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SMOOCHES WOMAN MAGAZINE

BIG GIRL BOUNCE

The New Curvy Girl Anthem

Downtown
& Brooklyn

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7 CURVY TRAVEL
BLOGGERS
TO FOLLOW

**HOT GIRL
QUARANTINE**

Curves
Around
The
World

MAMA PAIN

Alisa Boykins

Will Traxx

Tiffany Flamer

smoocheswoman.com



SWIMSUIT EDITION

SMOOCHES WOMAN MAGAZINE

THE LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR THE CURVY WOMAN

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Special Thanks

First and foremost, we want to give thanks to our heavenly father for his continued FAVOR, GRACE, AND MERCY and for his guidance on our journey to empower the lives of women. We thank him for allowing us the strength and endurance to complete this issue during these unprecedented times. Special thanks to our amazing team, our Brand Ambassadors and the women who support this movement. We love each one of you!

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Covid 19



CHANTE M. BRADLEY (Founder & Publisher)

Since I was a child, I've heard people repeat the saying: when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade. I'm sure you have, too. But these days, that sentiment feels more true and closer to home.

I always search for the brighter side of every situation; and feel there is a lesson in every trial and tribulation. Between you and me, though, I have to admit that I've struggled to recognize the silver lining of this Coronavirus moment. Just like most of the people in the world, my livelihood was greatly impacted. My business came to a screeching halt. I was determined not to allow the loss of income to consume my thoughts, so I tried to focus more on staying healthy and use this unprecedented time to reconnect with my family in ways that time had not allowed before. I tried to focus on what could be gained from this moment. I was ready to take this experience head-on just like all the other life obstacles. But just like everyone else, I could never have foreseen how long we would experience this pandemic.

After weeks into this quarantine, I began to feel overwhelmed, fearful and consumed by uncertainty. The constant news reports and social media posts of people losing their loved ones to this virus began to take a mental toll on me. At first, it was reports of people I did not know. As weeks progressed, however, it became people I knew or had some connection to. And then, it came home. It struck my family. Finding the silver lining became harder. For the first time in my life, I felt unable to identify the lesson in the experience and I started to question my foundation. I questioned my usually successful strategies for how to maneuver through life.

I dug deep, to my core, to remember another lesson I've heard people repeat since I was young: walk by faith. It was by faith that I've made it this far and now is not the time for doubt to creep in. Overcoming this adversity will only make me stronger.

What I realized is that the virus removed many of us from the outside world, which forced us to be still and re-focus on what truly matters. For a moment, I began to think that maybe, in some way, this is a reset for a society that began to take life's greatest blessings, such as family, for granted.

COVID-19 has awakened a new level of gratitude that I never knew before. This wakeup call reiterated to me that life is truly unpredictable. It reconfirmed that every day is truly a gift that we should not take for granted.

Family and health reign as the most important things in life, no matter what earthly possessions we come to acquire and goals we come to achieve.

So, it turns out I found a silver lining. The silver lining is that we all reconnected with our families and loved ones in a way that may not have happened without this pandemic.

I better understand that being a wife, mother, daughter, family member and friend is the most important role I will have on this earth.

For the first time in my life, I feel connected to the world in a way that assures me, we are all in this together.

Stay healthy and safe,
Smooches

Chante M. Bradley
Editor-in-Chief



EXCLUSIVE

A PUBLISHER'S EXCLUSIVE

Nicole
Cogdell Davis

Photography by
Danna's Photography

SMOOCHES WOMAN MAGAZINE VOL. 51 PG. 4

EXCLUSIVE

A PUBLISHER'S EXCLUSIVE

Curvynista Breaking *Barriers*

An Editor-in-Chief sit-down with Nicole Cogdell Davis, the Sojourner Truth of Chester

Her entire life, Philly-raised Nicole Cogdell Davis has been known as a staunch changemaker, a woman who fights for equality, and a voice for the communities she inhabits.

Her history speaks for itself. She has advocated against gun violence for the last 14 years, first with the Moms in Charge and later with Women of Strength Organizations. As an advocate, she always felt there was a need to speak up and be a voice for community members who had family and friends die due to violent acts in her community. Her advocacy for her local community is why she was nicknamed by a local blogger as the Sojourner Truth of Chester.

After a years-long legal battle that made national news, Davis emerged victorious from a race discrimination lawsuit against her former employer, national apparel retailer, Wet Seal, after she faced discrimination at her job. The lawsuit was filed in Federal District Court in California in 2009.

It was after the lawsuit that she would turn her energy full-time to community advocacy. Presently, she's rallying support for a mobile forensic crime unit for her neighborhood in Chester, which she feels will reduce the crime rate and provide tools needed to solve unsolved murders and violent crimes.

Davis has proven herself to be a curvynista breaking barriers. Smooches Editor Chante Bradley chatted with Nicole to get the history of her Sojourner Truth nickname, the scoop on her life after the lawsuit, and learn about her latest effort to get a mobile forensic crime unit for Chester. (Editor's note: This conversation has been edited for brevity):

S: What's your community involvement with advocacy organizations and what got you involved?

NCD: In 2004, a good friend of mine, Cheryl Marie Harden was murdered at fourth and Hayes, and literally, she fell at the steps of the church. I just could not believe. ... She ran a drill team. She was absolutely positive. And I didn't know that she was actually involved in (Mother's In Charge), because 12 years prior, she lost her daughter Jocelyn to murder as well. I went to Mothers in Charge the day that it happened because me and the co-chapter director Tonya Page was in a whole lot of pain. Here we are at mothers in charge the first mom that I met was a woman by the name of Marvela Daniels and her only child, was protecting his family business, they owned a cleaners. His name was Eric. He went up in a defensive position and a person stabbed him in the heart. And then hearing Dr. Dorothy Johnson-Spike who didn't lose just one child, but two children. One for health reasons, the other one to gun violence for a parking space. I knew that Mother's in Charge was the place that I needed to be.

So, why are you leading a charge for a Forensic Mobile Crime Unit in Chester?

Sometimes, I say to myself, wait, this is not making sense. We know the victims. We know who was murdered. We know the perpetrators. We know who's doing the murders. But we never seem to lockup the people who are supplying the guns. That's who I want to go after and that's the purpose of a forensic mobile unit. Every gun has a story. Every weapon has a story. The forensic mobile unit, it deals with rape. It deals with homicide. It deals with vehicular homicide. It deals with home invasion. It deals with everything. We have a divide; should you bear arms, shouldn't you bear arms. And guess what, you have a right with the Second Amendment to bear arms. Only thing I'm saying is, if someone is murdered, then you should be able to have the tools assessable to hold those accountable. They committed the crime. Imagine if a mobile unit rolled up and could process those kits right on the spot, that's what a mobile unit would be able to do.

How did you get the nickname The Sojourner Truth of Chester?

I got that from blogger Stefan Roots when I came back from a break from all of the interviews. When I came back, they were like Nicole, how does it feel to be the Sojourner Truth of Chester. I even received the Sojourner Truth Award from the National Congress of Black Women, Chester chapter.

What moment did you experience that inspired the lawsuit?

After all my hard work, my GM said "find another job, because I have to let you go." That was a defining moment for me.

What was your reaction when the EEOC gave their decision?

I was on my way to Virginia and (my lead attorney) was like, Nicole, the EEOC decision just came back and I was like, Okay, what was it? And when she told me, my response was, this black girl rocks. Yes, I said, this black girl rocks.

Given your track record as a curvy revolutionist and local activist, what is your response to the recent deaths by black people at the hands of the police?

My response honestly is, he had a life and he had a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and when he said he couldn't breathe, just like Eric Garner couldn't breathe ... everybody has a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. So, if we don't like it, let's exercise our right to vote. Because us who are conscious and woke, have to encourage some other people to vote. Just like you're standing in the protest and you're not stopping, whether it's Coronavirus or anything else, to make your voice heard, make (your voice) heard in terms of voting.

Links

<https://www.facebook.com/nicole.cogdell1>

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

MAMA PAIN ALWAYS TAKES CARE:

Alisa Boykins

Whether on the red carpet, a national television show, or running her Georgia-based nonprofit organization, Aliyah Najm is always a mother and caregiver first. As mother to Grammy Award-winning rapper, songwriter, and producer T-Pain, Najm is known by many as “Mama Pain.”

Since the early 2000s, her life has been intertwined with his celebrity lifestyle, including media interviews, watching her son on television, and making appearances on his behalf. Najm has been named on Who's Who of Atlanta lists, has appeared on numerous major network talk shows including Jimmy Kimmel Live! and Sister Circle, and was a 2016 winner of Food Networks' Clash of the Grandmas.



But behind the seemingly glitzy layers of being matriarch to an internationally-recognized music artist, Najm says she's just a mom like any other, juggling multiple adult children.

Being a celebrity mom is “twofold,” Najm said. “He still calls me when he has a cold, depends on me for advice, or even when he is going through something,” She said. “As I always say; I’m not a celebrity mom, I’m a mom of a celebrity.”

While being ‘part of his world,’ she said, “I have my own life and I am still just mom.”

For the past 13 years, her life was also filled with caregiving for her other son, Rashee. She took him to doctor’s visits, helped with dialysis treatments, and tended to his additional needs. There are times she remembers attending award shows or other celebrity events for T-Pain and leaving after a few hours to return to caring for Rasheed. It was her balancing act.

As a mother, she was always his nurturer. But it wasn’t until she became his official caretaker that she was inspired to launch Caregivers 911, a nonprofit that provides information, resources, and encouragement to help caregivers of those who are terminally ill or face a life-long illness.

She calls the organization her “most fulfilling project.” The organization is an outlet for caregivers to maintain their own physical and mental wellbeing.

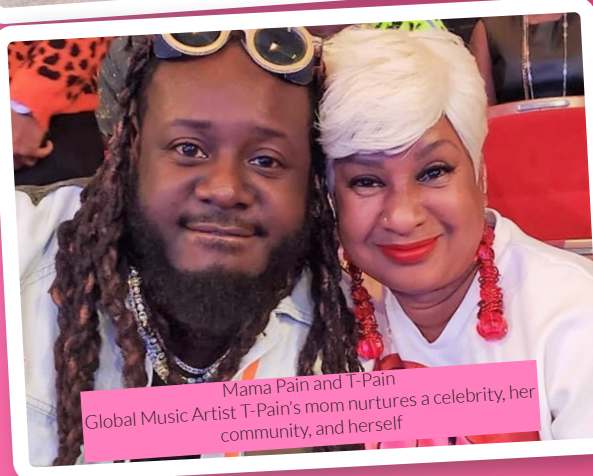
Lately, in the wake of COVID-19 or Coronavirus, the organization has provided resources about prevention, care, and underlying conditions that may make someone vulnerable to COVID-19. The organization has partnered with home health care agencies such as Living Dreams and Healing Hands, which both provide CPR and safety classes on how to handle infectious diseases to prevent potentially fatal situations at home.



Food Network’s Class of the Grandmas



Mama Pain and Rasheed



Mama Pain and T-Pain
Global Music Artist T-Pain’s mom nurtures a celebrity, her community, and herself

birthday party planned by her eldest daughter. She was shocked to see her now-fiance drop to one knee, serenade her with a song, and present her with a ring. She said that at that moment, she remembered how Rash-eeed, her very protective son, approved of him.

After 13 years, her entire life had shifted. No week-day appointments. No set schedule. With it, she’s had to shift her mindset to focus on herself. Part of that meant saying yes to love, when asked to become a wife.

“(Rasheed) is not here in body anymore but his spirit will never leave us,” she said.

These days, she said, she honors Rash-eeed -- who died about a year ago -- by watching over a canister full of his ashes at their home, to keep him near and always with his family.

In the past year, Najm became engaged to a long-time boyfriend at a surprise

Learn more about Mama Pain’s organization Caregivers 911 at www.caregivers911.org

Photography by
Alex Johnson III

Big Girl Bounce

HERB MIDDLETON

Every once in a while, a song is released that represents a great cause or movement. Will Traxx, a Bronx rapper, created a special birthday song a few years ago that still gets spun by DJs at birthday parties. The song even made its way to celebrity birthday parties for thousands, including the 50-year-old celebrations for Will Smith and Diddy.

A new song by Will Traxx, produced by Herb Middleton Music, titled "Big Girl Bounce" released in late May is a club-banger dedicated to curvy women featured on the Smooches Music Project. It's an all-year-round song for confident and bold ladies that like to dance and groove on the dance floor. The "Big Girl Bounce" is also a featured song in The Battle of the Bounce Challenge, an online dance challenge for curvy women all over the world created by The Smooches Woman Movement, Herb Middleton Music, Will Traxx and Model Tiffany Flamer.

Hear the "Big Girl Bounce" at HerbMiddletonMusic.com and across other digital music platforms



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TIFFANY FLAMER



SEVEN CURVY TRAVEL BLOGGERS TO FOLLOW

By Nyemade Boiwu

Many of us have a fair dose of wanderlust running through our veins, an urge to travel or explore the world. For some, life's daily responsibilities can make even the idea of travel seem out of reach. But on digital platforms such as Instagram and online blogs, viewers have the ability to see the world through the eyes of others. Each week, more than 1 million travel-related hashtags are searched, according to TravelPulse. About 36 percent of people use social media for travel inspiration. Popularity has boomed, as a result, for travel bloggers and travel influencers.

But even among this explosion of travel bloggers, it can be a struggle to find plus-size representation. While curvy bloggers do exist, some struggle to build followings, with many unable to crack five-digit followings. Sixty-eight percent of American women are considered plus-size, but plus size people are sparse among the nearly 400,000 photos which populate under Instagram's travel hashtag. Hashtags like *plussizetravel* or *fatgirlstraveling*, on the other hand, offer way less at about 26,000 posts. Slim travelers dominate.

However, a few curvy travel bloggers have broken the barrier, garnering a hefty audience of followers who rush to watch and double-tap their travel adventures. We've compiled a list of travel bloggers to follow on Instagram. We've also spoken with a few about their journeys, their best advice for aspiring travelers, and their take on being curvy while traveling.

1

@curvesandacarryon

www.instagram.com/curvesandacarryon/



Sondra Holtz started blogging her weight loss journey in 2011. By 2016, she said she realized that wasn't her truth anymore. Her Instagram profile "curves and a carry on" was born in 2017 to combine her love for travel and style to inspire people to love their bodies in the present.

Smooches: Are there challenges unique to being a plus size traveler that others might not face?

Holtz: Being a plus size traveler has a lot of stigma attached to it, and that's the biggest challenge. Plus sized people hesitate to get out there and do the things they've dreamed of because they worry about seat sizes, seatbelts, or people staring. It's hard to tell someone how to combat those fears and feelings, so all I can do is lead by example.

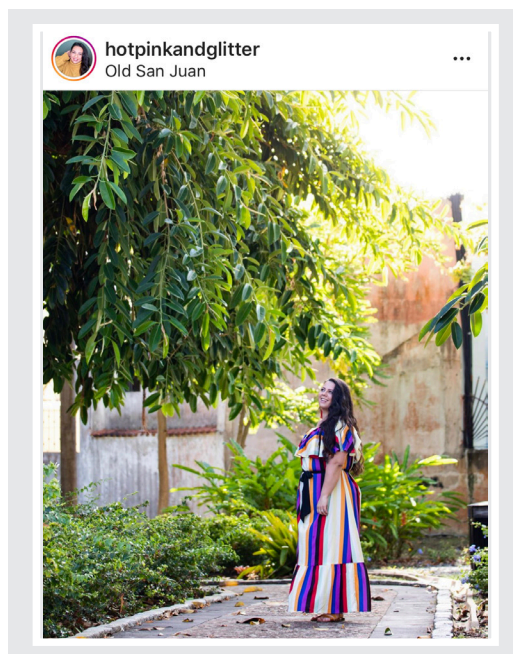
S: What advice would you give to someone hesitant to travel out of fear of size judgment?

H: One day, you're going to look back on your life and you don't want to dedicate that carousel of memories to what you didn't do, or the people who didn't believe in or support you. Do it for you. Do it to expand your world and see what it has to offer, and you'll find your confidence builds as you go.

2

@hotpinkandglitter

www.instagram.com/hotpinkandglitter/



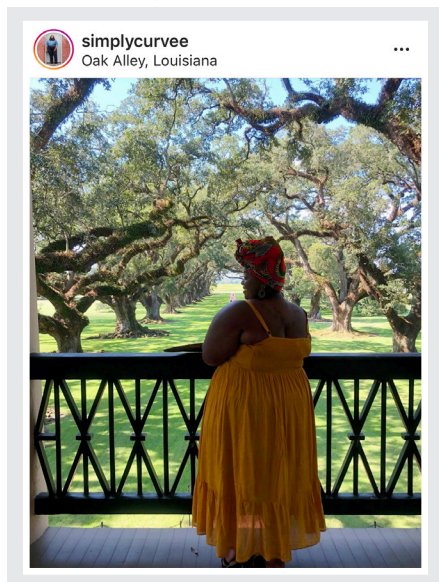
When Callie Richards started sharing her travel and fashion tips on Instagram, she didn't know what was in store. As her platform grew, she wanted a more permanent and comprehensive place to fully share her experiences and tips, among other things. So, about 18 months ago she started her blog, where she writes about her experiences going new places and eating new food. While the travel blog is not her full-time job (she's self-employed), she dedicates hours each week to doling out advice for curvy girls wanting to travel. Some of her favorite places include Paris, where she lived twice and "adores it," and Barcelona.

S: What advice would she give to someone hesitant to travel out of fear of size judgment?

CR: My best advice would be to fill your feed with plus size people and diverse people in general. Follow plus bloggers and travelers. There is immense power in seeing yourself represented in areas that have been historically exclusionary, like travel imagery. Find trustworthy groups and networks, places filled with plus travelers who can ease your concerns and you can ask questions openly and without fear of judgment to best prepare.

3

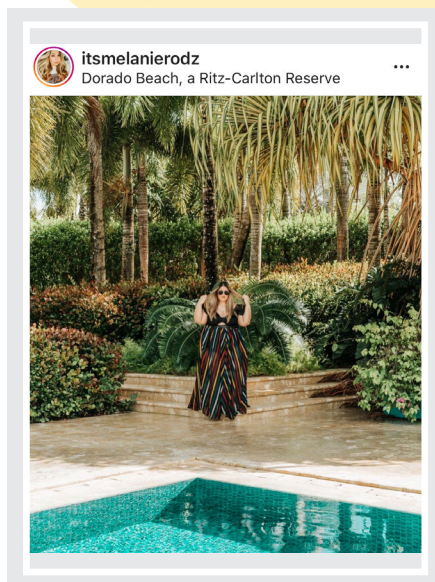
@simplycurvee / @fatgirlstraveltoo

www.instagram.com/simplycurvee/

This plus size millennial black woman was a breath of fresh air. From the bright outfits, to gorgeous original locations, Ashley Wall, known on Instagram as simply-curvee hopes to inspire other plus size millennial women. Wall also created FatGirlsTravelToo, a blog created for plus size women to live proudly as they visit the "amazing destinations they've dreamed of," according to its website. The blog offers curated experience to connect people with new cultures worldwide in authentic ways.

4

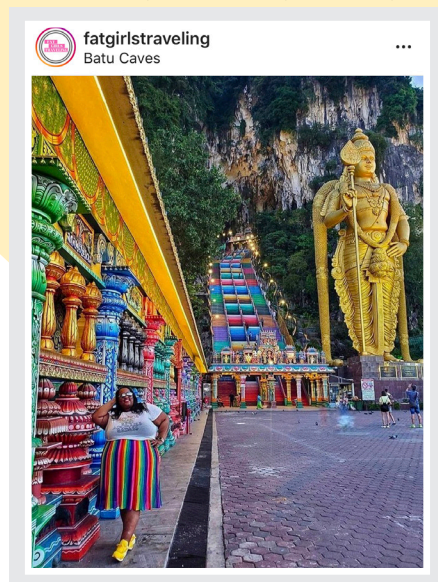
@itsmelanierodz

www.instagram.com/itsmelanierodz/

The tagline for @itsmelanierodz should be "take travel, but make it fashion," because along with traveling across the globe and posting crisp, inspiring images of herself in places including Italy and Puerto Rico, she makes sure to serve major looks at each location. With bilingual, fresh captions she captivates her nearly 6,200 followers to provide travel and fashion inspiration and tips.

5

@fatgirlstraveling

www.instagram.com/fatgirlstraveling/

Besides just sharing pictures of other curvy travelers @fatgirlstraveling has become a community founded on empowering and uplifting women all over the globe. They host retreats, meetups, fat camps and encourage members to meet up.

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6

@FatMenTraveling

www.instagram.com/fatmentravelling/

fatmentravelling

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Osheane Chambers noticed that while there are multiple platforms for plus size women to share their travel tips, concerns and experiences, there were few, if any in the Instagram and YouTube spaces dedicated to plus size men, for them to speak, encourage others and share their travel diaries. He wanted people to be able to see plus size men doing things like jumping off a boat in Vietnam. He found there was a lack of plus size men travel forums and plus size friendly excursions for men. This is why he started fatmentravelling in April 2019. Chambers' day job as a self-employed technology manager allows for frequent international travel. In the past two years he's been to over 30 countries for business and leisure, with Thailand being his favorite. It "will forever have my heart," he said. Among other things, he loves the people, the beautiful scenery, and that it's cheap.

Are there challenges unique to being a plus size traveler that others might not face?

Travelling isn't always easy for plus-size, chubby, fat, fluffy, curvy, big and tall people. Travelling is meant to be a fun enjoyable experience, however for the plus-size community, we go through a mental battle of emotions and doubts before boarding our flight and before even booking the flight. From fitting into narrow airplane seats, plane armrests squeezing our thighs, the look on fellow passengers' faces hoping we're not going to sit next to them, and the shame of requesting a seat belt extenders.

What advice would he give to someone hesitant to travel out of fear of size judgment?

Whether you travel or not, you'll be judged. Whether you're slim or fat, you'll be judged. Whether you wear something from eBay or Dior, you'll be judged. Whether you fit in the seat or not, you'll be judged. Live your life care free, unapologetic, and love you for who you are. Go out there and explore this beautiful world we live in. There are resources out there for the plus size community, for example seat guru allows you to check the seat width on every airline before picking your seat.

7

@sherryivy_

www.instagram.com/sherryivy/

sherryivy_

Ubud, Bali, Indonesia

...



Full-time traveler Sherry offers gorgeous photos of lush scenes around the world from Bali to Malaysia and Indonesia. In one photo, she's caught in motion, spinning beneath a Bali waterfall in a black and yellow floral dress. In another, she's captured swaying on a tree swing on a picturesque beach, tips of her hair almost brushing the sand. Beyond the photos, Sherry draws in followers with thoughtful, body positive, often personal captions that give an even better understanding of the writer. She gives honest takes on social movements and some beloved landmarks, such as a post about Lempuyung Luhur Temple where she muses about how she wishes there was more care for the history and the cultural significance of the site by tourists.

CURVES AROUND THE WORLD



The summer usually represents freedom and growth and coming into oneself. So, this year's Curves Around The World collaboration will feature an ode to Queendom. There is nothing more inspiring than the love of self-leadership, strength, and beauty within. We took a trip all around the world, and back in time celebrating Queendom and featuring a modern take on Ancient Egyptian, Tudor, Rococo and West African Monarchs. Special thanks to our collaborators Painted Thighs and K' lashe with Make-up Artist Devonda Dunn.

Event Coordinator: Chante Bradley

Creative Director: Antoinette "Toney"

Set Director: Deion L.

Photographer: Darryl Bradley /Acereel Studio

Models: Smooches Model Movement

Make up: A Beat Above Average

Designers: Global Mindset, Painted Thighs & K'Lashe Designs

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HEADPIECE & EARRINGS GLOBAL MINDSET
DRESS PAINTED THIGHS
MODEL OBIOMA MARTIN



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DRESS PAINTED THIGHS
MODEL YOLANDA MACKLIN





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MODEL JIMILLE FIGARO



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TOP & TIGHTS PAINTED THIGHS
MODEL KIMBERLY COTY



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ACCESSORIES GLOBAL MINDSET
DRESS PAINTED THIGHS
MODEL ORISHA PRINGLE



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PROJECT CURVES AROUND THE WORLD
ACCESSORIES GLOBAL MINDSET
DRESS PAINTED THIGHS
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MODEL DEBRA HOOD





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COVER UP PAINTED THIGHS
MODEL JESSICA DAVIS



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MODEL NIKISHA MOUZON





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Hot Girl

Quarantine

By Deja Bradley

EMBRACING YOUR INNER HOT GIRL,
EVEN DURING THE QUARANTINE

The *Hot Girl Summer* phenomenon crashed on the scene in 2019 and for many young women, summer would become forever known as “Hot Girl Summer.” The term was coined and embodied by self-proclaimed “Houston Hottie,” rapper Megan Thee Stallion best known for her tight, catchy rhymes and on-stage twerking skills. Hot Girl Summer was a phenomenon, later turned into a hit single with Nicki Minaj and Ty Dolla \$ign. It encouraged and empowered women of all ages to be confident, free, and have fun.

Many were looking forward to the upcoming summer, sure to be filled with more brunches, beaches, and hot girl energy. But that was before COVID-19, or Coronavirus would upend the lives of millions of Americans, creating a new day-to-day normal for most citizens and leaving the idea of summer, as we know it, in limbo.

Social distancing and quarantine likely wasn’t how many envisioned the start of the warmer months, but it seems to be becoming a new normal. And the changing routine can be overwhelming. Stay-at-home orders have been issued and

with so much time at home, people are spending hours on social media scrolling through posts, comparing themselves and their lives to others, from relationships to finances. But this is the exact opposite of what Hot Girl Summer promotes and making these comparisons can damage self-esteem.

The Hot Girl mentality doesn’t have to disappear because quarantine is here. Megan Thee Stallion promotes women empowerment, women looking and feeling their best. Megan’s lyrics and appearance are full of confidence. When her voice booms on a track, it can make one feel like they’re on top of the world. The confidence she encourages can still exist during this period. But how can women do this and feel their best during a seemingly stagnant and unprecedented time period?

Though gyms are closed, many are turning to YouTube and Instagram for at-home workouts. Others are joining online yoga classes. Some are turning to online courses hosted by influencers and celebrities. Embrace lyrics by the “Hot Girl” such as, “handle me, who gon’ handle me?” to give yourself a stronger mentality to set and

reach new goals. Workouts are a great way to boost happiness and make use of your time.

Isolation can also lead to feelings of loneliness. If you’re feeling that, now may be a good time to reconnect with friends and family you haven’t spoken to in a while. You could spend the time learning about yourself in solitude. You could perfect a craft, start that YouTube channel, build new relationships, or simply revisit old hobbies.

Debates on social media have swirled about productivity and whether or not people should emerge from quarantine with new skills, businesses, or hobbies. While this can be a good opportunity for some, this is not everyone’s reality. Allow time to adjust to a new normal, and take time to do exactly what you want. That can even be, simply, nothing.

This season is new for everyone but you can still make the most of it. While it can feel lonely, this may be time to focus on yourself in ways you couldn’t before. Just always remember that you’re a Hot Girl.



Spring Into Summer with Healthy and Meaningful Relationships

By Marla Fowlkes

Spring is in the air; with the temperature changing, so, too, are your relationships. Whether for better or worse, relationships are shifting.

In the spring and summer, we let new relationships bloom, cultivate deeper current relationships and maintain older ones. Have you taken the temperature of your relationships? Do your acquaintances and friends seem distant? Are you really connecting with people? Or, are you in your own little world? With the boom of social media, when was the last time you actually called someone? Let's take a moment to explore how we can get better at improving and growing healthy relationships.

New Relationships

Spring is a great time to start a relationship. Things bloom in the spring. Find ways to mingle. Understand that new relationships could bring change to your life. However, meeting new people should be fun and light. Easy conversations should lead to common ground. Keep your objections and any negativity to a minimum. Whether it's business or personal, set boundaries but be open to fresh ideas and new energy. Getting to know someone takes time and should not be rushed.

Enjoy each encounter and learn from each conversation. This is when your active listening skills should kick in. People like to feel special and needed. Be attentive and don't appear aloof during your encounters. Try to give the person your undivided attention whether in person or on the phone. Be authentic in your opinions and statements. The most difficult thing about beginning any type of new relationship is establishing trust. Believe what people show and say about themselves. Besides, what choice do you have until proven otherwise? Some of us tend to bring baggage to the door or become guarded when meeting new people. Unfortunately, this creates unwanted tension and makes comparisons of others inevitable. In any event, be clear about your expectations. What do you want for yourself? What are you moving toward? In the back of your mind, you should be echoing What's In It For Me or WIIFM? It's perfectly fine to have this mindset. Realize that there are great people everywhere, and learn where to go to meet them. This is especially important when fostering new business relationships. Go where your audience goes. Be a people magnet. Summer is around the corner and brings even more possibilities to start anew!

Current Relationships

Sure, it's a great time for new relationships. But what about existing ones? Who have you spoken to lately? It's time to assess your current relationships. Are there people who no longer serve a purpose in your life? We often surround ourselves with those people who make us better. However, some people drain us and bring out the worse in us. We tend to hold on to these toxic relationships; as fear can cause us to hold on to these toxic unions out of fear of being alone. When assessing your current relationships, pay attention to people's overall behavior. Do they exude negative energy? Is your time being monopolized? Currently, are you apprehensive about being in the company of certain individuals? It is so important to recognize the red flags. You are in the driver's seat when it comes to who you allow in your space. Surround yourself with positivity. People who make you feel good about yourself can assist in elevating you. Those individuals who are full of resources, your biggest cheerleaders, and will help you in need are all keepers. Evaluate your current tribe. What are you gaining or losing in your current relationships? Happiness? Uneasiness? Energy? If you don't know the answers, it's time to revamp your camp. Don't take your relationships for granted. Enjoying relationships is a privilege — it's not something that is guaranteed all of the time. Because of this, you should always treat your relationships like they are something special, worthy of celebration. Keep your tribe close and keep them encouraged. In turn, they will do the same for you.

Mature Relationships

For the people who have been there for you, developing a mature relationship over years, you must be intentional about keeping these folks around. They can be high or low maintenance but you have established the barometer and it feels good. Trust has been established. You can share your most intimate thoughts without being judged. Likely, you rarely argue over finances. You have agreed to disagree, and all parties involved realize that anger is a waste of time. Respect has been established and the line has been drawn in the sand a long time ago. Value the relationship but above that, value the friendship. These relationships have withstood the test of time. Undeniable support is only a phone call or text away. Mutual and separate interests have played a major role in staying in touch. With this, it's always something to talk about or catch up on. More importantly, no conversation is ever off the table or forced. When the going gets tough, you can always count on your more mature relationships to pull you through.

We should always make new connections, evaluate the current ones, and protect the mature bonds. Relationships make the world spin. Remember that mastering the art of communication will sustain any rapport.

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LIZZO

THE BIG POP QUEEN LIZZO

how she's reshaping what popstars look like

By Setoria Key

Lizzo, the self-assured and flamboyant pop star, has taken the world by storm. As a flutist, songwriter, and award-winning phenomenon, she has risen to the top by being the fullest version of herself. At 31, Lizzo captivates audiences with her bold expressions of self-love and anti-body shaming sentiments.

In 2019, her single "Truth Hurts" skyrocketed to the top of the billboard charts and broke the mold of how a pop singer can present themselves to the public. At 5'10" and nearly 300 pounds, Lizzo is daring and sexy -- rarely wearing pants and often opting for bodysuits during performances. In already high-energy performances, she dances, sings, raps, and plays the flute while twerking, showing size doesn't dictate artistry level. Not only are her performances unapologetic, but her racy social media posts are the same in nature.

Mainstream pop culture has historically been known to idolize and deem entertainers as "curvy," such as Beyoncé and Jennifer Lopez, but rarely did those celebrities represent women larger than a size 12. In music, curvy women have often been underrated stars, from Martha Wash to Jazmine Sullivan. Over the decades, there have been many tales of discrimination of plus size women in the entertainment industry. Stories have emerged about curvy women often pushed out of the spotlight because their size was seen as unappealing to the masses. However

Lizzo's career trajectory, as the latest in a lineage of plus size black female entertainers, represents a turning of tides in pop culture expectations of how entertainers look, opening a dialogue about the inclusivity of bigger bodies in these often critical spaces.

Nowadays, entertainers take the art of visibility or branding into their own hands. Artists rarely wait in line to be accepted by the industry. Now, they can pave their own way by gaining new fans on digital platforms. Though she now entertains 8.6 million Instagram followers with engaging videos and sometimes shocking photos, Lizzo has built her fame over nearly a decade. The Detroit-born singer first came onto the scene in 2013 with her first album *Lizzobangers*. She has since appeared on several TV shows, including David Letterman and Ru Paul's *Drag Race*, and won multiple Grammy Awards.

She uses her platform now to promote body positivity to her followers, often speaking about how women of all body types should be treated equally. On the platforms, she's an outspoken advocate for the curvy woman. She called out Twitter in January for having "too many trolls," and later called out video-app Tik Tok for removing her bathing suit photo despite not removing other swimsuit photos of women of smaller sizes.

Long before Lizzo would twerk on Instagram, darling divas such as jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald and soul singer Aretha

Franklin were remarked for their beauty and incredible talent. They, too, broke the mold of what singers looked like at that time. Though never celebrated as ideal sized women, their legacies transcend time. Female hip-hop pioneers, such as Queen Latifah and Missy Elliott never shied away from showing curves and never let it stop their party, always standing strong in their self-worth while showing a range of talents and emotional depth to further normalize curvier women. In the late 2000s, curvy culture was more largely embraced and many full-figured females received front-line attention. Singers like Jill Scott and Jazmine Sullivan were able to be center-stage acts, rather than fade into the background.

Many female artists are trapped in an industry which pressures for perfection and encourages them to do whatever it takes to be appealing in the public eye, from starving themselves to plastic surgery, even if it may lead to health issues or death. Choosing to love your natural body and decline the chance for physical alterations can be viewed as rebellious. That's why when pop diva Lizzo came on the scene, she emerged as the latest in the lineage of those women who let their curves live while their talent spoke. In a way, she has reintroduced audiences to an idea that was there all along, that beauty and confidence in the female music industry have nothing to do with size.

SWIMSUIT EDITION



PHOTOGRAPHY ACEREEL STUDIO
FASHION BESS DRESS BOUTIQUE LAS VEGAS
MODEL JASMINE JAMES



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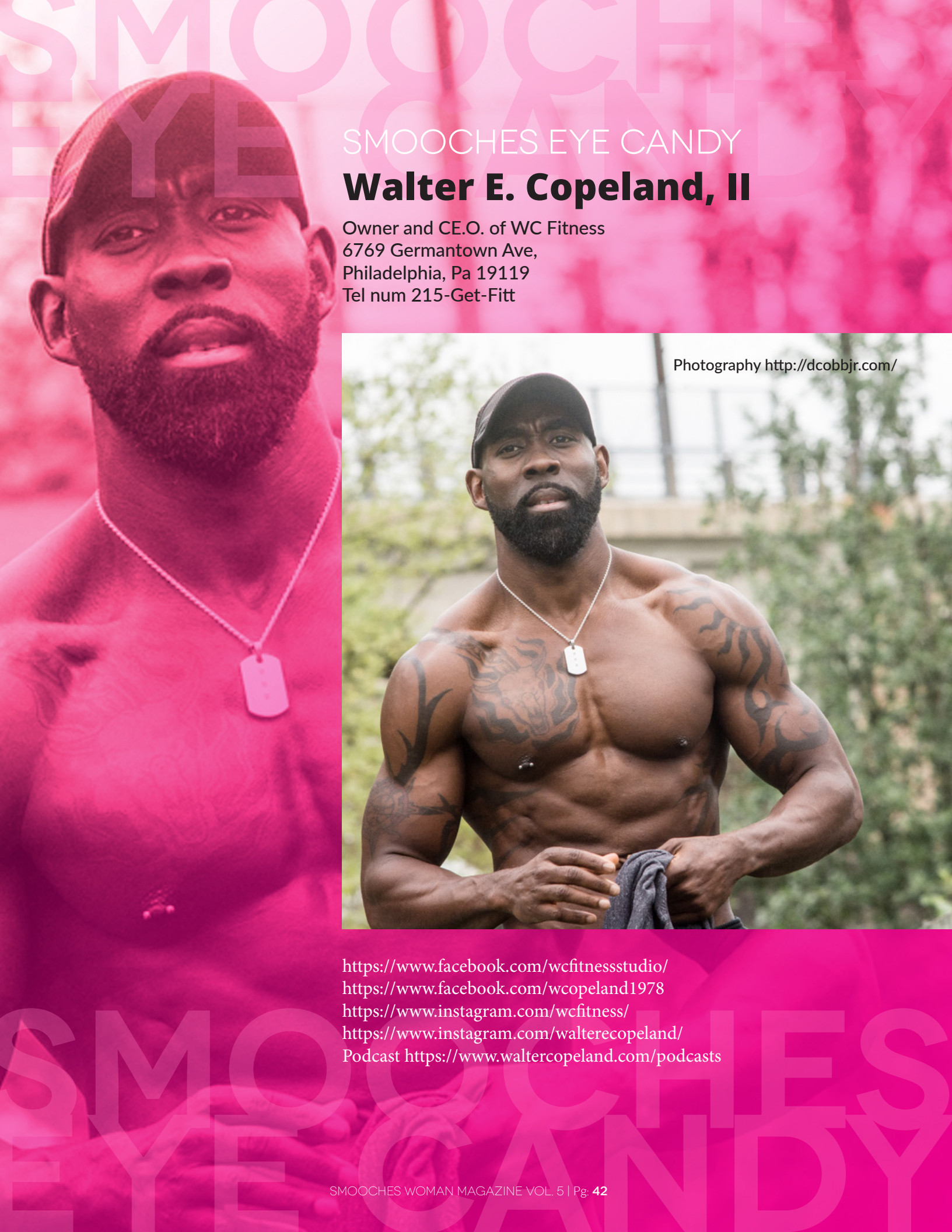


PHOTOGRAPHY ACEREEL STUDIO

FASHION BESS DRESS BOUTIQUE LAS VEGAS

MODEL WANDA T BROWN

SMOOCHES WOMAN MAGAZINE VOL. 5 | Pg. 41



SMOOCHES EYE CANDY

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First thing that I have learned how to do is Pause. There is power in your pause. Pausing allows you to think about what you think about so that you can embrace all things that are possible with this new season of change. Things are never as bad as they first appear. I then process everything that is good that this change will bring to me. Change is not bad, change is not the problem, it's our perspective to and about change that causes the problem. I then Pray so that I am clear on what next steps are and so I am at peace with whatever happens. Praying and waiting to hear from God also positions me to plan with intention so that I can position myself to prosper. Below are a few strategies that I use that helps me embrace new seasons of change with grace:

- ✱ I remain open to the joy of the Lord and what lies ahead today, tomorrow, or even during the next hour.
- ✱ I practice letting go of any predetermined pictures of what my day might be like and experience the day fresh, allowing things to be different from what I might have expected or planned.
- ✱ I am committed to being open to all possibilities as they unfold. Allow new, creative thoughts, activities, and experiences to come and act without hesitation.
- ✱ I Think about how I can do something I normally do in a fresh and innovative way. If you realize you are doing something out of habit, stop, connect with your innermost self, and ask to be shown a new way to act.
- ✱ Pause at regular intervals throughout the day and find something you are truly grateful for. In every stressful situation, search for one thing that you can give honest thanks for. Think about the goodness of Jesus and how he died and suffered for you. He became poor, so you could be rich. He became sick so you could be healed. Think about how you awoke in your right mind. Think about your eyesight, your ability to hear, smell and taste, the mobility of your muscles, and limbs. Take a break and practice conscious positive thinking.
- ✱ Use your senses. Utilizing your senses helps bring awareness and clarity during a stressful or trying situation. Through what you see, what you touch, what you smell, and taste, you can embrace your current experience.
- ✱ The start and the finish. Use the first and last moments of your day to take stock of the positive and negative experiences. Reflect on the good things and see the negative experiences as learning and growing opportunities.
- ✱ I don't fill every moment of my day with Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Just let yourself relax and allow your mind to wander. Be careful not to let your mind

harp on the negative in these little reveries. Close your eyes and let your mind free associate, even if there are no words that accompany this state. This is like a mini holiday in the middle of the day. Small refreshing daydreaming breaks help your mind integrate lessons and recuperate.

- ✱ Surrender. While it can be great to set goals and visualize the future, don't let yourself get too caught up in the vision of how things "should" be. Be prepared to let go of your attachments to any particular outcome so that you can embrace something bigger than you have ever imagined. Learn that to yield does not mean that you lose. Let God lead you down unexpected turns and you will discover joy, peace, favor, and reciprocal relationships in the most unexpected places.

Embracing this new season means stepping away from the old you and tapping into the spirit of God inside of you. First Corinthians 2:14- 16 says, "The unspiritual self, just as it is by nature, can't receive the gifts of God's Spirit. There's no capacity for them. They seem like so much silliness. Spirit can be known only by spirit—God's Spirit and our spirits in open communion. Spiritually alive, we have access to everything God's Spirit is doing, and can't be judged by unspiritual critics." (MSG)

Everyday I work on embracing my spirituality and my hope is that you figure out what you need to do in order to get started embracing your new season and breathing with intention.

For more tips and strategies you can connect with me on social media FB Obiomamartin, IG Iamobiomamartin
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 Email: obioma@obiomamartin.com
 You can also get a copy of my book B.R.E.A.T.H.E. through amazon

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LaThea Adams

BY CHRISTIN AYRE

On the morning of September 8, 2005, 17-years-old Lathea Adams woke up to prepare for another day of high school. Adams went to get dressed when she felt a pain in her neck. Then numbness through her arm. That day, her life would change forever.

Adams was rushed to the hospital and within the next 24 hours, she was put on a ventilator. Doctors said she suffered a spinal cord injury, believed to be caused by an autoimmune disorder known as Transverse Myelitis, an inflammation of the spinal cord. But this wouldn't stop Adams from pursuing her longtime modeling dream. In 2019, with encouragement from her personal trainer and care aide, she decided to pursue a modeling career from her wheelchair.

Smooches Woman Magazine spoke with Adams, a curvy revolutionist, to discuss an ever-changing industry and her role in breaking barriers to make the fashion industry more accessible for people like her. The conversation has been edited for brevity and clarity.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?

ADAMS: Modeling has always struck and interested me since I was in middle and high school. One of my favorite shows to watch was Tyra Banks' show America's Next Top Model. That show was very intriguing. Since I was 17 years old I dreamt of being a model. Modeling has always struck an interest in me, since I was in middle and high school. One of my favorite shows to watch Tyra bank's show America's Next Top Model. That show was very intriguing.

WHEN WAS THE MOMENT YOU KNEW YOU WOULD TRY TO BECOME A MODEL? WHAT INTERESTED YOU ABOUT THE MODELING INDUSTRY?

ADAMS: I actually knew I would become a model last summer after having a conversation with my personal trainer. However, because of my diagnosis, I felt I'd never get the opportunity. After I truly began loving the skin I was in, I was ready to play the hand that I'd been dealt by shaking up the industry and becoming a wheelchair model to show others that they, too, can believe and dream again.



“ DOCTORS SAID SHE SUFFERED A SPINAL CORD INJURY, BELIEVED TO BE CAUSED BY AN AUTOIMMUNE DISORDER KNOWN AS TRANSVERSE MYELITIS, AN INFLAMMATION OF THE SPINAL CORD. BUT THIS WOULDN'T STOP ADAMS FROM PURSUING HER LONGTIME MODELING DREAM. IN 2019, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT FROM HER PERSONAL TRAINER AND CARE AIDE, SHE DECIDED TO PURSUE A MODELING CAREER FROM HER WHEELCHAIR. ”

WHAT PUSHED YOU INTO MODELING?

ADAMS: My personal trainer and I had a conversation about me wanting to model when I was younger. His words were simple: "Why not now?" My personal care aide was a model as well, and she was always supporting me to model. That was my sign from God that I should get into this industry.

WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO DO YOUR FIRST PHOTOSHOOT?

ADAMS: I was very excited that I had decided to start this journey, but nervous because it was the first shoot. It was amazing and the photos allowed me to see what others see. My first photoshoot was in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Shawn Costen, the photographer was friendly and knowledgeable about the industry. She coached me throughout the shoot to ensure that we captured the right angles and ultimately great images!

WITH SO MUCH CHANGE HAPPENING IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY, HOW DO YOU FEEL YOU FIT IN?

ADAMS: I honestly feel that I stand out. I'm not just an aspiring model, but I'm an African-American plus-size wheelchair model. I believe my current circumstances will bring more diversity [to the modeling industry] that will give other aspiring models in my predicament a sense of inclusion and belonging. There's not a lot of representation in my lane: African-American plus-size model with a disability.

WHAT ADVERSITIES HAVE YOU FACED AS A MODEL IN A WHEELCHAIR, IF ANY?

ADAMS: Being a wheelchair model, I believe, has resulted in certain agencies overlooking my talents and declining to represent me. I believe this was due to me not fitting the status quo of a traditional model. I am considered a quadriplegic and I don't have the functional use of my arms and hands. This of course limits the diversity of my photos.

THERE'S BEEN A MOVEMENT FOR BOTH PLUS-SIZED MODELS AND MODELS WITH DISABILITIES, HOW DOES YOUR JOURNEY AND GOALS FIT INTO THE CHANGING, EVOLVING INDUSTRY?

ADAMS: The slow acceptance of individuals with disabilities is a bit disheartening. There are too many barriers, and I'm ready to shatter them and normalize modeling for those with disabilities like myself. Many companies that

I've researched and contacted do not offer a platform to accommodate me and others like myself. While there are disability modeling agencies, it's time for inclusion into the mainstream agencies. The time is now.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?

ADAMS: The ability to be included in mainstream agencies and be known for more than my disability. I want to pave the way for that little girl that dreams of modeling but doesn't see anyone like her.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED?

ADAMS: "be yourself" - Addlia Edwards, Ashley Stewart's ms. Ashley Stewart 2019

HOW DO YOU FEEL REPRESENTATION FITS INTO YOUR JOURNEY?

ADAMS: Without representation, I will never be able to shatter the barriers to become the face of renowned brands like Nike, Target, Ulta, Old Navy and the list goes on. It's time to shake up the marketplace by having full representation of the world with disabilities included.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON AT THIS TIME?

ADAMS: I want to bridge the gap between disabilities (and what?). Motivating people on self-love, purity and walking the Christian walk.

I have one year left in college-- to receive a degree in Marketing I started at Hampton University as of right now I'm transitioning to Kennesaw University

WHAT DOES THE CURVY REVOLUTION MEAN TO YOU?

Adams: It's confidence, boldness, community, a movement, self-love and self-care. "It's a new movement" Breaking out of the norm. Bringing more diversity and inclusion.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

ADAMS: Trust God, be yourself, be true. Always push forward. Life throws curveballs, but watch God turn it around.

Brows, Brows, Brows:

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR EYEBROWS SHARP DURING QUARANTINE

By Devonda Dunn

Eyebrows have traversed a handful of phases over the last 30 years. From the notable bushy "boy" brows in the '80s, to pencil thin brows in the '90s. In the 2000s highly arched brows were in, and in recent years, the infamous Instagram brow has taken over. Brow trends change just like fashion, yet so many women are still trying to figure out what makes the perfect brow.

With today's beauty culture, brows stand out. No matter how flawless the makeup looks, or how even and toned the skin is, eyebrows are always the main attraction; true for natural women and beauty-obsessives alike. Though many women aren't leaving the house for work or to hang out with friends, due to COVID-19 related quarantine, they're still obsessing over brow perfection. From video conferences to FaceTime calls, there are constant reminders that brow grooming is needed now.

We compiled a few tips and tricks for you to slay your brows and achieve your desired look from the comfort of your own home:



Eyebrow Cake Powder NYX
Professional Makeup nyxcosmetics.com



TRY
ME ON

1

Aim for the brow that compliments your face shape most

3

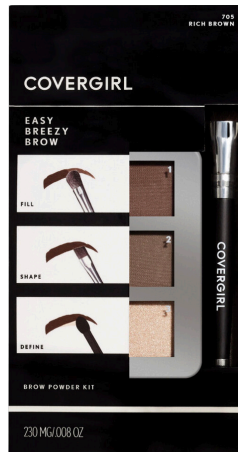
Secure your tools

Cleaning your brow is the first step to creating good eyebrows. For a well-arched look, you'll use two tools; concealer and a flat brush. Use a concealer one to two shades lighter than your foundation to create the illusion of a highlighted brow bone. The flat brush can be used to accentuate the brow arch. Concealer should be blended for a natural look.

Choose which product is best for you

Local drugstores (and online shops) are full of eyebrow styling options, including pencils, pomades, powders, and gels. Pencils are great to manipulate brow hairs, fill in sparse hairs, or to extend brows ends. For thinner or lighter-colored brows, pomade is the way to go to create a full coverage look. This thick cream can be applied using an angled brush to create lines that are brow-like. Powders can be just as simple as a pencil or pomade, but create a softer, full-brow look. Powder is recommended for oily skin. Gels are an excellent option for naturally full eyebrows or low-maintenance brows that just need to be tamed, or kept in place. Pro-tip: Lip liners or eyeliners can be used in lieu of an eyebrow pencil if need be

2



Easy Breezy Brow Powder Kit covergirl.com



Sisters, not twins

As this old saying goes, not all brows are created equal.

One may look a bit different, or be easier to groom, but focus on creating a semi-symmetrical look and you're good to go.

4

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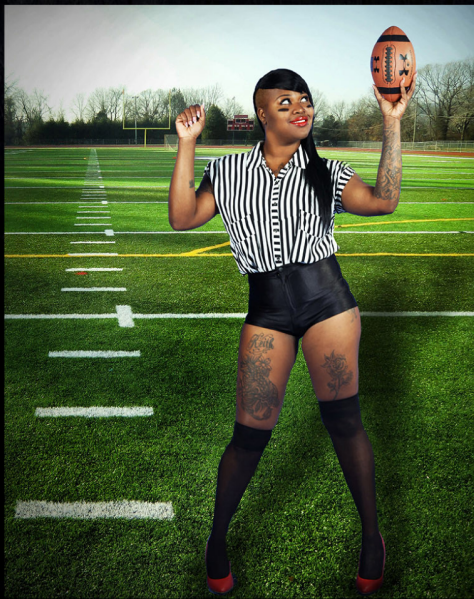
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