she became—trying to mold me into the same image, using control and criticism as tools of survival. I believe she truly is doing the best she can, but the best she can still hurts me. Both can be true.

I realize that while I can empathize with how my mother came to be the person she is, I also have the right to draw boundaries. I have the right to say no, to disagree and to stand up for myself, even when it means upsetting her. It’s a delicate balance—between understanding and self-preservation—but it’s one I’m finally willing to navigate on my terms.

As I continue this journey, I remind myself that my mother’s trauma and her resulting behavior are not mine to carry. My healing is my responsibility, just as hers is hers. And while I will always wish for a healthier, more authentic connection with her, I no longer feel obligated to sacrifice myself at the altar of her expectations. I choose, instead, to honor my own voice, my own needs and my own well-being. For me, that is the true meaning of freedom. 

STORIES THAT HEAL

At Hope+Wellth, we believe in the transformative power of storytelling. Stories allow us to learn, grow, and heal by sharing our experiences with others. Whether you’re sharing a real-life experience, a fictional tale with a message rooted in truth or an anonymous account of a personal journey, your story has the potential to inspire, comfort and empower others.

We invite you to submit your personal stories to be featured in our magazine. Your story can be submitted anonymously or you can choose to share your name—whatever feels most comfortable for you. Our hope is to create a safe space where voices are heard, hearts are touched and healing begins.

To submit your story, email us at stories@hopeandwellth.com. We look forward to reading your unique experiences and celebrating the power of storytelling together.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY SELF-CARE IDEAS for women of color

Prioritizing self-care in your daily life is essential, especially as a woman of color, because of the unique challenges and pressures faced in today’s world. From dealing with societal and family expectations to managing the effects of microaggressions and systemic barriers, it’s easy to become overwhelmed and neglect personal well-being.

Self-care doesn’t have to involve grand, elaborate gestures like expensive spa days or vacations; instead, it’s about incorporating small, intentional acts that nourish your mind, body and soul. Whether it’s taking five minutes to meditate, enjoying a quiet cup of tea or spending time with a friend who truly understands you, these simple practices can have a profound impact on your mental and emotional health.

Regular self-care helps combat burnout, builds resilience, and creates a deeper sense of self-worth, reminding you that your well-being matters just as much as any external responsibility.

By consistently nurturing yourself, you create the strength and balance needed to face daily challenges, all while affirming that your peace is a priority.

Here’s a list of simple, budget-friendly self-care ideas for women of color. These small acts of care can make a big difference in daily well-being!

Take a nature walk – Get fresh air and reconnect with nature.

Morning meditation – Spend 3-5 minutes focusing on breathing.

Journal your thoughts – Reflect on the day or set intentions.

Listen to a podcast – Find one that empowers or relaxes you.

Have a tea or coffee ritual – Savor your favorite drink in your quiet space.

Read a book by a woman of color – Connect with inspiring voices.

Practice affirmations – Say positive, empowering statements out loud.

Stretch or do light yoga – Release tension and stress.

Take a social media break – Unplug for a mental refresh.

Do a creative hobby – Paint, crochet, color or sketch for 15 minutes.

Take a bath with Epsom salts – Relax and soothe muscles.

Dance to your favorite music – Move freely and feel joyful.

Chat with a friend or loved one – Have a heart-to-heart with someone who uplifts you.

Book a wellness coaching session with

MoodWellth.com – Gain clarity and guidance on personal goals.

Watch a feel-good movie or series – Pick something light-hearted that makes you smile.

Set a boundary – Say “no” when needed and protect your energy.

Engage in a mental health check-in – Reflect on your feelings and mood regularly.



Available at [MoodWellth.com](https://moodwellth.com)

These ideas encourage both connection and reflection, essential for self-care!

Gather and Savor: How Food Brings Us Together

BY TAMMY DAVIS

“Who made the potato salad?” It’s a common question at family gatherings or dinner parties. If you’re a first-timer attempting this “delicacy,” all eyes might turn your way, wondering if your dish will make or break the meal. But if you’re already crowned the heavyweight champion of the family’s best potato salad, a collective sigh of relief, laughter, and perhaps a happy dance usually follows. Whether it’s potato salad, Aunt Mary’s shepherd’s pie, or Uncle Joe’s famous beef ribs, food has a special way of bringing people together.

From holidays and weddings to funerals, dates, and casual cookouts, food often serves as the nucleus of these social events. It’s how we celebrate, mourn, share, exchange, and learn. No matter who you are or where you’re from, food is a universal language.

I first fell in love with food while cooking with my grandmother who lived with us for a time during my childhood. She would let me add seasonings to a pot of her infamous mixed greens or carefully knead what would become the best Parker House rolls you could ever imagine. That sweet aroma of fresh baked bread would permeate throughout the house. By sharing her love and God-given gift with me, she passed down a passion that I now share with others.

Food has the power to evoke a myriad of emotions. Whether it’s a recipe handed down through generations or the first bite of a warm slice of sweet potato pie, food can transport you to a place of simplicity, happiness, cherished memories, and most of all, community.

In these uncertain times, it’s important to be intentional about connection. What better way to do that than to gather a few of your favorite people and enjoy an amazing meal? Check out these two simple recipes to get you started.



BBQ Pulled Jackfruit Sliders with Creamy Coleslaw

Yields 10-12 sliders

Slider Filling

- 12 pack Hawaiian Slider Rolls
- 2 3 ounce cans jackfruit, drained and chopped
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon Complete seasoning
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 12 ounces honey barbeque sauce
- 2 tablespoons liquid smoke
- 1 teaspoon yellow mustard
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar

Coleslaw

- 14 ounces coleslaw mix
- 2 tablespoons Miracle Whip
- 1/2 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder. Coleslaw Mix
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

1. In a medium bowl combine all coleslaw ingredients and mix well. Refrigerate until it’s time to assemble sliders.
2. In a medium saucepan on medium heat, add drained and chopped jackfruit and diced onions, all seasonings and 1 teaspoon of liquid smoke. Mix until jackfruit and onions are translucent.
3. Add all remaining ingredients to the pan and mix well, lower heat and cook until sauce thickens.
4. Assemble sliders by adding jackfruit mixture to the bottom bun, top with coleslaw (optional) and top bun.



Ground Turkey Stuffed Cabbage Rolls

Yields: 4-6 Rolls

- 1 cabbage, leaves
- 1 smoked turkey leg
- 20 ounces 85% lean ground turkey
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 1/2 yellow pepper, diced
- 1/2 orange pepper, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 handful fresh mushrooms, diced
- 1 15 ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 15 ounce can petite diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons granulated chicken bouillon
- 1 teaspoon Complete seasoning
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground sage
- Italian seasoning, to taste
- granulated sugar, pinch
- fresh Italian parsley, chopped, for garnish

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Fill stock pot halfway with water. Add granulated chicken bouillon and smoked turkey leg to the pot. Boil on medium-high heat for 15 minutes.
3. Carefully peel off cabbage leaves one at a time. Add cabbage leaves to the boiling pot. Boil for 25 minutes or until tender on medium-high heat. Set aside and allow to cool.
4. In a medium frying pan add ground turkey, diced vegetables and 1 teaspoon of each seasoning. Fry until browned and vegetables are translucent. Set aside.
5. In a small saucepan add tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, Italian seasoning, 1 teaspoon of onion powder, 1 teaspoon of garlic powder and a pinch of sugar. Mix well and simmer for 7 minutes. Add 1/2 cup of tomato sauce to ground turkey and mix well.
6. In a medium, shallow pan add remaining tomato sauce, reserve 1/3 cup for garnish.
7. Take one cabbage leaf, fill with ground turkey mixture, fold short ends towards the middle of mixture, then fold over the long ends. If cabbage leaf is too thin or translucent wrap with another leaf. Place cabbage roll, folded side down into the medium, shallow pan on top of tomato sauce.
8. Continue this method until all of the cabbage leaves or ground turkey mixture is gone. Top cabbage rolls with reserved tomato sauce and Italian parsley and place in the oven for 15-20 minutes.

Serve immediately

4 Ways You Can Create Happiness at a Job You Don't Like

BY RHAYNA BERRYHILL

No one wants to clock in to work just to clock out of reality. Here is how you can stay present at work and make it a more favorable experience.

So, you've found yourself dreading the thought of Monday mornings. The idea of commuting or logging into work virtually is not nearly as fulfilling as you'd like it to be. Not to mention, it doesn't help that you are entering a space where, at times, you are viewed as unprofessional or inferior because of the color of your skin. It stands to reason that most people would love to have a passion-driven, forever inspiring, equitable, high-earning job. Although obtaining your "dream job" would make life seem a lot easier, in reality, earning a living can be an uncomfortable and despairing human experience. As a woman of color, this discomfort can come with its own set of unique issues and nuances. You might not be the only woman at work, but maybe you're one of the only Brown or Black women in your office. In this case, when you experience people micromanaging you because you are viewed as incompetent, someone talking over you, or receiving microaggressions about your hair, tone, clothes, etc., just know that these challenges are valid. Here are a few ways you can bring some life into your place of work.

First things first, you are not alone in your plight. In fact, you are in the overwhelming majority if you feel as though your job simply does not make you happy. Recent studies have shown that overall employee wellness has declined, and the majority of the world's employees continue to struggle at work and in life, which can directly impact workforce productivity (Gallup, 2024). Clearly, this lack of contentment in the workplace is not beneficial to businesses or their workforce. It is unfortunate that some employers lack empathy regarding the differences in cultural experiences, but being underrepresented does not have to mean being unqualified in the grand scheme of things.

HAVING AN EXCITING CAREER IS THE DREAM, BUT IN REALITY, EARNING A LIVING CAN BE AN UNCOMFORTABLE AND EXHAUSTING HUMAN EXPERIENCE.



Photo from freepik.com



IDENTIFY A MOTIVATOR

One way to create happiness in a work environment is by identifying a motivator. Perhaps this job is a stepping stone to a higher position you have aspired to for years, or you find yourself working under the tutelage of someone who is doing what you have dreamed of since childhood. Either way, if you find the smallest reason to propel yourself, it can make your days a bit more bearable. Think about the money accumulating in your bank account. Consider the work ethic you are building that will bulk up your résumé or the mouths you are responsible for feeding. Whatever matters most to you, try filling in the gaps at work by applying a motivation to this current season of your life.



AVOID SKIPPING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE

Another way to create a happier environment is to avoid skipping ahead to the future. In your mind, you may already be retired on a yacht in the Caribbean. Before you jump to the end of the race, take a second to enjoy the journey. It may sound cliché, but take it one day at a time. It is helpful to only focus on what you can control and confidently achieve in the present. Ian Daley, writer and co-founder of Daley & Co. Leadership Inc., says that it's important to look just at the goals you need to accomplish over the next year [or day] (Daley, 2023). Essentially, perspective and time management are everything. Prioritizing what is most important will help you not feel so overwhelmed and can lead to a less stressful experience.



BE YOUR OWN CHEERLEADER


In the same vein, you can create more ease for yourself at work by being your own cheerleader. If discouragement is one of the reasons you are unhappy at your job, perhaps looking within yourself can be a solution. Try to focus on what tasks or goals you have done really well. Remember these moments when your confidence gets low and you can't find the inspiration to complete new assignments. Witnessing your white counterparts receive praise can be difficult and frustrating. Sometimes being one of the only women of color in a space can feel isolating and leave us feeling unseen. Though challenging, be okay with letting go of the unfair standards and pressures of white supremacy and the free market. They will continue to disturb your peace, but all you can do is find ways to reclaim and live in joy. If you do not hear affirmations often, you can quickly start to believe you are performing poorly or that no one values your presence at work. While

validation is generally desired to incentivize employees, be self-assured and feel good knowing you are doing your best no matter what an employer does. Truly believing in yourself is a “not so easy” practice you should install in every aspect of your life. If this moment in your career doesn't feel particularly rewarding, think about the muscle you're building by working through discomfort.



FIND A PLEASANT RESEMBLANCE

Finally, find people or moments at your workplace that resemble something pleasant in your personal life. Showing your personality at work can seem risky at times, but it may be just the thing that could humanize the experience. Do not feel like you have to talk to the only other Brown woman in your office just because of race or background. Make the connection more personal to spice up the conversation. There may be a coworker who has the same taste in music that you do. There may be someone else who has similar fitness goals or goes to the same gym as you. These small connections can make all the difference in saying goodbye to agonizing pleasantries and opening the door to feeling seen in an environment that may feel forced. Breaking through the formal obligation of a work setting and talking about a new album or making plans to go to a pilates class after work can help shift your perspective. It can help open your eyes to how a job may not only be a means to an end but a way to bridge gaps and expand your network in unlikely places.

Making a living doesn't always have to be miserable. Remember to rest and take time to reset. Working to maintain a level of contentment at work is tiring for BIWOC, so renewal is key. Also, take pride in the truth that you have secured a way to make a living. Be grateful that you have an opportunity to support yourself or maybe others. If you want to start experiencing more happiness at work, find motivators, put your best foot forward every day, learn how to be your own support system, and personalize your experience so you don't feel like a number. None of the above may come naturally to you, but these practices may help you break free from monotony. It's got to be worth a shot, right? 

Dear Hope+Wellth

Welcome to the “Dear Hope+Wellth” section of Hope+Wellth Magazine, where our experts are here to answer all your burning questions on topics that matter most to you! Whether you’re curious about navigating mental health challenges, building healthier relationships, boosting your nutrition, enhancing your style and confidence, managing grief, cultivating wellness in the workplace or staying fit, we’ve got you covered. Our goal is to provide practical, compassionate advice to help you live your best, most balanced life.

We invite you to share your questions with us at dearhope@hopeandwellth.com. No topic is too big or too small — we’re here to listen and offer guidance tailored to your unique needs. Your question could be featured in an upcoming issue, helping not only you but also others who may be facing similar challenges. So go ahead, ask away! We’re excited to hear from you and support you on your journey to hope and well-being.



Style Therapy with Arlinda

Question

I'm losing my confidence and I think it correlates to my style or lack thereof. I'm a 40 something single mom with work and kids, so it's just not something I think about very often anymore. I want to get back to that. How do I find what my personal style is now?

Answer

Hi, I'm Arlinda, a style advisor for MoodWellth and I love questions like these. Let me start by saying that I am also a 40 something (48 to be exact) mom. I work, have a family and have all of these other hats that I wear that many of us moms always have.

Sometimes it's a lot more than we ask for, right, but we do find the strength, the courage, the time and the dedication to get things done... just like style. If you want to feel better about your outside appearance, you have to put a little love into it. Sometimes, we feel really good on the inside, but it's not translating on the outside and that's where style becomes more than just clothes—it becomes a form of self-expression and self-care.

What we choose to wear can significantly impact how we feel about ourselves, lifting our spirits or making us feel more confident when we need it most. As we age in a society that often overlooks or undervalues the beauty of growing older, it can feel like a constant battle to maintain self-worth and positivity. Embracing our personal style, no matter our age, becomes a powerful way to reclaim our narrative, resist societal pressures, and protect our mental health. Feeling good on the outside isn't about conforming to trends; it's about celebrating who we are, where we've been, and where we're going.



So, to answer your question, “how do I find out what my personal style is now?” Intention. You had style before, but maybe it looked different, or maybe it was shaped by different circumstances. Now, it's about being intentional in how you choose to present yourself to the world. It's about taking stock of where you are in life, acknowledging how your tastes or needs might have evolved, and understanding that style isn't static. Just like you, it grows, changes and adapts with each season of life. The goal is to align your outer appearance with your inner essence, allowing both to shine through in harmony.

Finding your personal style as you age isn't about trying to keep up with what's new or what others think you should wear. It's about reflecting on what makes you feel most like yourself—confident, comfortable and authentic. Think about the pieces in your wardrobe that bring you joy and consider why they do. Is it the way they fit, the color, the texture or how they make you feel powerful or serene? Start there and let that guide you in creating a wardrobe that celebrates your unique journey.

Here are a few tips to help you rediscover and refine your personal style:

REFLECT ON YOUR LIFESTYLE

Consider how your daily life looks now versus in the past. Your wardrobe should be a reflection of your current routines, activities, and aspirations, not just what's been hanging in your closet for years.

EXPERIMENT AND EVOLVE

Don't be afraid to try new things, even if they seem outside your comfort zone. Your style should evolve as you do. Experiment with colors, textures and silhouettes that feel fresh and exciting to you.

FOCUS ON FIT AND COMFORT


Your body may have changed, and that's okay. Find clothes that make you feel good in your skin, not just trendy pieces that don't serve you. Prioritize quality over quantity and choose items that enhance your natural shape and make you feel at ease.



EMBRACE TIMELESS PIECES

Invest in a few key pieces that are classic and versatile. These become the foundation of your wardrobe, making it easy to mix and match with newer, trendier items that still resonate with your evolving style.

STAY TRUE TO YOURSELF

Style is deeply personal. Don't feel pressured to dress a certain way because of societal expectations or age norms. Be bold in expressing who you are today, and let your style tell your unique story. 

Grieving Living Losses

with Rae Karim



Photo from unsplash.com

Question

How do we prepare ourselves for the end of a relationship? What do we do when we know it has to end but we procrastinate because we know once it ends, it's going to hurt?

Answer


This is a great question and one that isn't talked about very often. When we think of grief, we often think of grieving someone who has passed away, not someone who is alive and kicking, right? However, I often explain that people grieve many things other than death. We grieve the loss of jobs. During the pandemic, many grieved the loss of certainty and the predictability we had before the pandemic, and we grieve the loss of relationships that we know must end to protect our wellbeing. So, the question is how does one prepare for the grief that comes with ending a relationship and the answer is simple though it isn't easy - rip the bandaid off.

Sometimes the healing can temporarily hurt more than the actual cause of the pain. We have to remind ourselves that some relationships are for a reason, a season or a lifetime. So, when you find yourself in a reason or seasonal relationship, you have to allow yourself to accept and be grateful for the good and positive things that happened and acknowledge that it's time for the relationship to end.

Ending the relationship doesn't always have to be direct, meaning you don't have to call that person and say "we aren't friends anymore." However, you can initiate the ending by unfollowing on social media, deleting text messages and pictures, getting rid of items that remind you of that person, and avoid going to the same places or events you know that person frequents for a while. That said, there are times when a more direct approach is necessary, especially if the relationship has become toxic or harmful to your well-being. For example, if you are in a relationship (romantic or friendship) with someone who consistently disrespects your boundaries, belittles you or engages in behavior that causes you emotional distress, it may be crucial to communicate your decision openly.

In these situations, having a conversation where you express your feelings honestly and explain why you need to step away can help provide clarity and closure for both parties. It may be uncomfortable, but being direct can sometimes be the most compassionate choice for your mental health and personal growth, ensuring that there is no ambiguity about the end of the relationship.

Ultimately, preparing yourself for the end of a relationship is about honoring your emotions and recognizing that it's okay to feel a range of feelings, from sadness to relief. Acknowledging that the end of a relationship can hurt, even when you know it's the best decision, is an important step in your healing journey. Remember, it's not just the end that matters but also the process of healing, which can bring new growth and understanding about yourself.

By allowing yourself to grieve, creating a strong support network and practicing self-care, you can navigate the end of a relationship with compassion and clarity. The pain will eventually subside, and in its place, you will find new strength, self-awareness and the possibility of more fulfilling connections in the future. 

VOICES OF CHANGE

Advocacy and Activism in Mental Health

BY JEMELIA SHOTWELL

“I am because we are. Our collective health and wellness depend on how we show up for each other.”

— **Bebe Moore Campbell**

Let’s start this article with a moment of inner reflection. If possible, sit comfortably, close your eyes, rest your hands in your lap and take three deep breaths in and out through your nose. Now bring to your mind a memory of when you have experienced a challenging moment, whether mentally or emotionally, a moment when you did not feel the most supported. It wasn’t a comforting experience, was it?

Now, connect back to that moment once again, but this time imagine having close family, friends and community standing behind you, offering support, encouragement, love and understanding. How does that feel? Perhaps it feels inspiring, hopeful or supportive?

That sense of support and love that you just experienced is something everyone deserves, without stigma, judgement and shame. As a community, we all carry the responsibility to give this to one another. This begins with the community collectively advocating for mental health, and bringing deep awareness to the idea that there is no separation; what affects one, affects all.

Research suggests that the adult Black community is 20% more likely to experience serious mental health problems, such as Major Depressive Disorder or Generalized Anxiety Disorder (“Addressing Mental Health,” 2019). Unfortunately, many suffer in silence. For too long, there has been a long-standing history of stigma surrounding mental health in the Black and Brown communities. While the impact and the depth of stigmas experienced may differ amongst families, I believe it is safe to say it has undeniably caused more harm than good to both individuals and the collective. We are now at a critical point in our collective journey where we must not only address and repair the damage this lack of advocacy has inflicted on the fabric of our communities but also recognize the importance of mental health advocacy. It is important that we implement programs and initiatives within our communities to better serve those who continue to suffer in silence.

Why advocating for mental health is important?



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ADDRESS AND REDUCE THE STIGMA

Addressing and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health is an important first step. Stigma often silences individuals, preventing them from seeking the help they need. Through our actions of advocating for mental health, we normalize conversations around it, making it easier for people to reach out for support without feeling the burden of shame.

SHINE A LIGHT

Advocacy shines a light on the mental health care disparities faced by BIPOC communities. Our actions of advocacy drive systemic changes that promote equal access to quality mental health services. Advocacy also plays a key role in influencing public policies, securing funding and ensuring that mental health services are accessible to all.

RAISE AWARENESS

Advocacy helps raise awareness about recognizing the early signs and symptoms of mental health challenges. Early intervention can lead to better outcomes, as individuals are more likely to receive the support they need before their condition worsens.


PREVENTION

Ultimately, advocacy can prevent severe and tragic outcomes often associated with mental health challenges, such as substance abuse, poor quality of life and suicide. Ensuring that everyone receives the necessary support is vital to avoiding these outcomes.

Advocating for mental health doesn't have to be overwhelming; even the smallest actions can have a significant impact. The key is to take action. Here are a few simple ways you can start advocating for mental health right now.

How can you contribute to and support mental health in our community?

- Take the time to learn about mental health and the stigmas surrounding it. As you gain knowledge, share what you've learned with your family, friends and community.
- Get involved with local mental health organizations by volunteering, donating, and participating in their events. Use your social media platforms to advocate for and promote organizations that support mental health.
- Start open discussions about mental health challenges. Ask your friends and family how they are doing mentally and emotionally and offer your support. Also, share your own mental and emotional well-being with trusted friends and family.
- Connect with local representatives to advocate for improvements in mental health policies that better serve our communities and support mental health education in schools.

The power to create change starts with you. Together, we share the responsibility to advocate for mental health in our community. 

Addressing mental health in the Black Community. Columbia University Department of Psychiatry. (2019, February 8).

<https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/addressing-mental-health-black-community>



Photo from unsplash.com

The Journey to Peace While Figuring Out Your Purpose

BY RAE KARIM

When I think of the journey to peace and purpose, the song “Beans & Corn Bread” by Louis Jordan and the Tympany Five comes to mind. I first heard it in the movie *Malcolm X* years ago, and the melody has stuck with me, echoing in my mind ever since. The song itself is a comforting mix, much like the balance between peace and purpose—two elements we often hope will go hand in hand.

At first glance, it seems logical that where there is purpose, peace should naturally follow. But what happens when you’re not entirely comfortable with your purpose? What if the path that feels right doesn’t necessarily feel calm?

For instance, in my own experience, I became a certified grief coach and founded Good Grief Now!™, an international 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to grief support. I’m deeply grateful for this purpose, for the opportunity to serve and help others. Yet, despite this gratitude, I haven’t always felt at peace with it. And I’ve often asked myself why.

Reflecting on this, I think of how I became what some call an “adult orphan.” All my parents—including my maternal grandparents, godparents, mother and father—have passed away. The most significant losses, my grandfather and mother, occurred just 16 days apart in 2017. Out of that grief, I created Good Grief Now!™—starting it as a day party, of all things. It may sound contradictory, but it was necessary; there was a lack of traditional support for grievers. I wanted to offer something different.

But despite this, peace remained elusive. How could I feel calm when I was still reeling from such profound loss? And yet, four years later, during the pandemic, the nonprofit expanded into what it is today. I was doing meaningful work, but still, I struggled to find peace.

Through this journey, I began to realize that finding peace while figuring out your purpose is not always straightforward. There are a few insights that helped me navigate this process:



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*I was doing meaningful work, but still,
I struggled to find peace.*

ACKNOWLEDGE ALL YOUR FEELINGS

The first step is to acknowledge all the feelings that come with the journey. It's okay to feel conflicted about your purpose. You might experience fulfillment mixed with discomfort, doubt or even anger. I had to honor all these feelings as valid parts of my own path, recognizing that my purpose was deeply tied to my personal grief and the resistance I felt toward accepting it.

EMBRACE THE EVOLVING NATURE OF PURPOSE

Your purpose doesn't have to be fixed; it can grow and change with you. It's okay if your purpose looks different now than it did years ago. Sarah Jakes Roberts, an acclaimed speaker, often talks about how purpose is for the long haul and can take different forms over time. I came to understand that where I am right now is purposeful, but finding peace may require allowing that purpose to evolve.

FIND PEACE IN THE PRESENT

Another key is to find peace in the present moment. Ask yourself, "What can I do now that aligns with my values and feels right today?" Peace often begins by being present and grateful for where you are, even if it's not where you ultimately want to be.

RESOLVE TO ACCEPT YOUR PURPOSE

Sometimes, finding peace is about resolving to accept your purpose, even if it feels challenging or uncomfortable. The longer I evaded or avoided my calling, the more restless I became. I found that embracing my purpose, even when it felt imperfect, allowed peace to come to me more readily.

CREATE RITUALS OF CALM

Creating rituals of calm can also help you feel grounded. Whether through meditation, journaling or a quiet walk, these practices can offer moments of peace even in the midst of purposeful work.

CONNECT WITH SUPPORT

Lastly, connect with others—friends, mentors or support groups—who can provide perspective, encouragement and moments of laughter that make the process less daunting.

These tips helped me realize that finding peace is an ongoing adventure. Sometimes, peace is easy to find; other times, it feels elusive, like something that remains invisible until a certain moment. Merriam-Webster defines peace as a state of tranquility or calm, which makes me think that there should be some calm in the work we do over the long haul. But perhaps peace isn't a constant state. It could be found in fleeting moments of acceptance or in the deep breath taken after a hard day. It might be more closely tied to how well we resolve that our purpose is our purpose, whether it feels perfect or not.



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The more I reflect on this, the more I see that peace and purpose are dynamic and deeply personal. They are shaped by our experiences, growth and the evolving versions of ourselves. It's okay for your purpose to shift as you change and grow. So, as you continue your journey, remember that finding peace is not just about reaching a destination; it's about the choices you make, the support you seek and the comfort you allow yourself to experience along the way.

Ultimately, I've come to believe that peace and purpose can coexist, but they are not always simultaneous. Purpose isn't static, and neither is peace. Both require flexibility, patience and a willingness to embrace the unknown. And maybe, just maybe, we find peace—like a comforting side of beans and cornbread—as we learn to navigate the ever-changing path of our purpose. 🌱



How Self-Aware Are You?

This quiz is designed to help you evaluate your level of self-awareness by reflecting on how well you understand your thoughts, emotions, and actions. Self-awareness is a crucial aspect of emotional intelligence and personal growth, allowing you to navigate relationships, make sound decisions and manage stress more effectively. As you reflect on your score, consider the areas where you can grow and explore ways to enhance your self-awareness.

Instructions: For each question, choose the answer that best describes you. Tally your points and check your self-awareness level at the end of the quiz.

How often do you reflect on your thoughts and emotions?

- a) Regularly, I make time to reflect on my inner world (4 points)
- b) Occasionally, when I'm feeling overwhelmed or confused (3 points)
- c) Rarely, I'm more focused on what's happening around me (2 points)
- d) Almost never, I don't see the need to (1 point)

When you receive feedback, how do you react?

- a) I value feedback, whether positive or negative, and use it to improve (4 points)
- b) I appreciate feedback but can feel defensive at times (3 points)
- c) I mostly ignore it unless it's overwhelmingly positive or negative (2 points)
- d) I avoid or reject feedback because it feels uncomfortable (1 point)

How well do you understand the impact of your actions on others?

- a) I'm very aware and often consider how my actions affect people (4 points)
- b) I try to be considerate, but I don't always notice (3 points)
- c) I rarely think about it unless someone points it out (2 points)
- d) I don't usually consider others' reactions to my actions (1 point)

How comfortable are you with acknowledging your flaws?

- a) Very comfortable – I see them as areas to grow and improve (4 points)
- b) Somewhat comfortable, but it can be tough sometimes (3 points)
- c) I avoid thinking about my flaws unless I have to (2 points)
- d) I don't think I have significant flaws to address (1 point)

Do you regularly seek out new perspectives to challenge your viewpoints?

- a) Yes, I actively seek different opinions to expand my understanding (4 points)

- b) Occasionally, I'll listen to others' views but often stick to my own (3 points)
- c) I prefer to stick with people who think like me (2 points)
- d) No, I avoid views that contradict mine (1 point)

When faced with stress, how do you typically handle your emotions?

- a) I recognize my emotions and take steps to manage them (4 points)
- b) I acknowledge my feelings but don't always know how to manage them (3 points)
- c) I try to ignore my emotions and power through (2 points)
- d) I often deny or suppress my emotions (1 point)

How easily can you identify your own triggers (things that upset you)?

- a) I'm highly aware of my triggers and work to manage them (4 points)
- b) I can identify them sometimes, but they still catch me off guard (3 points)
- c) I have some awareness but often feel blindsided by my reactions (2 points)
- d) I'm not aware of my triggers, and I react impulsively (1 point)

Do you set aside time to evaluate your personal growth and development?

- a) Yes, I regularly assess how far I've come and what I need to work on (4 points)
- b) I think about it occasionally but don't actively track my growth (3 points)
- c) I tend to focus on daily tasks rather than personal development (2 points)
- d) No, I rarely think about my personal growth (1 point)

How often do you check in with others to understand how they perceive you?

- a) Frequently, I actively seek input from others on how I come across (4 points)
- b) Sometimes, but I don't do it regularly (3 points)
- c) Only if there's a conflict or issue (2 points)
- d) Hardly ever, I don't see the point of asking (1 point)

How do you respond when your emotions feel overwhelming?

- a) I acknowledge and explore my emotions to better understand them (4 points)
- b) I try to manage them but sometimes struggle to cope (3 points)
- c) I often ignore my emotions and distract myself (2 points)
- d) I shut down or overreact without understanding why (1 point)

RESULTS

40 - 34 points: Highly Self-Aware

You have an exceptional understanding of your thoughts, emotions, and behavior. You actively reflect, seek feedback, and consider how your actions affect others. Keep honing these skills to continue growing!

33 - 25 points: Moderately Self-Aware

You have a solid level of self-awareness but could benefit from deepening your reflection and seeking more feedback. Try setting regular check-ins with yourself to further enhance your emotional intelligence and growth.

24 - 16 points: Somewhat Self-Aware

You are aware of some aspects of your behavior but may avoid deeper introspection or feedback. Becoming more open to self-exploration and understanding your emotional responses will improve your relationships and decision-making.

15 - 10 points: Low Self-Awareness


Your self-awareness may be limited, which can lead to unintentional impacts on others and difficulty managing emotions. Start by practicing mindfulness and paying attention to how your actions affect others.

9 points and below: Minimal Self-Awareness

You may struggle significantly with understanding your emotions and behavior. Improving self-awareness takes time, but beginning with small steps, like journaling or asking trusted friends for feedback, will help you grow.

If you scored on the lower end, that's okay. Increasing self-awareness takes practice and below are five ways you can practice increasing your self-awareness.

- Practice mindfulness, which helps you stay in tune with your emotions.
- Seek regular feedback from trusted individuals to understand how others perceive you.
- Journal your thoughts and feelings, which allows you to track patterns over time.
- Engage in self-reflection, setting aside time to assess your personal growth.
- Challenge your perspectives by seeking out diverse viewpoints.

By incorporating these habits into your routine, you can deepen your self-awareness and improve your overall well-being. 

Spirituality in Everyday Life: Mindful Moments and Practices

BY JOY EWING, MA, LMFT

In the business of our daily life, finding moments of spirituality can feel challenging, especially for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) women who often navigate unique cultural and social landscapes. Integrating mindfulness and spiritual practices into your everyday routine can bring a sense of peace and fulfillment. As a Black female therapist, I can understand the struggles. I see it in my personal life and in my office with the women that I work with. These are some of the tools and techniques that have helped me cultivate better mindfulness, movement, and self-care. I also empower the women who come to see me for therapy to use these practices as they work through their healing journeys and navigate life's many ups and downs. It's vital to take time out for yourself, even amid the chaos. Here are some simple, yet profound ways to weave spirituality into your daily life, tailored specifically for BIPOC women.

MORNING INTENTIONS

Start your day with a moment of intention. Before you dive into the day's tasks, take a few minutes to sit quietly and set a positive intention. This could be as simple as "I will approach today with kindness" or "I am grateful for this new day." Setting an intention helps you focus your mind and align your actions with your values. For BIPOC women, drawing on cultural and ancestral strength can be particularly empowering. Consider an intention that connects you to your heritage, such as "I honor my ancestors' resilience" or "I embrace the beauty of my culture."

MINDFUL BREATHING

Breathing is something we do automatically, but when done mindfully, it can be a powerful spiritual practice. Throughout your day, take a few moments to focus on your breath. Inhale deeply, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly. This simple practice can help ground you, reduce stress, and bring a sense of calm. Incorporate affirmations or mantras from your cultural or spiritual

background into your breathing practice. Phrases like "I am strong," "I am enough," or "I am connected" can add a layer of spiritual significance and empowerment.

GRATITUDE JOURNALING

Keeping a gratitude journal is a wonderful way to cultivate a positive mindset. Each evening, jot down three things you are grateful for. They can be big or small, significant, or seemingly trivial. Reflecting on the positive aspects of your day can shift your focus from what's lacking to what's abundant in your life. For BIPOC

women as it offers a holistic approach to health and spirituality. Yoga encourages self-awareness, stress reduction, and a deeper connection to your body and spirit. Try incorporating yoga into your daily or weekly routine. There are many styles to choose from, so find one that resonates with you. Whether it's a gentle restorative practice or a more vigorous vinyasa flow, yoga can provide a sacred space for self-care and spiritual growth.

NATURE CONNECTION

Spending time in nature is a powerful way



Photo from unsplash.com

women, acknowledging the unique aspects of your identity and experiences can be particularly affirming. You might note gratitude for moments of cultural pride, personal achievements, or the support of your community.

YOGA

Yoga is a wonderful practice that combines physical movement, breath control, and meditation to promote overall well-being. It can be particularly beneficial for BIPOC

to connect with something greater than yourself. Whether it's a walk in the park, tending to your garden, or simply sitting under a tree, nature has a way of calming the mind and nurturing the spirit. Pay attention to the sights, sounds, and smells around you, and let yourself be fully present in the moment. Nature can also be a source of cultural connection. Explore natural spaces that are significant to your heritage or incorporate traditional practices such as herbal remedies or gardening techniques passed down through generations.

ACTS OF KINDNESS

Engaging in acts of kindness not only benefits others but also enriches your own spiritual well-being. Look for opportunities to help someone in need, offer a kind word, or perform a random act of generosity. These small gestures can create a ripple effect of positivity and connection in your community. Acts of kindness can also involve supporting other women, particularly those in your cultural or social circles. Mentoring, sharing resources, or simply being a listening ear can strengthen communal bonds and uplift everyone involved.

MASSAGE THERAPY

Getting regular massages can be a powerful way to connect with your body and promote relaxation. Massage therapy not only alleviates physical tension but also provides a space for emotional and spiritual release. Consider finding a therapist who understands your unique cultural needs and preferences.

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

Whether you prefer meditation, prayer, or a combination of both, taking time to connect with your inner self and God can be deeply nourishing. Find a quiet space, close your eyes, and focus on your breath or a meaningful mantra. Allow yourself to let go of worries and be present in the stillness. You can incorporate elements of your cultural or spiritual traditions into your practice. This could include listening to spiritual music, reading the Bible or an inspirational book, using guided meditations, reciting traditional prayers and affirmations that resonate with your heritage.

THERAPY

Therapy is a vital tool for spiritual and emotional health. It provides a safe space to explore your thoughts, feelings, and experiences with a professional who can offer support and guidance. For BIPOC women, finding a therapist who understands your cultural background can be particularly healing. Therapy can help you process past traumas, navigate current challenges, and

cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness and spiritual well-being. Don't hesitate to seek out this valuable resource as part of your spiritual journey. A great place to start with locating a culturally competent therapist is Therapy for Black Girls.

Incorporating spirituality into everyday life doesn't require grand gestures or significant time commitments. It's about finding mindful moments and practices that resonate with you and enrich your life. By setting intentions, practicing gratitude, connecting with nature, engaging in acts of kindness, practicing yoga, getting massages, and seeking therapy, you can cultivate a sense of spirituality that brings peace, joy, and a deeper connection to the world around you.

These tools have been instrumental in my ongoing journey of healing and growth, nurturing my mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being. They have helped me deepen my connection with God and experience the


abundant gifts of joy, peace, and love. It is my sincere hope that as you continue on your own path, these practices will offer you the same comfort, strength, and guidance that they have brought to me. May they help you to find balance, renew your spirit, and open your heart to the beauty and goodness that life has to offer. 



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Kendrick Lamar's Pop Out Concert: The Pinnacle of Black Culture

BY MARCUS NORRIS



On Juneteenth of this year, rapper Kendrick Lamar hosted a concert called “The Pop Out: Ken and Friends.” This concert came in the wake of one of the biggest rap beefs of all time—and the biggest of this generation—Kendrick Lamar vs. Drake. This beef was predicated on the fact that Kendrick saw Drake as a person who continuously steals from other cultures, or a “culture vulture.” Drake is Canadian, but he has an album where he’s Jamaican, an album where he’s British, and another album where he’s acting like he’s from the hood in Atlanta! This all led to Kendrick calling him out in several songs, with the biggest being “Not Like Us.”

For some context, this was a celebration of the West Coast. It was also a way to let Drake know that Kendrick was good out in the West and still invests in his community. The concert started with DJ Hed and rappers Remble, Ray Vaughn, Jay Worthy, and more! The middle featured DJ Mustard, who brought out Tyler, the Creator, and YG, and the main event was, of course, Kendrick himself. The celebration that ensued reminded me of a very Black event...

IT'S A FAMILY REUNION!

If you are Black, you know about the emphasis we put on family and family reunions. Family reunions in the Black community have ties to unifying after slavery ended, and they have become gigantic events. It's a time for families and friends to come together, often spanning multiple generations. It's a space where people can reconnect with relatives they might not see regularly, and an atmosphere of warmth, laughter, and shared memories, creating a familial bond that transcends individual households.



Photo from unsplash.com

As I mentioned earlier, The Pop Out included LA/California artists from multiple generations like Schoolboy Q, Tyler, the Creator, Ab-Soul, Dr. Dre, Jay Rock, Ty Dolla \$ign, and more. It also included celebrities like LeBron James and LA natives DeMar DeRozan and Russell Westbrook, which truly made this celebration rooted in inclusivity within the West Coast community. It represented an open invitation to celebrate and support each other, reinforcing what united them instead of their differences.

IT STARTED LATE

Let's be real with ourselves as Black folk... we've all heard that the event starts at 3:00, and the tables aren't even set up by 3:30! The Pop Out was supposed to begin at 7 PM EST, but when the broadcast aired at that time, they were still setting up the stage. Though we are often criticized for starting late, it's important to understand what this represents. It represents an emphasis on the experience rather than the schedule. Starting late can be seen as an expression of flexibility, allowing the gathering to unfold organically and giving people a chance to arrive and settle in without an emphasis on punctuality.

GROUP PICS

Now you know there's always that one family who has to take a group picture of EVERYBODY. They try to wrangle everyone from the oldest to the youngest together to take a group pic, and this concert was no different. After Kendrick played "Not Like Us" (for the fourth time), he paused and tried to get everyone on the stage for a group pic.



This was symbolic of how we all have this sense of togetherness. We get to the festivities and are having a ball, but then we stop and gather the whole family for a big group picture because we don't know when we'll get together again.

ALL FIGHTING WAS STOPPED

Unfortunately, one of the most notable aspects of Los Angeles culture is gang culture. I'm sure that you have all heard about how two different groups of individuals tend to clash out there. However, that night... all clashing groups were in solidarity. Different gangs like the Bloods and the Crips were dancing together. There may be some fighting or "beef" between family members, but not at a family reunion. All that fighting stops, and we all become a big happy family, at least for the time being.

It felt like the entire county of Los Angeles was at the Pop Out. There were countless celebrities in attendance, but only a select few were allowed on stage. If you weren't from LA, you were part of the general crowd. This... resonated with me. To me, it symbolized that this was truly a family affair.

THEY KEPT IT IN THE FAMILY

Think of it like your inner circle of friends—those you love and care about deeply. They might show up at your family reunion, but they aren't always in the group pictures. While they know you value them, they also understand they're not quite in the family photo yet. To me, this speaks to the strength of familial bonds—ties that run deep through every family, especially Black families—and it was clear throughout this concert.

The Pop Out's celebration of unity through music echoes a long-standing tradition within Black culture, where music has always been a cornerstone of collective resilience and togetherness. From the spirituals sung during slavery to communicate and find solace, to the freedom songs of the Civil Rights Movement that galvanized a generation, music has continuously served as a powerful medium to unify and inspire. This event, much like those historical instances, showcased how music transcends individual differences and conflicts, creating a sense of communal strength and solidarity.

Kendrick Lamar's ability to bring together diverse artists and audiences, much like the leaders of past movements, underscores the enduring power of music to heal, unite, and remind us of our shared heritage and collective resilience. The Pop Out was not just a concert; it was a reaffirmation of the enduring spirit of Black culture, emphasizing that even in the face of adversity, unity and cultural pride will always prevail. 🌱

Self-Care Gift Guide

Introducing our exclusive **Self-Care Gift Guide**, thoughtfully curated to inspire and empower you on your wellness journey. At Hope+Wellth, we believe in the power of intentional self-care, which is why we've selected items that not only bring comfort but also serve as reminders of your strength, resilience, and worth. From calming candles to cozy blankets and empowering journals, these gifts are perfect for nurturing yourself or someone you love. Ready to discover more? Visit our MoodWellth Well-Being Boutique at www.moodwellth.com for an extended collection of thoughtful self-care gifts that will help you heal, grow, and thrive.

9oz Soy Scented Candles

Ignite your inner peace with our 9oz soy scented candles, each infused with an inspiring message like *Heal At Your Own Pace*, *Strong and Vulnerable* or *All That Matters is You*. These gentle reminders flicker with every flame, creating a soothing atmosphere that supports your journey toward healing and self-compassion.



Plush Blankets

Wrap yourself in comfort and empowerment with our plush blankets, available in three sizes. Adorned with messages like *Heal At Your Own Pace* and *All That Matters is You*, they offer the warmth of self-care—perfect for cozying up during moments of rest or reflection.

Blank Journals

Our blank journals provide a space for you to pour out your thoughts, dreams, and plans. With phrases like *All That Matters is You* and *Whatever I Do Today is Enough*, gracing the covers, these journals remind you to embrace your journey at your own speed, with no rush and no pressure.



Mugs with Powerful Phrases

Start your day with inspiration by sipping from our empowering mugs, each emblazoned with phrases like *All That Matters is You* or *Heal At Your Own Pace*. Whether it's your morning coffee or afternoon tea, these mugs are a beautiful reminder to put yourself first.



Guided Journal: Journal Your Way to Joy

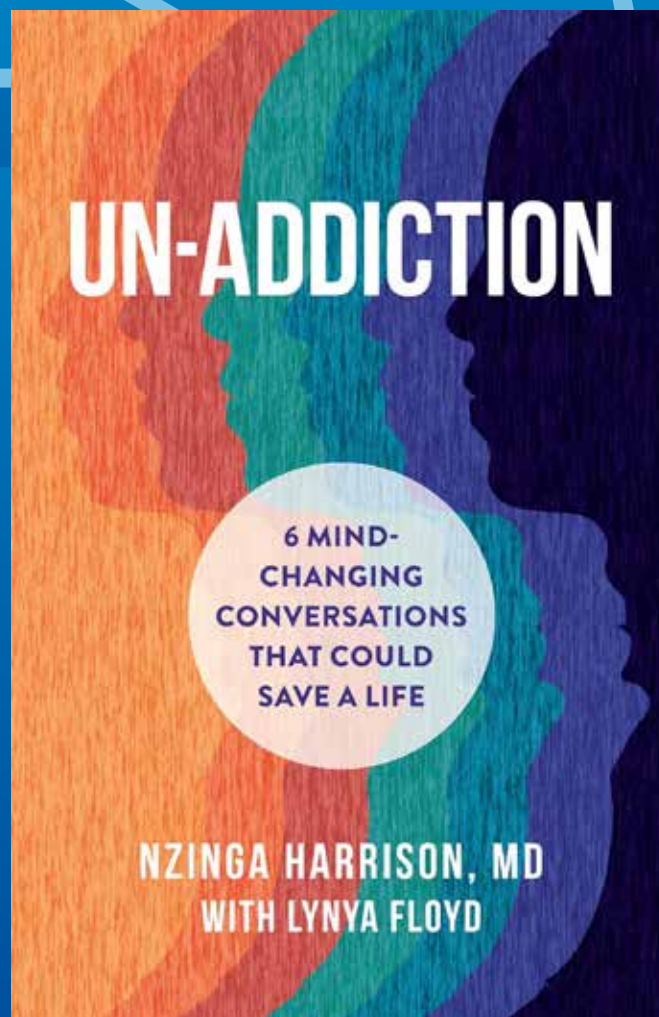
Our *Journal Your Way to Joy* is more than just a journal; it's your personal guide to rediscovering happiness. With thoughtful prompts and space to reflect, this guided journal helps you uncover joy in your daily life while nurturing a mindset of self-love and gratitude.

Greeting Cards

Our greeting cards offer thoughtful, heartfelt messages that resonate deeply with the experiences of BIPOC women. Perfect for sharing moments of connection, these cards encourage love, healing, and solidarity in a world that often overlooks our stories.



*This book will change
how we talk about
addiction and fix
a broken system.*



Learn more at NzingaHarrisonMD.com

