MAY 2018

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VLADIMIRE CALIXTE Celebrity Therapist & Founder of Therapy for Black Men

Brooklyn Gallery Owner Richard Beavers on art & social consciousness Dr. Sheron Brown on making peace with fat In order to get fit

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MAY 2018 Editor's Note

Can you believe we're already heading towards the middle of May? What happened to April? And spring? Mother Nature has her way of showing us that time waits for no one. With that in mind, this is the perfect time for self-reflection, figuring out what it is you want out of life and going for it! Time is way too short for harboring self-doubt and discouragement.

In this month's issue, our cover star is the perfect professional to help others rid themselves of feat and self-doubt. Vladimire Calixte is a celebrity therapist who has proven in her own life that resilience and strength are the keys to success. She gets very intimate with us as she describes her journey from her native Haiti to the U.S. and the struggles and challenges she endured along the way. Her story is truly inspiring for anyone who has ever had to face and overcome hard obstacles.

Vladimire sets the tone for the issue and there are so many other inspiring stories of amazing indiividuals inside. I can't wait for you to read them! Enjoy!

> Shawn Stuldtrant



Cover Feature: Relationship Therapist Vladimire Calixte

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Founder of TAJJ Cosmetics

By Melissa E. Marks

Makeup expert and entrepreneur, June Smith is thriving in the Cosmetic industry while propelling the importance of "Black Girl Magic." The founder of TAJJ Cosmetics not only takes great pride in her Jamaican roots but emphasizes the importance of how her brand is targeted towards African American women all over the world. From Fashion Shows in Paris and being recognized by the Black Beauty and Fashion Awards in the UK, it is evident that June Smith is an example of what black excellence truly previals. Smith talks about her mission to help all women of color feel beautiful and confident through her sucessful cosmetic line, TAJJ Cosmetics.

What inspired you to create your cosmetic line, "Tajj Cosmetics?"

I was inspired to start my cosmetics line after developing the first product, The Incredible Corn Concealer, which is used to conceal discoloration on the feet caused by corns. After years of feeling embarrassed about wearing open toe shoes, I got the idea to develop a productfor the feet; one that would match the natural skintone, waterproof and could last up to twenty four hours. After an overwhelming response of our customers and to fill the void in the market of products for women of color, we started intensive studies into ethnic skincare and we launched our complete line of makeup, developed specifically for women of color.

It is obvious that you have a love for makeup. When did this love develop and what sparked your love for makeup?

I fell in love with makeup from the moment I knew what it was, probably around age six. I watched my mother apply her makeup and she looked absolutely beautiful after her application. I could see the transformation and I wanted it too. I loved how she applied her foundation and lipstick. As soon as she would leave the house, I would try to do the same. And as I got older, I realized that makeup would transform the look of women and I wanted to do it.

What is the essential meaning behind Tajj Cosmetics and what do you want people to take away from this cosmetic line?

TAJJ is the acronyms from my three boys' first names and mine. Tyler, Andre, Jevar and my first name June.

Out of all the products in your cosmetic line, which product would you say has been the most successful thus far and why?

The most successful is the Incredible Corn Concealer because it solves a problem. Most women suffer from corns on their toes, and the Corn Concealer gives women the confidence to expose their toes, it gives them the freedom to wear open toe shoes without feeling embarrassed. It's a confidence booster.

For anyone who is wanting to start their own cosmetic line, what advice would you give to them?

I would say to anyone looking to start their business, not only in the beauty industry, is to ensure that they have a passion for what they desire to do. To have patience. Be prepared to work hard and long hours. And that there is no such thing as overnight success.

Your beauty products were used on the models for the Paris Plus Sized Fashion Show in Paris. Which products were you excited for the models to use the most and why?

I was excited about all the products being used on the models. All our products are developed specifically for women of color. And I was excited to see their flawless beauty on the runway wearing our beauty products.

Starting a business is a lot of work and your work has been recognized due to your selection for the Business Entrepreneur Awards. How are you feeling about this achievement and what are you hoping to gain from it?

Starting a business is indeed a lot of work, and to be recognized for it I am beyond grateful. To be recognized by the Black Beauty and Fashion Awards UK was truly an honor. This was the first of its kind in the United Kingdom, and I am thankful that I was a part of it all. It was also a perfect way to introduce our TAJJ Cosmetics products in the UK.

As a woman of color, what advice would you give to other women of color when it comes to choosing the right makeup? What are some do's and don'ts?

The first do's and don'ts is to understand your skin undertone. Know what colours matches your skin undertone. Ensure your neck and your foundation looks the same.

In what ways is Tajj Cosmetics a reflection of you as a person?

Real, Bold and Beautiful. I am a person who expresses how I feel and how I look. I see my products the same way I see myself. My lipsticks are bold and our foundations make our women looks absolutely flawless.

If there is any advice you could give to black women who are beginners to makeup, what would it be?

I would advise our black women to use makeup to simply enhance their natural looks. Makeup is an application, it enhances our looks. True beauty is revealed.

What are three words you would use to describe all black women?

Beautiful, Resilient and Powerful.





Life: An Interview with Art Museum Gallery Owner Richard Beavers

By Farheen Nahvi

In a socially and politically imbalanced world, every voice fights to be heard. Gallery owner/director Richard Beavers has taken it upon himself to ensure representation of people of color, through the most powerful medium-art.

Art perhaps is the best form of expression-for what better way to express than through actions captured; in the fluid movement of a brush stroke; in the eternal eyes of a marble

head; in perfectly timed photographs, just capturing the right emotions; through the hands of those who know it best-art, indeed, is the best form of expression. It remains, ages after its creator has moved on, to tell us the story of times gone past. The Mona Lisa tells us a story, as do the statues in the Vatican, as will art forms throughout time in all ages. One of its best qualities is its fluidity, the nature which

allows it to change with the world, and in this context, comes to us the art of the

contemporary world. It is better in it that it is closer to our lives.

Every life is an art, and this best exemplified through the

exhibitions at the Richard Beavers Gallery located in

Brooklyn, New York. Sure, we have the Louvre,

but contemporary

experiences cannot find expression in sixteenth

century art pieces; the times have changed. With a new

exhibition recently closed,

it is best to let the Gallery talk for itself.



Richard Beavers Gallery

- An Interview with Bronze Magazine -

How did you see art growing up?

Like most other kids, my first introduction to art was during field trips or class trips at school when we would go to museums.

What inspired your interest in art and to open an art gallery?

Well, what inspired my interest in art was, I remember one day I came home from school. I went on a class trip to the museum and my mother asked me, you know, how did I enjoy the trip and I told her that I didn't really enjoy it. You know, I didn't particularly care for the art that I saw. And little did I know that the reason why I felt that way was because it wasn't anything I saw in the museum that was reflective of my experiences or imagery that depicted people of color that I was familiar with. So, when I told my mother that I didn't enjoy the trip, she took me to a gallery in Manhattan. It was on 13th street between 2nd/3rd Avenue and it was owned by two women of color from the Caribbean and when I walked into that gallery and I saw the artwork that was in there, that there were all of these amazing wonderful images of color, the stories were familiar with mine, the imagery was reflective of the community that I came from, that was the moment that I really developed an of appreciation of art.

What was your very first exhibition like?

While my first exhibition was exciting, it was also an educational experience for me. It was an artist, his name was 90 Degrees, and at the time the company that I had was called fine art but it was spelled PHINEART. So it was kind of playing off of Phat Farm and it stood for Pure Hatred Influences Negative Energy, Awareness Reflects Togetherness.

This was over 20 years ago. And we had an amazing turn out and you know, all of the artwork was very Hip hop influenced. It was a lot of portraits of Hip hop artists. We had maybe over 200 people that came out to the exhibition.

How are your artists chosen for exhibition at your gallery?

I look for artists who have a very unique and distinctive style. I look for artists whose work is urban and inner city influenced, work that's reflective of everyday experiences and in telling the story of life in these environments. I also look for work that addresses a lot of the social and political issues that are in the forefront of our communities. I like to communicate through art and you know I want the community of Bed Stuy and particularly, people of color, to be able come into the gallery and to be able to see work that speaks to their experiences and tells their story.

Your gallery has exhibited frank morrison's art a few times prior to this new release. what sets him apart as a contemporary artist?

Well, Frank and I came up together. You know, I was selling posters on the street. He was just starting to get into the publishing of his art, which opened up a larger market and exposed people to his work. That's one of the things that we have-a really long history together. We both share a very similar mission, and exposing people from the inner city to art and his work, it tells a story of individuals who typically are not found depicted in art. You know, he has a very poetic and dignified way in which he depicts his subjects, which more often than not are people of color in his work. He started off in Hip hop as a graffiti artist. So he combines his graffiti elements, realism and iconography, which are things that are once again symbolized and familiar to our experiences growing up in the inner city communities; and he takes all of those elements, and he combines them into one very unique and distinctive style. There's a story being told, a very necessary story of individuals who are typically overlooked. And the narrative that's being told about people of color is something that him and I feel very strongly about; we should be able to tell our story and we should be able to take back control of the false narrative that's being depicted out there on a daily basis through a lot of the media outlets.

How does Frank Morrison relate to the work he creates?

He's a father of five kids and a husband. He grew up in the same communities as the individuals where he's telling the story. You know he relates to it because you know these are not just subjects or themes, this is his life. He lived it first hand, these are his experiences. Like a poet who tells stories through words, he's a storyteller with an oratorical way of telling stories through art.

What kind of audiences does your gallery attract?

We attract a very diverse audience. We attract people of all ethnicities and social classes. I have a strong belief that if you're honest in the work that you create and honest in the manner in which you present and curate the work, it's going to appeal to individuals who are looking for an authentic story.



What is your relationship with artists you exhibit pre and post exhibition?

A lot of the artists are my friends and I look to develop long lasting relationships with artists. It gives me more insight into who they are and why they are so passionate about what they create. You know, it's not just necessarily about the business side of it; it's about the relationship and the mission that we have from the very beginning, which is to create a platform for artists of color, particularly artists from an inner city background, to be able to have a place where they can exhibit their work and we can help establish a market for it and expose it to a larger audience. I have worked with many of the artists such as Frank for over 20 years, while I have worked with several of the other artists for only a number of years and we look to continue to foster that relationship in order to grow together and expose as many individuals as we possibly can to the messages through the art.

What type of feedback have you received from the community about your gallery and why do you believe your gallery's presence is important to the community?

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and more than just being positive, it's not easy to get people to come out and spend money on art. In a lot of instances art is not a day to day necessity. If you can move people and if you're authentic in what you are doing; its ten years now and we've gotten full support from the community. And I think the community sees it as more than just a gallery, it's a very necessary cultural institution. It's a place to come to, a place where you can feel comfortable, a place where you're welcomed and we do more than just tell our stories through art. We have programming; we have conversations in the gallery, which are in depth, up close and personal conversations with creatives from Brooklyn. We do monthly films, we have a relationship with a company called Lumina Theater, that showcases independent movies from individuals of the African diaspora; we have comedy at the gallery. You know, so the programming expands, we have a gift of print, where we give free prints away to young people who come into the gallery. We've had financial literacy workshops, we've had book signings.You know so we really open the space up to do as much programming as we possibly can, to draw people in who may feel intimidated by coming out to a gallery. So through these programs, we're welcoming them in different ways, and we are also exposing them and introducing them to art at the same time.

What sets your artists apart?

I don't know if there's something necessarily something that sets them apart, more than the fact that there's an under-representation or a misrepresentation of artists of color who have a story to tell, and that story is life in an inner city environment. You know, so you're not going to find that in a lot of the mainstream galleries. You're not going to find that in a lot of these institutions. You know, so myself as the owner of the gallery and a curator, I have full control over programming. I have full control over the work that's going to come in here, so I want my story to be told. I want children of color to be able to come in here and see imagery that's reflective of who they are. So I would say the thing that sets us apart more so than anything else, is the work that you'll find in here. The subject matter of the work and the people who are and who the artists are inspired by to create the work.

"Urban restoration"-sounds as interesting as it is intriguing. what can people expect?

They can expect to see an amazing exhibition. They can expect to be moved by the work. They can expect to leave out of here being inspired and they can also see that it's okay to tell your story and it's okay to be authentic. And it's okay to address some of these controversial issues through art. Art is supposed to be controversial, art is supposed to be thought provoking. And I think most importantly, that anything is possible. You know, I started off selling posters on the street and I didn't know where it would take me but I believed that there was a market for urban contemporary art. I think 10 years later that we've proven that.

Are you open to exhibiting more that just paintings and photographs in your gallery, can contemporary sculptors, for example, find a refuge for their artwork there?

We're open to all genres and all mediums of art. It just has to be work that is moving, work that's creative, work that is authentic and unique. And sculpture is a difficult medium when we're looking for work that is urban and inner city influenced. You know, typically artists that come from certain backgrounds don't have access to materials or to that type of formal training. I'm open to all genres of art, all multitudes of art. It's not just figurative, it's not just photography. We have artists whose technique is expressionism. I've worked with some sculptors but I'm always looking for that next thing, where an artist is kind of working outside of the box and taking that creativity to a whole other level. So the answer is a resounding yes.

A place to be visited; find your expression at the Richard Beavers Gallery at 408 Marcus Garvey Blvd, Brooklyn, NY 11216. website: http://richardbeaversgallery.com/



MEECAH

POP SOUL ARTIST

EMPOWERS OTHERS THROUGH HER MUSIC

By Tiarsha Harrison

Pop-soul singer Meecah has a powerful voice and a message to tell. Born Micailah Lockhart, old, the Pace University Performing Arts student began singing at the age of three and at 21 years old has already become an accomplished performer, having sung the National Anthem at a gathering where the guest of honor was former Secretary of State and First Lady Hilary Clinton. She's already performed twice on Broadway as Ruth in Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun. She was also mentored by Grammy, Emmy and Tony award-winning composer Marc Shaiman. Heavily inspired by her father who worked with the legendary American Funk/Soul band, the Commordores, Meecah star is continuously rising. Her recently released EP New Moon Rising features the single Melanated, an empowered anthem for African American women. We caught up with Meecah to talk about her roots in music, her message to black women in her song Melanated, and her future goals.



Where are you from/where were you raised? I was born and raised in West Palm Beach, Florida. I love my city 56-Ace baby!

How would you define your style of singing?

I am Pop/R&B. My music style is heavily influenced by Beyoncé, Bruno Mars, Prince and Michael Jackson. Lots of horns and lots of harmonies when I can help it.

How was it singing the national anthem in front of Hilary Clinton?

She's a beauty! Truly a humble and comforting spirit to be around, she was so inspirational. I was completely calm talking to one of the most powerful women in the world, and she had a beautiful part in that. Singing for her is one of the greatest accomplishments of my life and I thank God endlessly.

What was your thought process when writing the song Melanated? What message do you want African American women to receive from it?

I wrote the song Melanated as a response to the Charleston riots. I thought it was necessary to name the song in a past tense form of Melanin because although it is inherently given to people of color, in America we need to be awakened to how powerful it is. So, in order to be MelanatED, you must be EmpowerED. I wrote this as a love letter to my younger self and for every person of color whose melanin is being overlooked. Wake up, get #Melanated !

How do you feel African American women are viewed in today's society?

I feel underrated. Black women are immensely powerful, and when we get together we shake the earth. I firmly believe that it's in our DNA. Have you seen Black Panther? When people don't see our worth but I have to soar in the glory of my blackity-blackness and fight for those who are coming after me in honor of those who came before me.

What made you go by the name of Meecah?

My mother named me after her friend and initially called me Mee-Kai-EE-Lah, and when I told my dear friend about it she just started calling me "Meecah" and I fell in love with it to the point where I started using it as my artist name!

How was it performing for Broadway?

Simply put, an answer to my prayers. I got to perform some amazing songs alongside my friends and I now have

memories that will last a lifetime. Cynthia Erivo is a joy and Kristen Chenoweth is a riot! I love them both to pieces and am grateful for the opportunity.

"Entertaining is my passion, it's what God put me on this earth to do."



How was the experience of being mentored by Marc Shaiman?

It was a great stepping stone into this industry. I am honored to have been surrounded by greatness and perform on television next to a man who wrote many of the songs that play on the soundtrack of my childhood!

What was the motivation behind your song "Dream'?

I wanted a fun song about the risks of love! It's a cute nice little bop and Slim Pudge did a great job of capturing that essence of playing it safe with your teenage love.

How do you juggle your personal life with your professional life?

I don't. Entertaining is my passion, it's what God put me on this earth to do. Other than setting out some time for God, all that I do is to better my music career. The majority of my family time is spent going out to eat after at my shows, my friends and I spend time dancing and going over lines, when I cook my life is surrounded by music and theatre, and I like it like that.

In the future, what is it you hope to pursue?

I want to have an active and affluent music career with world tours and several platinum albums. I'd love to work with Bruno Mars! From there I would like to intermittently do movies, and then Broadway! But whatever God gives me I'm more than satisfied with!

"I feel underrated, black women are immensely powerful... we shake the earth. I firmly believe that it's in our DNA."





"When people don't see our worth - even when its right in their face - it's frustrating..."



Women of Color Can Be Free to Go Outside Again with Shontay Lundy's BlackGirlSunscreen By Shatay Speights Something that I feel should definitely be prevalent amongst women of color is supporting our businesses, especially those that are made for and with us in mind. Brands that cater to and created by women of color are special and should be celebrated and supported. For women of color, entrepreneurship and creating your own business from the ground up is no easy task. It gets that much harder when bringing a product to the table that the market hasn't recognized yet. Trailblazing a path with a new product offering brings its own set of rewards and challenges for a new company. Along with the rewards of being your own boss comes many hardships and obstacles one must be ready to conquer. There's a new challenge to face daily, but you have to keep going. No one knows these things better than entrepreneur Shontay Lundy, founder and creator of BlackGirlSunscreen, a sunscreen product made specifically with women of color in mind.

BlackGirlSunscreen is made with plenty of natural ingredients that are of huge benefit to our skin. In our session, we talked about the need for a product like BlackGirlSunscreen, skincare problems women of color face, black entrepreneurship and the "For Us, By Us" concept, her experience as a businesswoman who brought something new to the market and much more! Check out our conversation on the next pages...





Bronze Magazine: I love that you saw a need for women of color and filled it! With so many beauty products catered to people of a lighter hue, it's refreshing to see a product like this being produced, and by a black woman no less. What was the final straw moment that made you say, "Okay, this is it! I'm making this product!?"

Shontay Lundy: BlackGirlSunscreen was born from a need for a product that offered broad-spectrum sun protection and blended beautifully with dark skin tones—instead of leaving a white residue. My "aha" moment came from a feeling of being underwhelmed by the lack of products on the market for people of color. I knew there had to be something that could work. And I knew that if I could figure out how to make it happen, it'd be a game changer. With this motivation, I started looking for a solution and discovered that there were natural ingredients that could boost melanin, offer proper UV protection and be fully absorbed by our skin. Hence, the evolution of BlackGirlSunscreen.

BM: What do you see as some of the biggest skincare problems and concerns that women of color face and should be paying attention to?

SL: Unfortunately, women of color are light years behind other races in the cosmetics industry, and we lack the necessary education. The number one mistake women of color make is simply not using sunscreen. Fifty-nine percent of women know they should wear sunscreen regularly, yet only 30% do. Research shows African Americans have the highest rate of mortality in the U.S. population after receiving a melanoma diagnosis.

These statistics can't be ignored. In response to this dire need and necessary public education, BlackGirlSunscreen, a revolutionary SPF moisturizer, has been specifically designed for women of color using natural ingredients while protecting against UVA/UVB rays. Individuals with lupus and/or chronic acne need to be especially conscious of the impacts of sun damage to the skin.

BM: I see that a lot of the ingredients in your product are natural and make for a green product. Why is that so important to you? What do the benefits include for those that buy BlackGirlSunscreen?

SL: Women want to look good, feel good and know that they are using safe products. The health of people and the environment is of utmost importance to us. Today, we live in a health-conscious society, and we want BlackGirlSunscreen to exemplify that in every way. The benefits include BGS proudly providing broad-spectrum protection including natural ingredients such as carrot seed oil, jojoba oil, almond oil, avocado and shea butter. We have eliminated parabens and oxybenzone to be environmentally safe.

BM: I see that you participate in activities like yoga and hiking. How important is physical health and taking care of our bodies inside and out, especially in the black community?

SL: Again, I think physical and mental health are areas of opportunity where the black community requires more education. There has to be a level of consistency with what you put in your body being as important as what you put on your skin. We are here to bring awareness to people of color to protect their skin from the sun.

BM: I can only imagine the territory that you cross into when starting a new business, especially when trailblazing a path with a product need that hasn't been met previously. How has the process been? How has it all made you approach business and grow as a businesswoman?

SL: Oh my goodness! This has been quite a ride. Everyday is different, but the reaction to Black Girl Sunscreen has been overwhelmingly positive. Yay! We are so very appreciative for everyone that has supported our mission and vision. It has been an honor to work with amazing beauty gurus and influencers. We have been privileged enough to spread our message via radio, podcasts and social media and have also been a presenter at various trade shows. Now going back to everyday is different, there are trials and tribulation to this crazy notion of being an entrepreneur. However, we see the big picture!

BM: What advice do you have for budding entrepreneurs looking to launch new products, especially those that haven't hit the market yet? SL: What has worked for me is getting out there and just doing it. No one else is out here doing it for me. It's trial and error. You're the one sending those emails; you're the one showing up at offices; and you're the one making cold calls. I'm doing something I believe in. I found a problem and I created a solution to it. You have to get out there and do it because no one else will do it for you. And if you have a support network, use 'em. Sometimes people start something and let it go for a couple of months. Just keep going. Patience is required. My first year in the game, I didn't let the FDA approval stop me. I moved forward with the logo, packaging, etc. Just don't quit because you have one bad day.

BM: How important are the concepts of buying black and "For Us, By Us" to you?

SL: Very important. Buying black and "For Us, By Us" have created a movement amongst the black community. We have lived in a time when black people did not support one another, and it is refreshing to see that the mindset has reversed. Black female entrepreneurship has quadrupled and has continued to grow. With that, the goal is to retain the black dollar within the community.

BM: What has been the most rewarding thing or experience to come out of BlackGirlSunscreen thus far?

SL: There are many rewarding things, but I think a reason why black women have not succeeded in entrepreneurship is that they lack confidence. Launching BlackGirlSunscreen has forced me to step out of my comfort zone in terms of being the face of a brand, articulating my ideas and eliminating self-doubt. So, on a personal level, I've already won.

BM: What can you share with the Bronze readers about some of the things that are on the horizon for BlackGirlSunscreen?

SL: BlackGirlSunscreen is about to go big! LOL. Some of the most common questions are why don't we have a product line for men and children. We hear our customers and supporters loud and clear. We also plan to break through the misconception of black people not protecting their skin from the sun.

BM: What do you envision for the BlackGirlSunscreen brand in the future?

SL: Our goal is to create awareness globally around people of color protecting their skin from the sun. BlackGirlSunscreen will create a legacy that will influence future generations to be skin conscious and dispel stereotypes related to people of color and sun protection. To learn more, visit us on BlackGirlSunscreen.com and follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.



Shatay Speights: Let's be sure to support own and elevate products that are made with quality and with us in mind! I love what Shontay Lundy is doing with BlackGirlSunscreen in wanting to start a conversation in educating our community on this area of health, dispelling the misconception that we don't take care of our skin and providing representation of black female entrepreneurship.

Visit the website; shout out her and the company on social media; try the product and come back and let us know how it worked for you. Ladies, we can finally be free to be outside again with BlackGirlSunscreen! We wish much success to Shontay Lundy and BlackGirlSunscreen and can't wait to see what's to come in the future!



Cover Feature: Celebrity Therapist

Vladimire Calixte

by Melissa Marks

Photographer/Art director: Nick Rich - iAmNickRich.com Hair:Jennifer's Beauty World Making her way from Haiti to America at the age of 8 and experiencing life changing events throughout her lifetime, celebrity therapist and award winning expert on mental health, Vladimire Calixte has proven that resilience and an abundance of strength are the keys to success.

Calixte is not only a successful celebrity therapist, she's also a notable author, award winning mental health expert, a mother and the catalyst for inner peace. It is Calixte's experiences that has propelled her many achievements. In this interview Vladimire opens up about her experiences that has made her the phenomenal and successful woman she is today.

Coming to the US from at the age of 8, what was that transformation like for you?

Coming from Haiti to America was a culture shock. Not being able to speak the language was a huge barrier because everyone was speaking english to me at school, and I wasn't able to understand a word. At 8 years old, coming to a brand new country, not speaking the language and having to adjust was pretty tough. Looking back, it just shows the resilience of children. I remember thinking, "I just have to make the best of this." I also remember being teased, being told that I smelled, that I needed to go back to my nation. It hurt, but I used all of that to fuel me. I decided to do my very best in school and within two months I picked up on the English language.

What was it like being raised by a man who fathered multiple children?

My father's absence is actually the fuel and the catalyst for what I do now. By the grace of God I was able to heal, but it was painful. I remember as a little girl longing for my dad. I had a lot of self loathing and after a while I really eternalized his absence. I started to believe that his absence was because of me. I started to think that it was something I did or said as a child, that caused him to not be around. Of course, as time went on I realized it had absolutely nothing to do with me and I took my childhood back; because he had all of it.

You mentioned that you survived a fire at the age of 14, what happened and how did it affect you as a teen?

I was awoken by my cousin saying "Wake-up! There's a fire!" I remember leaving the house on a cold January day, and only having the clothes on my back, which was a t-shirt and jeans. To have absolutely nothing but the clothes on my back was something. Thank God for good family and friends that we stayed with for that night. We went to a family friend's home to sleep for the night, but I don't even know how I slept that night. I remember waking up in the morning feeling like it was a dream, until I realized, "okay this really happened and I don't have a home." I remember the horror on my mother's face when they called her too. Thankfully my mother was a nurse and we were able to move into our own home within a year, after staying with a family.

At the age of 5, you were molested. How did this affect you as a child and through your adolescent years?

I was very sexually aware. It wasn't until I migrated to New York, until I told my mother what happened. I remember that it was specifically a family friend who violated me. Again, I self loathed. I thought, "maybe it's me, it can't be the person who did it. It had to be me." Doing well in school is how I meditated.

Do you believe that these specific experiences helped you to be emotionally free? If so, how?

By doing the inner work and by the grace of God, I was able to do the inner work with His grace. I was able to look

in and go into a lot of deep self reflection by really becoming aware of the narrative that I was telling myself. That narrative that you tell yourself not only becomes a way of life, it becomes your personality. My narrative was that I wasn't enough. that I wasn't deserving and that I wasn't worthy. By doing the inner work, I started to change that narrative by believing that I was worth it, that I was deserving, that I was worthy. I started to recognize my strengths and the things that I needed to work on. I also had the mental model of having to be perfect, of having to be a perfectionist. Again, that mental model is what is rooted in not feeling enough, not feeling deserving. I can say now and for many years now, I have been living an emotionally free life. Meaning, I take responsibility for what is mine, I acknowledge when I am wrong and [I am] self compassionate.

"...when you come to know who you are it affects the way you live, as well as the way you love."



What influenced you to become a celebrity relationship therapist?

It actually wasn't something I set out to do. I knew that I wanted to help other people become just as emotionally free as I am. One thing I realized, is that I help people recognize their power by living emotionally free. It was not something I originally planned on doing. I did not set out to say that I was going to work with celebrities, politicians or NFL players. It was something that came about. I remember getting a first phone call from TLC and having to do group therapy for a reality [TV] show. It was something I really enjoyed and I gravitated towards it. I sought out some of the key players in the mental health department of the NFL. It took years for me to develop a relationship [with them] and then it just developed from there. It really just all happened. I take pride in what I do and I am loving every minute of it.

What has been the biggest challenge you have faced, as a celebrity therapist?

I would say balancing family life and my career. I give my all to my clients by being extremely accessible to them. Having to balance being a wife, a mom, engaging with my clients, doing speaking events and writing books has been difficult. Balancing and being present in everything that I do has been the challenge. I am constantly challenged by it as well.

What has been the most rewarding part about being a celebrity relationship therapist?

Seeing people become emotionally free. Seeing people recognize their power and owning it. Seeing people become vulnerable. Seeing people take emotional responsibility for themselves. I always tell my clients that there is a big difference between being responsible for someone and being responsible to them.



"I believe that low self esteem is a false belief. A false belief is really the conclusion that someone draws about you." It is so humbling and gives great joy to see them fully own that. Hence, that is the emotional freedom to see them self validate and no longer needing external validation. It's a beautiful thing to see them have the moment.

You are the author of the book "Naked and Transparent: Six Vital tools for Knowing Yourself and attracting healthy relationships." What is this book about? And how has your experience as a therapist influenced your ideas in the book?

[This book] is about people who are struggling in unhealthy relationships and who need a solution as to why. It's really about people who are feeling lost and trapped. It's about them going into the power of knowing themselves, its the power of self introspection and knowing what it is about them that is attracting the same type of woman and the same type of man, and to really get a chance to look at their lives and attract something healthy. I believe that everyone that comes into our life is our mirror. They get a chance to show us how we really feel about ourselves and who we really are. So this book is about doing the inner work, doing the self reflection, becoming self aware and then doing the work to become emotionally free to attract more love, success, peace and joy in their life.

The book really stemmed from me not knowing myself, because I did not have my father around. It came from the pain that I felt because he was not around and then the inner work that I did as a result. I do believe that when you come to know who you are it affects the way you live, as well as the way you love. It really changes your life. My goal in writing this book was really to help others think about their narrative, their narrative identity, their past, their relationships life choices and ultimately living as their true self. "I take pride in what I do and I am loving every minute of it."

You have recently come out with a Therapist Directory called Therapy For Black Men. Please explain what it is about?

In partnership with licensed mental health professionals in private practice throughout the fifty states, TherapyForBlackMen.org is a Therapist Directory that provides proactive, multiculturally competent care to men of color. TherapyForBlackMen.org makes it easy for clients and therapists to connect with each other.

Along with being a celebrity, you are also a media personality. What is that experience like for you?

It's nice being able to talk to people on a broader scale and to be able to reach people more widespread. For example, my sessions are one on one but what I love about being able to come in on media is being able to connect with more than one person. To connect with a few a people and then they can go home and reflect on what they learned based on what they heard or what they saw on television. I love being able to connect with a whole group of people.

Some of the hot topics you focus on are relationships, trauma, self esteem, sex and dating, and addiction. Out of those topics, what advice would you give to someone who is struggling with low self esteem?

My advice is to get to know who you are really. What is the narrative? Are you someone who is blaming yourself for anything in your life? What transpired you to have a low self esteem? Because it is always reciprocated by something. I would say get to the root of where the low self-esteem comes from. Is it something that someone said to you? I believe that low self esteem is a false belief. A false belief is really the conclusion that someone draws about you. For example, I had low self esteem even though I did well in school. It was a false belief because I believed that I was not worthy enough because my father was not around. Him not being around was a false belief because it had nothing to do with me, it had everything to do with him because he was wounded. But that false belief came because he was not around. I would encourage anyone who is experiencing a low self esteem to get to the root of where the low self esteem came from. After evaluating and understanding the root cause, really work on changing the narrative. Focus on self awareness. Who are you? How would people describe you? How are other people experiencing you? Then from there, build that self-esteem. Look at the things you are really good at and the characteristics that make you who you are. Focus on those things, before you focus on meditation. Focus on the strengths and then build from there. Constantly engage in self-reflection.

Faith, Courage and Hollywood



"I don't care what you are going through, once you get it, keep going!!! Your day is coming!! ... I believe in you and I love you." Actress Tabitha Brown Dishes on Loss, Love, and Her Secret to Success

By Florence Edwards

Hollywood actress Tabitha Brown, has been capturing and entertaining audiences since the tender age of 5. Known for independent films, "Laughing to the Bank" the award winning feature film "I am Still Here," Bounce TV's "Family Time," ABC Family's "Switched at Birth," and her sketch comedy on The Ellen Show, Tabitha Is taking Hollywood by storm, and is proving that a little faith can go a long way.

A devoted wife, mother and fashion designer hailing from Eden, North Carolina, Mrs. Brown's big break in the world of entertainment began in 2002, as she beat the competition to become the new female co-host and celebrity interviewer of the late night TV show, The Busta Brown Show for the WB. After being a successful co-host, she made the big move to Los Angeles in 2004, and has been featured in music videos, infomercials, and popular Netflix films, including "Outrighteous,""Keeping the Faith," and Jessica Sinclair's "Thug Love."

An in-demand actress, Tabitha is currently in production with Martin Sheen and Edi Gathegi on feature film "Princess of the Row" to be released 2018. The host of the humorous Facebook Live vegan cooking show, Tabitha has been an inspiration to over 100,000 loyal fans and around the world. Although Tabitha is a success story, her journey to success has been anything but a fairytale. Health issues, the loss of her mother, and other unforeseen challenges threatened to stop her from living her dream, but the unstoppable triple-threat proves that faith in God conquers all.

Florence: As a devoted wife and mother, how has fame Florence: What would you say is the secret to a happy, impacted your relationship? Have people closest to you long-term marriage that most couples overlook? changed since you've become more known in Hollywood? Tabitha: The friendship!! Liking each other vs loving each

foundation is so secure! My family and friends are my foun- other, you're really happy! Always be honest and talk to dation and things have only gotten better! I'm so blessed each other!! And when change is happening on either with the most supportive husband and kids! They are my side, take time to understand what the other person is goeverything!

Florence: A lot of people who desire to make their dreams Florence: What would be the role of a lifetime for you? come true endure loss. You've endured a very tragic loss on the road to stardom. How did you push toward your dream after your mom transitioned?

short and while we are able, we should always pursue our dreams!!

Florence: What do you do on a daily basis to keep a positive mindset?

Tabitha: Pray and live my life by leading with love!

Florence: You're a very spiritual person. Have people in the industry been supportive of you being so open about your Florence: What's next for you, Tabitha? What extraordinary beliefs? If not, how do you handle negative feedback?

Tabitha: Most people are supportive! I've had those who have asked am I afraid that my spirituality will prevent me Tabitha: I'm excited about my partnership with Wholefrom making it to the next level, and my answer is simple: foods and all the great things that will be announced this "If I can't be who God has purposed me to be, then that's not for me." I know God has my journey planned for me, so I will never deny my love for him!

that you haven't shared with your fans, and what steps did you take to overcome those challenges?

Tabitha: An eating disorder! For years since high school I had such a hard time with weight. I would starve myself until my nose bled. I would take hundreds of different diet pills! After having a really big health scare, I decided to Tabitha: One thing I would like to leave with everyone is love myself the way God made me!

Florence: Since getting your start as a Hollywood actress, through, once you get it, keep going!!! Your day is comwhat things can aspiring actresses do to prepare for a suc- ing!! Your purpose is waiting!! I believe in you and I love cessful career?

Tabitha: Study, Study, Study... a lot of people want to be famous, but they don't want to do the work that's required! We've got to get into acting class, study and practice! There is always someone willing to outwork you, so you have to be ready! Also the most important thing, Be YOURSELE!

Tabitha: The great thing about where I am in life, is that my other. We love by default but honey when you like each ing through. I adore my husband, he is my best friend!

Tabitha: A TV sitcom as America's new mom! I always say I'm Claire Huxtable meets Roseanne! Lol

Tabitha: After seeing my mom fight so hard to live and Florence: As an African American actress, Hollywood can lose her battle to ALS, it made me realize that life is so be challenging, and full of haters. Have you gotten support from other Black women in Hollywood, or has that been a challenge?

> Tabitha: I always get love from my sisters!! I'm super blessed with amazing women in this industry and we support each other! I think it's a misconception that black women don't support each other, and that actually it is so far from the truth!!

> projects are you looking forward to accomplishing this year?

year!! Also, I'm in the works producing my own TV show "A Taste with Tab" among other great show opportunities that I can't announce just yet! I'm also excited about a feature film I have coming out this year "Princess of the Florence: What are two things you've had to overcome Row," Starring Edi Gathegi and Martin Sheen! I'm also just excited to stay on my vegan journey and continue to inspire people on the journey!

> Florence: What is one message you'd like to leave for them?

> this: When God has something for you, there is absolutely nothing that can stop it! I don't care what you are going you!!

Learn more about Tabitha Brown by visiting her social media pages:

> Facebook: ActressTabithaBrown IG: IamTabithaBrown Twitter: IamTabithaBrown



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LIFESTYLE BRAND HAPPY GIRL GLOW EMPOWERS WOMEN OF COLOR TO SUCCEED

By Tiarsha Harrison

Mompreneur Shae Sterling, creator of HappyGirlGlow.com knows firsthand the juggles and struggles of motherhood and entrepreneurship. From an idea born during her freshmen year of college, Shae launched Happy Girl Glow in November of 2017. Happy Girl Glow is a lifestyle digital community, aimed primarily at assisting ambitious millennial women. Their "Glow Essentials Box" aims at providing a valuable resource to women with access to tools they need to thrive. Inside the subscription box, Shae has curated all-natural organic items including a Mrs. Meyers Clean Day Soy Candle, Seventh Generation Chlorine-Free Pantyliners, Gluten-Free Jason products, Banana Boat Sunscreen Lip Balm and more. We caught up with Shae to find out about the inspiration behind such a community and why this resource is so important for millennial African-American women.

What inspired you to make happy girl glow?

Ultimately what led me to create HGG and why I'm motivated to do what I do and build this lifestyle brand is because of intelligent, talented and personable women like Oprah, Martha Stewart, and Joanna Gaines. These women are serial entrepreneurs who have built successful brands by creating a lifestyle associated with their respective outlets. From watching them on TV to reading their books and magazines I've learned so much from them over these past years. They've really helped influence the woman I am today by instilling money management, cooking techniques, homeownership and more into my mind. I realized that there are other girls out there who could benefit from this same shared knowledge but won't receive it because of their economical background or being a racial minority unless it is communicated to them in a trendy way.

Why is it so important to uplift young African American women in this society?

This is the most dynamic, multi-faceted and technologically advanced generation of women that's ever existed. So our mission is to be a catalyst with the forward evolution of today's girls. Our target of millennial African-American women need this because our site inspires and enables our tribe to better themselves and #glowup.

In a time when most millennial women are underpaid and overeducated we are helping to level the playing field by strengthening their confidence and supporting them to help ensure they succeed in what they set their minds to. They gain a real family when they subscribe to our box, an accountability partner.

What tools do you provide women?

The resources we provide are all tools hard working ambitious women need. Ranging from free tips on social media (people love getting our Instagram tips), help creating a plan of action for meeting your goals through consultations, free planner template sheets, emailing our team is always an option, we're here to edit essays, give notes on how to better craft your resume, using our platform to advertise for them, help you choose lipsticks and outfits plus MORE.

In your opinion, why is it so important to stay positive in this world that we live in today?

It's hard to really narrow down but my best response is simply for your own peace of mind. If you're not mentally at peace, then you won't be hopeful in the hard times and instead you'll be easily defeated. Girl, everyday there will be obstacles and negativity that presents themselves so if you are easily defeated you'll stand no chance at happiness. We want to see you happy. We want to help you stay happy and that is why being positive despite today's negative environments is imperative.

How has social media influenced your bra?

Such a good question because we just held our first ever fireside chat #IlluminateHER and social media was the topic of choice for all the attendees. We held both an





Instagram, Facebook and Twitter poll to see what the attendees wanted to chat about and social media won hands down, so we invited two social media specialists as speakers, I acted as moderator, and the conversation went SO well. It wasn't like the stuffy panel discussions where you just listen and take notes, "Ahem"... our girls got to really sit around a fire with their wine or hot chocolate and ask each other questions and share social media tips. In that convo a lot of girls said they felt twitter was dying, that Facebook is forever, and Instagram wins over Snapchat. Very insightful convo for sure.

"...being positive despite today's negative enviornments is imperative."

Instagram: @HappyGirlGlowOfficial Twitter: @HappyGirlGlow Facebook: Secret Members only group and Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/happygirlglow

Make Peace with Fat How to Work with Your Fat to Get Fit

Dr. Sheron Brown

"A minute on the lips, a lifetime on your hips." -Unknown

Have you heard that one before? Better still, have you felt that one before? I have. I would eat a cookie, or a piece of cake and feel as if I was putting on the pounds in the moment then work out for a week with sweat everywhere and feel like nothing changed. I would then beat myself up with the questions: What's wrong with me? Why did I eat that? Will these pounds ever leave?



Don't Fight Fat

I became conscious of fat as a little girl, thanks to my mother. Whenever she got dressed to go out, she'd turn her back to the mirror with her bra on and say, "I want to get rid of that piece of meat." As I got older, I learned that it was back fat. I would laugh, but it didn't take long for me to take on the same behavior of looking in the mirror, grabbing the excess meat of my stomach with both hands, shaking it around and yelling at it. You know what I'm talking about. You're probably laughing right now because you or someone you're close to have done it.

Well, it doesn't have to be this way. Trying to get rid of fat by spending hours in the gym and eating boring salads with no results could mean that you've been fighting the fat because you don't understand it. Instead of fighting the fat, you can use it to your advantage to get fit and healthy.

If you are overweight or your doctor has told you that you're obese and you've been trying to lose weight to no avail, I've got news for you: stop resisting the fat! Dr. Wayne Dyer once said that what you resist, persists. After looking into his statement, I

discovered that Carl Jung, a well-known psychologist, argued years earlier that "What you resist not only persists, but will grow in size." If you have been fighting the fat, you have been resisting while it has been persisting—and probably growing. **You can stop now. There is another way.**

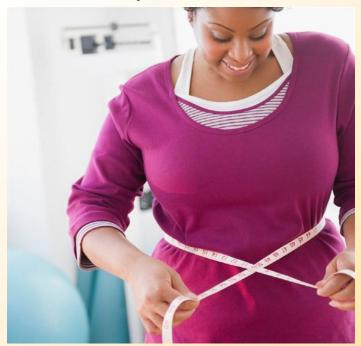
Seek First to Understand

First, understand the fat. All of the fat on your body is not bad. Yes. Researcher, Dr. Sylvia Tara, refers to fat as another organ because it contributes to the production of hormones. She also couples the type of hormone the fat produces with the color of the fat.

There is brown fat. Everyone has it and should want brown fat. This fat helps to generate heat and burn calories. Brown fat also contributes to the production of the hormone leptin. With increased levels of leptin, your brain tells you to stop eating and you eat less. See? I told you, you should want brown fat.

There is also white fat. This fat creates a cushion around your organs and keeps them safely protected with movement. White fat also produces ghrelin, the hormone that lets you know you are hungry. The fat is not necessarily bad because it serves several purposes in your body, but the issue is when there is excess white fat. You feel extra hungry. The good thing though is you can burn the white fat by maximizing the brown fat! Then there is beige fat. I'll keep it simple. Beige fat is good because it produces adiponectin. What's that? Keep reading.

Now, the two main location related fat that I want you to be aware of are subcutaneous and visceral fat. Subcutaneous fat is under the surface of your skin. This is where you would mostly find brown and beige fat, but the visceral fat is that fat we don't like. Visceral is the belly fat—the excess white fat that people try to burn off with exercise. Fortunately, adiponectin helps to turn the beige fat brown, and that helps you lose the weight. So, all you need to do is make friends with the brown and beige fat in order to bring the white fat into balance.**How do you do that?**



Use Fat to Lose Fat

Befriend your fat. Use your knowledge of fat to lose fat. There is a 3-pronged approach you can use to successfully release the excess fat you've been wanting to lose.

1. Intermittent Fasting.

From the time you go to bed at night until you eat in the morning, technically you are fasting. In order to do an intermittent fast, you simply need to extend the time for another eight hours. Essentially, the fast should last for about 16 hours. In addition to decreasing your appetite and increasing your self-control, fasting helps to improve self-discipline. As that happens, you experience personal growth, you learn more about yourself and you improve your relationship with food as you eat more high fiber foods. Your new relationship will contribute to good eating habits that last.

2. Appropriate Sleep.

The "I'm on my grind," "get your hustle on" mindset that makes you think you have to stay busy longer is increasing your levels of visceral, white fat. You want to get your eight hours of sleep. Here's why. When you sleep, you increase your leptin levels and decrease ghrelin thanks to your brown and beige fat. In other words, you're hungry less, and you eat less. Get your beauty rest and let your fat work in your favor.

3. HIIT the Gym.

There's no way around it. Exercise is necessary, but don't just do anything hoping you'll release weight. Be smart about it and use High Intensity Interval Training. This is how you do it:

◊Warm up for 5 to 10 minutes

- Engage in high level cardio where it's difficult to talk for 60 seconds
- Engage in medium level cardio where it's easier not too easy to talk for 120 seconds
- Repeat the high and medium levels cycle for 20 minutes

◊Cool down for 5 to 10 minutes

Include HIIT in your exercise program two to three days a week on non-consecutive days. In addition to getting more out of your workout in a shorter period of time, you will increase your levels of adiponectin, turn that beige fat to brown and burn more calories.

There you have it. You no longer need to resist the fat, especially since that will just bring more fat. Thinking against it and beating yourself up, only contributes to the cycle of guilt or stress eating. Instead, make friends with the fat. Recognize that fat has a purpose and that it will work with you if you work with it.

Now, go make peace with your fat and get fit!



Sheron Brown, Ph.D. is the owner of Sweet Eden by Sheron, a wellness education company. She is also the author of The Wellness-Purpose Connection™: The Ultimate Guide to Maximizing Your Life Experience. As a certified integrative nutrition health coach and yoga instructor, Sheron teaches mindful practices that helps you heal your physical,



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