



CAREER & LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE
for women of color



Alexandria Johnson Boone

Chairwoman and Founder
Women of Color Foundation and
Publisher & Chief Editorial Officer, CL Magazine

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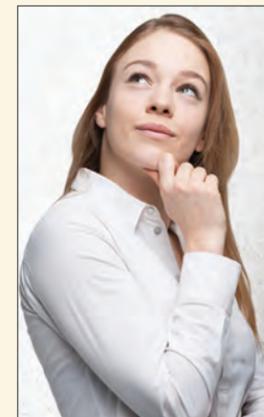
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Hip, Hip Hooray!

Dear Readers,

This is the first of our Issues for 2017, our third consecutive publication year. 2017 is also the 15th Anniversary Year of the Women of Color Foundation (WOCF). Wow, we have come a long, long way!

As I reflect on the last 15 years, I remember the trials and tribulations and the successes and triumphs of starting, growing and sustaining the WOCF. And thank God, we are still here. So many women and girls have benefitted greatly from our special events, awards luncheons, training programs, conferences, summits, and our many partnerships with other community organizations and academic institutions.

But none of this would have been possible without the generous support of our many sponsors and funders (both long-term and new ones), the dedicated WOCF faculty, mentors, project staff & advisors, and the many volunteers that have assisted us over the years in Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio; and in Chicago, Illinois. I gratefully extend a heartfelt, personal thank you to all of them.

In addition, C L Magazine could not continue to provide a quality, informative publication, without the support of our advertisers. So, thank you to them as well.

Please take time to visit our two new, beautiful, informative and interactive websites at: www.womenofcolorfoundation.com or www.cl-magazine.com

Our new websites were designed with you in mind, and we would appreciate your feedback.

Finally, please remember to subscribe to C L Magazine, and even consider gifting a friend, colleague, employee, student or family member with a surprise subscription. You won't regret it!

In the spirit of the greatness in us all,

Alexandria Johnson Boone
Publisher and Chief Editorial Officer, C L Magazine and
Chairwoman/Founder, Women of Color Foundation



Editor's LETTER

Dear C L Magazine Family, Friends and Supporters,

Although it was five years ago, I remember the first time I attended a Women of Color Foundation (WOCF) event like it was yesterday. I had recently completed undergrad and moved back home. All that was missing from my newly obtained degree was the booming career, fancy car and huge office downtown. After all, that's what happens after you graduate right?! You go to college, earn a degree and immediately land an executive position straight out of college. For some that may be the case, but for me and I assume for many of you that wasn't reality. When I learned about an event geared toward women of color focusing on professional development and building careers, I knew this was the event for me.

Walking through the doors, I remember feeling nervous and anxious but most importantly, inspired. Here I was standing in a room full of beautiful, educated, accomplished, black and brown women. If I had to use one word to sum up my first experience at this WOCF event it would be sisterhood. Far too often we hear about women (especially women of color) being catty or jealous. It felt so good to see these women setting the standard for my generation by celebrating and supporting their accomplishments. Throughout the event, there were speakers that I could relate to who had humble beginnings but triumphed through and became trailblazers in their respective fields. These women shared stories that helped me learn about the value of hard work, ambition and failing. By the

time the event was over I found myself picking my jaw off the floor because what I received was far greater than I could have ever imagined. I made connections that day that changed my life and I know for a fact that I would not be the person I am today without the Women of Color Foundation.

As we celebrate the 15 Year Anniversary of WOCF, it is only natural that we have the Founder, Alexandria Johnson Boone, grace the cover of this issue. Her passion and commitment to creating opportunities for women and girls remains the hallmark of her success. Take a walk down memory lane and find out what she has in store for the Foundation's future in an exclusive interview!

If this is your first time reading our publication, prepare to be inspired, enlightened and challenged. We love to hear your feedback! Share your thoughts with us on social media. Also, please be sure to visit our new and improved interactive website!

Until next time...

Cheers,

Simone L. Swanson
Editor and Chief Researcher

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Managing a Part-time Gig and a business

You wake, shower, and rush out ahead of the morning commute to arrive at your desk by 8:00 a.m. The day drags, and you occasionally find yourself daydreaming at the two walls of your cubicle wondering if this is the highlight of your career. You crave freedom and the opportunity to build your own. You conclude it's time to blaze your own trail.

Many individuals today have a desire to build their own businesses and work independently. However, scaling your business and sustaining your lifestyle can become a challenge. While motivational speakers will advise you to take the leap from your 9-to-5, most bootstrap entrepreneurs will say, "Don't quit your day job just yet." If you're tired of dreaming but looking to sustain yourself while building your business, it is possible to manage a part-time job with these few ideas in mind:

1.) A Complementing Position

Find a position that allows you to utilize the skills needed in your business or a position where you can gain knowledge of available resources. Be careful not to choose a position that would be a conflict of interest to you or your employer. For example, if you would like to own a restau-



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rant, working for a caterer or a culinary school will allow you to gain invaluable skills that you can apply to creating your own unique dining experience.

2.) A Strict yet Flexible Schedule

A part-time position with a set schedule may be ideal, as it will be easier to arrange your remaining time. If hours vary or if you have a self-managed position, you will have to be twice as organized and disciplined with arranging your calendar. This includes scheduling your personal tasks, breaks and time off. You will find yourself with missing hours when you are not held against a clock. Tools such as Toggl, RescueTime or another time management service can assist with accountability.

3.) Become a Master Saver

As you build a business, there are certain costs that are not debatable. The survival of your company during those primary years will depend on how frugal and strategic you are with your resources. When choosing a location or office space, try to identify the location that best places you in front of your target market. Establishing a brick and mortar location should not put you further in debt. Find a location that will generate enough business to pay for itself.

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Leaving a Legacy of *Generosity*

It has been said that we make a living by what we get in life and that we make a life by what we give. Leaving a legacy can be simply learning to be a generous giver of time, effort and talents. When the word legacy is mentioned we must think beyond the dictionary definition.

Although the legal world views a legacy as something tangible, legacy can be something we live, not simply the thing we leave. Sometimes this legacy is intentionally or unintentionally passed from one generation to another in forms of beliefs, values, memories, forgiveness given and forgiveness received. You can choose to have generosity as a core value and be part of the legacy you live and the legacy you leave.

Soren Kirkengard, a 19th century Danish philosopher, theologian and author, once said, "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."

I was challenged to think about my legacy of generosity after losing a dear friend a few years ago. I said goodbye to her and will long remember her great legacy: a champion for those who had none, the soul of friendship and, yes challenges. A friend whose memories graced many over several states and beyond. Her spirit of resilience and good humor would see her through a life of gratitude most of us will ever know.

So, I challenge you to think about your own legacy of generosity. In doing so it may influence the way you choose to live and work. It may inspire you to dig deeper and climb higher and examine your life's purpose and move toward a greater service of generosity.

We cannot know for certain how long we have here. We cannot foresee the trials of misfortunes that will test us along the way. We cannot know God's plan for us. What we can do is live our lives as best as we can with purpose, love and joy. We can use each day to show those who are closest to us how much we care and treat others with kindness and respect that we wish for ourselves. We can learn from our mistakes and grow from our failures. And we can strive at all costs to make a better world, so that someday, if we are blessed with the chance to look back at our time here, we can know that we spent it well; that we made a difference; that our fleeting presence had a lasting impact on the lives of others. I encourage you to share your stories, time, and talents with the next generation and together make memories that will become a generous model for the following generations.



And that my friends can be your gift of generosity, your legacy.

Thelma Todd
tjtodd@netscape.com

Your best friend just asked *you* to be her health care power of attorney.
Now what?



Now, sit down and have a real discussion about what she wants if the worst happens. Would she want to be kept alive *no matter what*? What if she was no longer able to breathe on her own; if she was permanently unconscious?

By completing her health care power of attorney and living will, she is *taking control* of her healthcare decisions. As her health care power of attorney, *you will be her voice* if she can't speak for herself.

After her advance directives are complete, ask her to return the favor. After all, that's what besties are for.

Visit hospicewr.org/decisions for helpful information, videos and free downloads.



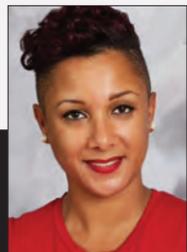
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Interview Tips

for the 40/50 Club



While competing for a job in today's market is no easy feat for anyone, members of Generation X (post-Baby Boomers) have an uphill battle, especially with a new workforce that inherently costs less and is hungry to get experience. Getting through the initial application process and invited to an interview is fantastic. However, interviewing at any age can be nerve-racking but very rewarding in the end when you get the job! So let's talk about overcoming the nerve-racking part.



Brett Byers

Managing Director, The Hawkins Company
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The goal is to concisely communicate and strategically present yourself as a unique combination of who you are and who the employer is looking for: an enthusiastic, lifelong learner who knows their industry, keeps up with technology and trends, and communicates effectively with colleagues of any age. Here's how to prepare:

- 1 Do research** – Take a look at the organization's mission, values, and what they are known for. Don't be afraid to ask the person coordinating the interviews who you will be interviewing with and what the interview format will be. Research the interviewers. People are flattered when you are able to share something about them. So be sure to bring up commonalities in your background as an ice breaker.
- 2 Answer the questions with examples** – As part of your preparation, review the job description carefully. I advise my candidates and executives in career transition to sit down and write a journal of all the things that they have done in their recent work experiences that align with what the position requires. After this exercise the examples will be fresh in your mind so you'll have a short recall when asked a question. I highly recommend using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) technique to concisely answer each question and share your experience.
- 3 Be positive and self-confident** – Know that you are the expert with the maturity and experience to back it up. Remember that age and maturity are assets as experience trumps everything. Maturity is an advantage because experience makes you an expert problem-solver. Having worked through different work environments with all types of people and teams equips you to make better judgements than your younger counterparts. You are flexible and not easily flustered. You can roll with the punches!
- 4 Stay up on the latest industry trends and best practices** – During your interview, make sure that you convey your commitment to continuous professional development to stay abreast of the changing trends and share how you have applied them in your current position and your ideas on how you would use them in the position you are competing for.
- 5 Dress to impress** – Wear that power suit. Ask thoughtful questions about the company, the position, the team, and the culture and send a follow-up thank you note. *Good luck!*



GRIEF has the Power to Transform

As the director of Hospice of the Western Reserve's bereavement center, I find that people are very confused and surprised by their own grief reactions. They want to know if they are grieving the right way, how long it will take, when it will be over, and the like. Quite simply, grief is a normal, natural, necessary response to a loss. What isn't simple is the rollercoaster of emotions that occurs simultaneously and over time. The fact that everyone grieves differently makes it more complicated. And there is no "getting over it."

I have learned so much about grief and loss from the families we serve. Living and grieving is difficult. Anything and everything can be related to grief and loss, from laundry, washing dishes, vacuuming, mopping, taking out the garbage or landscaping. There is always a grief connection.

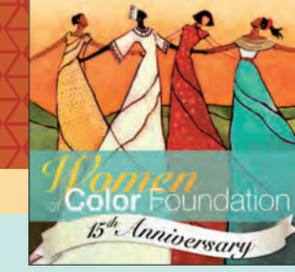
Let's take doing laundry. Maybe your laundry basket was always full, keeping you plenty busy, even after load after loads of clothes

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Diane Snyder Cowan
Director, Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center
www.hospice.org

www.womenofcolorfoundation.com



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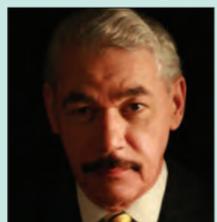
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Magda Gomez
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Juan Molina Crespo
Executive Director Hispanic Alliance, Inc.



were already washed and dried. It may have seemed as if you were always doing laundry - and now there are fewer items in the basket, a reminder that your loved one is missing. While the load is lighter, it seems much heavier. If your partner died, you might not have wanted to wash the last set of used sheets for fear of losing the scent of him or her. Then there's finding the missing sock or the shirt in the bottom of the hamper that triggers sadness and longing.



The washing machine itself is a great metaphor for grief. The only "normal" in the life of the bereaved is the setting on the washing machine. Clothes get tumbled up just like our grief reactions and feelings. The material is different after each washing. The brand new blouse or shirt is less bright and more worn with each cycle just as grief becomes less intense over time. You simply cannot wash away your grief.

Adjusting to a new normal is a part of the grief process and this includes doing chores. For some, they become triggers. For others, challenges. And for others still, they are opportunities. For most, they are all three and in time, help transform the grief.

Transforming grief is the most amazing phenomenon I have seen in working with bereaved. Grief can be beautiful. It is often an expression of love and as such can be a way to move forward with a cause or to continue a loved one's legacy. Transforming grief can be cooking Auntie Evelyn's famous holiday brunch or creating legislation for new laws or changing career paths. This list is limitless.

What is most amazing to me is watching people find homes for their deceased love ones in their hearts as they move forward in their lives - in their day-to-day activities and their interactions with others.

And, I have learned about hope. As bereavement professionals we are often the person that holds onto hope for the griever until they are ready to grab on themselves. It's been a most rewarding career.

Hospice of the Western Reserve provides grief support services for hospice patients and families from the time of diagnoses for a minimum of 13 months after the death. In addition, we offer a variety of programs that are open to the community. These include grief support groups, art therapy workshops and online grief support resources. Family programming includes a variety children's camps, teen retreats and special events. We also offer death-related crisis response in the schools and the workplace and have a comprehensive grief support program in the schools. More information about our services can be found at www.hospicewr.org/griefandloss.



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Beauty & Fashion

It's almost time for spring, so you know what that means! Time for new trends. What do you need to know? What do you need to have? Don't panic. Below are the four must-haves for spring 2017. Starting from the crown and working on down.



Hair: Winter has the nasty tendency to wreak havoc on the hair—drying it out, leaving it looking lifeless, and feeling brittle. What can restore the luster to your distressed tresses? Two products can do the job. Both are by Shea Moisture: the Raw Shea Butter Extra-Moisture Detangler and the Raw Shea Butter Reconstructive Finishing Elixir. The detangler is magic! I'm telling you, your hair will feel so soft and moisturized. You will not be able to stop touching it. (If you have thin hair, though, you may want to pass on this.) If you need shine, the elixir is a lightweight oil that gives the hair an amazing sheen. Plus, it smells phenomenal. Just a spray or two in the palm of your hands, rub them together, and run through your hair. *Voilà!* Instant, undeniable shine.

Face: The hands down must-have makeup item this spring is the Soft Matte Complete Concealer by NARS. This stuff is amazing for spot concealing. Wave bye-bye to blemishes! The finish is skin-like. It blends out like a dream especially if you use the padding of your fingers to apply the product. It is perfect for those light makeup days and full glam nights. Trust me, you need this! (*Caution: Given the formula, I would not recommend using this underneath the eye.*)



Shoes: *Platforms.* What are these? Picture the sole of a vintage 1970s platform. Now put that sole on a flat sandal. Boom, platforms! From what I've seen, these are hideous but it's my duty to let you know what's coming, even if it's not my style. The simple ankle strap sandal is also back, which I love. They are so simple and chic.



Colors: Start stocking up on pinks, yellows, and khaki. Yes, khaki. This spring will bring back vibrant, saturated colors. Raspberry pink, canary yellow, true blue. Think lively, vivacious, and bright! Regarding khaki, get ready for the return of the oversized, boxy utilitarian jacket. You know the one—square chest pockets with rectangular front waist pockets.



Whether or not you choose to indulge in this year's trends, remember confidence never goes out of style so *werk it!*

Major Morris
Creator/Influencer, Blogger
www.mjmorris.com

Alexandria Johnson Boone

“Alex engaged our audience. We laughed, cried and celebrated!”

– National PowerNetworking Conference



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The Joys of *Bible Journaling*

I was at a place in my life where I longed for a deeper relationship with God. Although I have been a Christian since my childhood, my walk with Christ has been a rollercoaster. In fact, there was a season that I walked away from God and almost lost my faith completely. From that time, I realized my complete and utter dependence upon Him. I've spent seasons of my life attempting to read the Bible and understand scripture and it was hard to stay committed to it until I began Bible journaling.

course, but at least I had a title to my messy study method and now a community that supports and encourages it.

Let me pause and make one thing clear: Bible journaling is not about making this elaborate expression of art. Admittedly, I've been guilty of wanting to make something really beautiful and inspiring for the sake of, well, making something really beautiful and inspiring. But that is not the right attitude. Bible journaling isn't about the outcome. It's about the process. The goal is to connect with scripture and build intimacy with God. It's freedom, using a mixture of media, with no

I wanted to grow in my love for the Lord and be a part of His story. I began to spend more time reading scripture but this time I approached it freely with no rules. I spent a lot of time highlighting, notetaking in the margins and doodling imagery as I read; this method allowed me to internalize and understand what I was reading. Before, I would attempt to read the Bible and I could never remember what I read. Maybe my mind was too distracted or the words were too big but I just couldn't begin to understand what was going on.



rules and an emphasis on having fun in God's presence.

Again, the purpose isn't how it looks, but rather to keep me in the Word and express my thoughts on a particular verse. What I write and doodle in the margins helps echo the meaning of the passage.

The idea of combining my time in the Word and my creative side is what attracted me to social media followings such as #illustratedfaith and #documentingfaith. Y'all, these hashtags and journaling accounts blew my mind! They were beautiful and I was instantly encouraged and inspired. But also they were similar to what my Bible was evolving into. Mine weren't as pretty of

Posting photos of my Bible does not mean that I have it all together. Not even close! I'm so terribly flawed, messy, broken and in need of God's mercy and grace minute by minute. He has given me a love for creativity as well as a visual learning style, so of course this form of worship appeals to me. I choose to share this in hopes that someone can find encouragement and creative inspiration in these posts, no matter where you are with (or without) God. I don't have all the answers, but I do know that God wants us to be in relationship with Him and dwell in His Word.



Marie Cloud
@amariedesignstudio

Teach Your Child Career-Changing Skills By Playing Chess

At some point in your life a career change is inevitable. It can be stressful and nerve-racking but also exciting and satisfying.

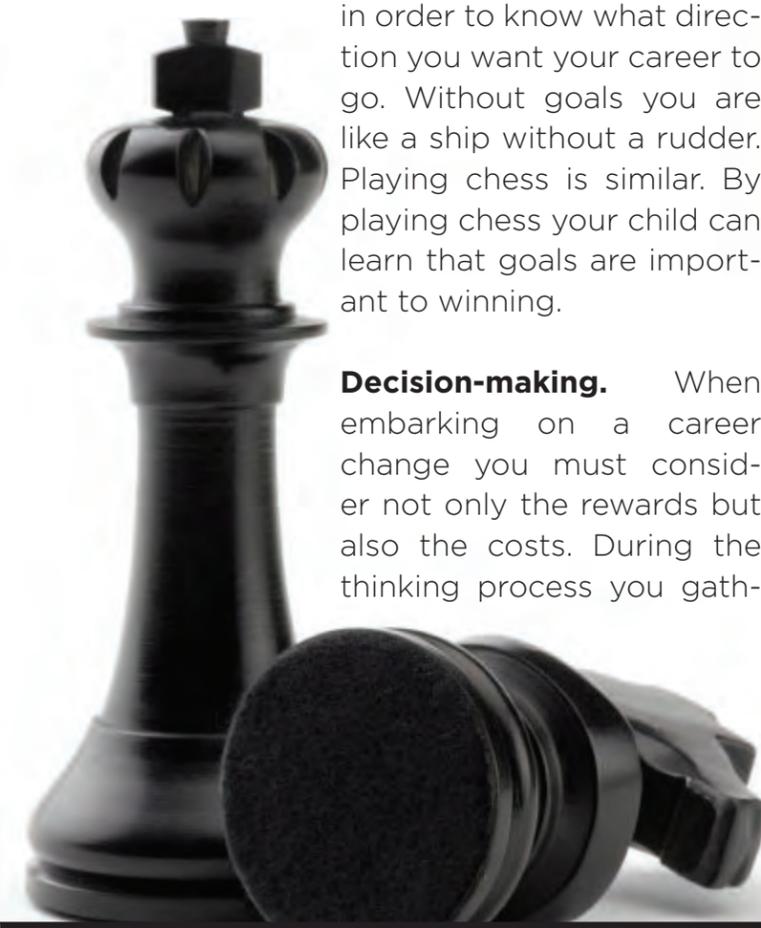
er information and come to a decision. Your child can practice this on the chess board. They must weigh the consequence of making a move and realize that once the decision is made there is no return. Taking action without thinking is the cause of every failure.

For the children in your life, you want them to learn from you so they can have a fulfilling life and successful career. Children learn by seeing and listening, but the best way they can learn is by doing. A great way for your child to learn the skills needed for a career change is by playing the game of chess. Here are five of those skills:

Planning. After weighing the cost of changing your career, planning is next. You plot each course of action to ensure it is leading to your goal. As your child plays chess they will learn how to plan the steps to achieve their goal and have fun at the same time.

Goals. During a career change you need goals

Focus. Changing a career involves tremendous focus. So does chess. Your child can practice focus on the chess board. This skill will benefit them in school and life.



in order to know what direction you want your career to go. Without goals you are like a ship without a rudder. Playing chess is similar. By playing chess your child can learn that goals are important to winning.

Perseverance. A career change can be challenging. This is when perseverance is a must. Telling your child how to perseverance will only go so far. This is an attribute they need to experience and put into practice. Playing chess is a great way to accomplish this.

Decision-making. When embarking on a career change you must consider not only the rewards but also the costs. During the thinking process you gath-

These five skills can be habit-forming, and the way you break old habits is by forming new ones. Set aside some quiet time where you and your child can play and they can learn and practice these skills. Being adept at these skills will give them an advantage in their school, career, and life.



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www.meetup.com/NorthcoastChessClub

The Egyptian Roots of Gender Equality



On January 21, 2017, battalions of pink hat supporters around the world—from Brazil to Burma—joined their American sisters in an expression of solidarity during the Women’s March on Washington. For me, there was a notable exception to that Who’s Who of United Nations membership: Egypt. That was particularly glaring since the roots of feminist ideals can be traced back several millennia to the Land of the Nile.

Ancient Egypt conjures many exotic images: pyramids, temples and pharaohs. But for women mobilizing to protect human rights, what Egyptian civilization should evoke is the first historical expression of

something close to gender equality. Women and men were practically equal under ancient Egyptian law. Women of even the lowest classes could own and dispose of property, execute contracts, and work outside the home as merchants. Some women were even taught to read and write and were trained to become scribes, priestesses and doctors—elite professions within that primeval society. Those norms were established many centuries before the heyday of Alexander the Great.

Contrast that with the second-class status of women in ancient Greece, who were effectively the chattel of their fathers and husbands—with no

separate identity of their own. In a historical essay, Egyptologist Joyce Tyldesley of the University of Manchester provided this illustrative insight: “It is interesting that when the Greeks conquered Egypt in 332 B.C.E., Egyptian women were allowed more rights and privileges than Greek women, who were forced to live under the less equal Greek system.” One can imagine that the difference between the status of Egyptian women and their ancient Greek counterparts was about as stark as the difference between working mothers in urban America and the sequestered wives who suffered de facto slavery under Afghanistan’s Taliban regime.

Whereas the ancient Greeks were so terrified of empowered women that they created the myth of the Amazons, a threatening community of aggressive (modern translation, “assertive”) women viewed as a perversion of the natural order, Egyptian society was far more tolerant of powerful women. A few even became regents and pharaohs. In that respect, ancient Egypt was a tad more progressive than our modern American republic when it came to appointing a female head of state. Long before Cleopatra VII would fascinate Julius Caesar, Queen Hatshepsut ruled Egypt’s empire around 1475 B.C.E. as absolute monarch. That included adopting the trappings of pharaonic rule such as a fake beard.

However, if we dig deeply into the sources

of Egyptian culture, we see that this incomparable respect, by ancient standards, for the status of women had its roots in their religion. Perhaps the most beloved Egyptian deity, and the most enduring, was the goddess Isis. This mother goddess was deemed to be the foundation of the throne since the pharaoh was the earthly personification of Horus, the son of Isis. She was also a symbol of female dignity and revered wherever Egypt’s influence had spread.

So I pose this thought experiment: What if Western civilization had taken the best of Egyptian tradition to reform the worst of ancient Greek gender politics? Would the progress of feminist ideals in the West have accelerated? I think so. And women might not find it necessary to mobilize against rampant misogyny and sexism in the 21st century. It is the height of tragic irony that the name “Isis” is heard today as synonymous with a horde of murderers and rapists rather than a symbol of female empowerment. My debut novel hopes to change that.



Geronimo Redstone
www.geronimoredstone.com

Dooley Noted

In today's fashion-minded, body shaming, "look-as-young-as-you-can" society, I find it refreshing that I am not so connected with "that" world anymore.

When I was younger, I was definitely influenced by it—feeling fat when I was only 110 pounds, for example. Today? Not so much. I care about my body and looks in terms of health, wellness, and self-confidence but not in terms of external pressure to look like the models in women's magazines. I choose to spend my time on things I deem most important and worry less about what others think.

I am the woman who will bring my daughter to school while, yes, still wearing my pajama bottoms. Oh, how I would love to wear a uniform to my office so I don't have to think of accessorizing. Ah, how easy that would make my life! I laugh if someone comments that I am wearing mom jeans. Well, duh...I am a middle-aged mom and proud that I am even wearing jeans. A Friday night at a bookstore sipping a warm drink is way more enjoyable than going to a "disco party." Oh I forgot, they don't call it that anymore. Today I am the mom who says, "Whatever the situation, I will figure it out," where the younger me was worrying about every little thing: "I am a terrible parent! What did I do wrong? I ruined my child for life!"

Yes, a lot has changed over the years—my looks, body, intellect, interpersonal skills and energy level. And with that aging process, I have gained wisdom and I'm grateful for what experience has taught me. I have learned:

- I need to be intentional with those who are most important to me
- Spending alone time through prayer, meditation or nature is critical for wellness
- Acceptance of who I am, both my strengths and faults, is essential
- Life is less about being right, and more about understanding others' viewpoints
- Never lose your sense of humor; laughter is good for the soul
- I don't have to save the world
- My children will always be better than me technologically

So today, I embrace life whole-heartedly and I am able to take things in stride. I appreciate all that life has to offer, while acknowledging it can change in a second. I recognize the importance of the fabric of our lives woven together, connecting us to one another. I rely on mentors who have helped me achieve greater life balance and have taught me to love myself.

It is a freeing experience to be my authentic self without worrying about the external, societal pressures. Because really...who cares? Not this middle-aged woman!



Linda Dooley
Chief Executive Officer, Domestic Violence and Child Advocacy Center
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Remembering a Legend



Charleyse Smith Pratt, Ph.D.

A Woman of Passion, Vision and Service

August 6, 1949 - March 10, 2017

A VISIONARY LEADER

During her illustrious academic career, she served Cuyahoga Community College, Case Western Reserve University, Baldwin Wallace College and Cleveland State University with honor and distinction. But Cleveland State University's Sullivan-Deckard Scholars' Program was clearly her favorite. She derived extreme pleasure and pride from working with the program staff, the scholars, the navigators, program partners and funders.

A DEDICATED MOTHER

"Charley" was an amazing wife, mother, grandmother, friend, champion of education and advocate for the downtrodden and less fortunate. She was always looking for ways to encourage and inspire others to be and do their best in life, and that they could achieve anything with a plan and a solid educational foundation. Her children, Bryan, Tiffany and Jarrett brought so much joy to her life. She often spoke of their many accomplishments and expressed pride in their dedication to education, a value she instilled in them early in their lives.

Charleyse also had many other children in this community, that she mentored, inspired, motivated and encouraged throughout her life and academic career.

A LOVING WIFE

Charleyse and Bishop Gregory A. Pratt, were married for 47 years. They were best friends throughout their lives together; supporting each other's dreams, careers and service to the larger community. They served our almighty God together and mentored a dedicated Church Family at Emmanuel Apostolic Church. They were one, single, solitary union in all that they undertook.

Dr. Pratt was truly a *Servant Leader*. She always put her family, her church and her students ahead of everything in her life. Her smile, brilliance, grace, dignity, compassion and commitment to others will be sorely missed by all who knew her and those whose lives she touched.

Back to the Walden Inn: 15 Years in the Making

Have you heard? The Women of Color foundation is celebrating 15 years of inspiration, engagement and empowerment! The Women of Color Foundation provides personal and professional development, education and training to women and girls of all colors. The organization has developed a unique concept and forum to facilitate the collaboration, networking, mentoring, sharing, development and training of women and girls of color. 2017 marks 15 years of serving the community and inspiring people across the country and around the world. We recently sat with Founder and Executive Producer Alexandria Johnson Boone to discuss her amazing journey and the future for the organization.

*Interview with Alexandria Johnson Boone
Chairwoman and Founder, Women of Color Foundation*



Planting the Seed: Motivation and vision behind the Women of Color Foundation

In 2002, A good friend, Bonnie Barenholtz invited me to an awesome rejuvenation retreat. During the retreat, there was everything from inspirational sessions to informational workshops on cosmetic surgery and a fashion show.

After attending the event, I thought to myself: ‘Wouldn’t it be great if there was a similar retreat for women of color as well?’ That experience in addition to many others, sparked a passionate desire to help others – a passion and desire that still burns brightly to this day. Shortly after, I launched womenofcolorevents.com and our signature event, ‘Connections, Community and Career’ A Personal and Professional Development Retreat for Women of Color. In 2005, with the help of long-time friend and Attorney Vanessa Whiting, we incorporated as a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization and changed the name to the ‘Women of Color Foundation.’

In pitching the concept to various individuals, yet another good friend, Joanne Clark — who at the time was President of the National City Bank Foundation — understood my vision and the need to have empowerment conferences for women of color, and African-American women as our needs were unique to those of other women. She then provided a \$10,000 grant through the Foundation. Because of this sponsorship support, in 2003, I held my first event at the Walden Inn, and the rest, as they say, is history.



Alexandria Johnson Boone with one of her earliest staff members, Bernadette K. Mayfield.

“...we have forged many other great partnerships from all over the country, including the Starfish Foundation with Soledad O’Brien and Brad Raymond...”

— Alexandria Johnson Boone

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That is also why we're going back to the Walden Inn & Spa for our 15th anniversary celebration, because that is the place where it all began. However, instead of booking a few rooms and the auditorium, we bought out the whole place, and this really speaks to the growth and expansion that we've had over the years.

Growing the Seed: Major successes

There are a few successes that stand out, but the first would be attracting and solidifying partnerships with our dedicated and committed sponsors. The second major success was our ability to get women to register and come to our events. It warmed my heart to hear many of the women say, 'Oh my goodness, this was so fulfilling.' I had a great sense

of pride in the fact that women felt safe in sharing their personal and professional issues, and finding out that there were many other women who were going through similar challenges, experiences or even successes. On another occasion, I went to the office of my mentor and branding guru, Dr. George Fraser, and there was a postcard on his desk. After reading it, he said, 'Alex, have you seen this? There's a Women of Color conference!' He went on to say the postcard was really nice, and that 'they' have great workshops and a great location. I immediately started to laugh. He said, 'I think that this is amazing, why are you laughing?' I replied, 'Because that's my postcard, for my new event.'

There's just been so much growth. There are



The team from left (seated): Bernadette K. Mayfield, Frechic Burton Dickson, Alexandria Johnson Boone, (standing) Cheretta Moore, Jennifer Coiley Dial, Simone E. Swanson, Rodney L. Brown, Paula T. Newman Not pictured: Tara Jefferson, Mone't Roberts and Tierra Smith.

about nine events planned for 2017, many of which will be held at corporate sites that include: Cleveland Clinic, Dominion, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and the Ohio Reformatory for Women — the 4th largest women's prison in the US; and local academic institutions including Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University. These events, like others in the past, will be intimate, with some being invitation only. This will ensure that the women always get the best value for their investment. Our 15th Anniversary C-Suite Executive Summit will also feature three prominent men as speakers. I chose to have them speak at a women's conference because I truly want experts — regardless of color or gender — to educate, train, motivate and inspire our attendees. I also want people to know that although the organization is called the 'Women of Color Foundation,' all women are welcome to attend our events. Every woman, regardless of age or background brings a unique set of experiences and can benefit from net-

working and sharing of ideas — no one is excluded.

Our first conference was a glorious day and had 79 women in attendance. We then started to host events at various sponsor locations to create awareness. Fast forward to today, we've had educational conferences with over 300 participants, held events in multiple cities, and included overnight stays to extend the experience. In addition, we have forged many other great partnerships from all over the country, including the Starfish Foundation with Soledad O'Brien and Brad Raymond, the PowHERful Foundation, ColorComm — an organization of women of color in communication — Odyssey Media Group, and the United States Office of Homeland Security in support of their Blue Campaign. Additionally, we also launched C L Magazine in 2015 and we are now in our third year of publication. So, as you can see, after 15 years, that the tiny seed has grown into a tree.

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Alex Boone has been a powerful force in our community and a good friend to so many in Cleveland. Always pro-moting and advancing others, she stands tall in her advocacy and support of women of color.

Margot James Copeland, Chair & CEO, KeyBank Foundation

Alex — your work and more importantly your heart and soul have been devoted to sincerely and with great compassion demonstrate what it means to be a Woman of exceptional excellence and elegance.... I will forever cherish our friendship.

Renita Jefferson, Human Resources, American Greetings Corporation

As I've come to know Alex Boone, she has never ceased to amaze me with her kindness and the elegance of her ways. As time has allowed our relationship to evolve, I've come to admire not only Alex's business savvy, but also the sincere manner in which she gives back to the community at large, and young ladies of color, in particular. Alex has championed my effort to publish CODE Magazine, acting as my Senior Advisor and sounding board as we create the brand associated with the CODE Media Group. I wish Alex and the Women of Color Foundation continued success as she firmly establishes her legacy as a preeminent leader in our community. Thank you Alex for everything!

Bilal S. Akram, Publisher, CODE Magazine

Alex is involved in more projects, more events and more young women's lives than anyone I have ever known! Always dressed to kill, usually in shoes that hurt (!) she lifts spirits and opens hearts. The team at WKYC adores her!

Micki Byrnes, President & General Manager, WKYC-TV

**The Impact of the Seed:
Keeping up with interesting presenters
and sponsors for conferences**

Now here is an interesting topic, because I remember a time when I would call up my 'sister friends' saying that I needed them to speak at my retreats. They were excited for those opportunities. Now, I receive letters from women of all backgrounds and agents of speakers even send messages with resumes, videos and links to their client's websites. I think that it's because we make all our faculty feel welcome, value their expertise, and treat them with extreme respect. We try to ensure a great experience for them, as well as our attendees.

I believe that we've developed a reputation over 15 years, of hosting the events where you need to be. The beauty is, that we have an excellent reputation for delivering quality programs. There are so many success stories from a woman deciding to have a necessary surgery after hearing one of our medical speakers, to two women merging their businesses following one of our retreats.

Also, through various partnerships, we were able to provide registration scholarships that allowed some participants to attend the retreats. One of our primary goals is to create a healthy environment for teaching and learning. One of my most staunch supporter, friend and advisor, the late Dr. Charleyse S. Pratt, would always say that 'the evidence of learning is changed behavior.' It's amazing now, that women have said to me, 'You changed my life,' 'You gave me hope,' 'You've helped me realize that I'm not the only one going through these issues,' or 'I've decided to go out on my own, and I've never looked back.' In another case, a woman who attended a session and was recently released from prison, mailed me a check for ten dollars. She said, 'I don't know if this will help because it's not very much, but please use it to help another woman like you've helped me.' At times,

I still get choked up thinking about it, because that ten dollars let me know that I was doing the right thing and moving in the right direction. I've been doing this for 15 years and that is what keeps me going. I believe it is also the reason why so many people want to be a part of making this kind of impact on the lives of others.

Top takeaways from the retreat:

When women attend our retreat, they can first expect to create a life and career plan. This will take them from knowing what they would like to do in their careers and lives and establishing a roadmap to get them there. Women will also learn the importance of and potentially be connected to a career and life mentor. They will also gain a greater understanding of the importance of their personal brand and realize that their success is largely up to how people see them. Further, women will get tips and tools on developing a personal and professional network; the importance of giving back; and looking for other women and girls, for them to mentor. It's all about expanding their territories. Getting women to learn and share their learning with other women.

**Growing Pains of the Seed:
Biggest challenges**

Early on, my most difficult challenge was getting women to understand the importance of investing in their personal and professional development. A woman could come to one of our retreats and stay for two nights for the price of one designer suit. Many women would see the location and features of the retreat and think that it was expensive. I say, 'No, it's not. Just avoid buying one designer jacket or suit and you could easily afford registration.' Women must also realize that their participation and support is invaluable to growing the organization for the benefit of each other and those women coming along behind them. Often, we pay all this money

to fix up our hair, nails and all those external things and neglect our internal growth because we think that 'we've made it'.

One way that I used to encourage women to attend is to tell them to go to their company or organization and ask them to pay for you to attend. Corporations and institutions pay for professional training and development all the time. People don't realize that they may be missing out on thousands of dollars' worth of training and conferences by not asking the companies that they work for to underwrite the registration fees.

Although it was not much of a challenge, I had to also realize where to expand and where to draw the line to remain consistent and authentic. As I mentioned before, I realized that I needed to include all women of color. This was very fitting, because anyone who knows me knows that my circle of friends includes women of all colors. As we began to grow, more people wanted to be involved in what we were doing and we saw the value in expanding to women across the color and career spectrum.

Another challenge was expanding our programs and raising money for events. Over time, we even out grew the initial \$10,000 investment. It only went so far. In an effort to reach more women, we had to have more programs, and in order to have more programs at well-known and professional venues, we had to raise more money. All that changed in 2005, when we received our 501(c)(3) designation from the Internal Revenue Service. Our funding doubled and opened the door to major program growth and event expansion. Early on, with no permanent, paid staff, I was writing all grant requests and sponsorship proposals, attending all meetings and pretty much running the show, with the help of Bernadette Mayfield and Paula Newman, part-time, senior project managers for the Foundation. This was also a challenge, because

while growing the foundation and running my for-profit business, GAP Communications Group, I was also serving as a caregiver for my mother and my father. Although I was busy, it was an honor to take care of my parents during that time. I am grateful that I could keep pushing through and still see my organization thriving to this day.

**The Possibility for the Tree:
What's next?**

Moving forward, I would like to hire a full-time Executive Director, Executive Assistant, and a Fund Development & Marketing Director. Having these positions filled permanently would help me to focus on other areas of the organization to reach more women. I could then develop a global expansion plan.

We currently are privileged to have office space in Tower City, but would like to have our own building to house our administrative operations, training programs and conferences. To date, we've impacted the lives of over 11,000 women and girls; however, if donated, the building would be a beacon in the community and could help us expand our reach exponentially.

Other ideas for the future include the Women of Color Institute and corporate and individual membership programs. The institute could be used to offer certificate programs for a wide variety of fields.

The Women of Color Foundation is very near and dear to my heart. The organization has unlimited growth potential and I am excited to discover how it continues to blossom as we strive to educate, train, motivate and inspire women and girls of all colors around the world.

For more information about the Women of Color Foundation, visit:

www.womenofcolorfoundation.com

The Magic of Blended Families *that Work!* Part II



The Walkerly kids (from left): Dylan, 21; Autumn, 25; Austin, 7; Taryn, 23; Isabella, 7; and parents Kris Putnam-Walkerly and Terry Walkerly.

Kris Putnam is a consultant in the field of philanthropy, where she advises foundations on where their donations might have the best impact. Terry Walkerly owns a company that helps restaurants manage their used cooking oil. His service filters, cleans, and removes waste oil and then processes it for sale to the biodiesel market.

Kris and Terry attended the same high school but barely knew each other. They reconnected at their 20-year high school reunion. Kris came back for the reunion from living her single life in San Francisco. Terry had been divorced for four years and had three children: two girls, Autumn, 14, and Taryn, 13, and a boy, Dylan, 10. The couple fell in love quickly and got married within a year.

Two years into the marriage, Terry filed for custody of his middle daughter and his son, which was granted. The kids naturally felt a strong loyalty to their mother, and at the same time they were not especially accepting of Kris. That was among the first of several challenges the couple faced. They dealt with the kids' emotions with a steady, consistent approach to family life. They prioritized the kids' visitation times, engaged the kids into the couple's new life together at every opportunity, and allowed the kids to make as many choices as possible.

Terry and Kris wisely bought a home large enough to accommodate their two home offices and Terry's three kids during visitations. His kids' lukewarm feelings towards Kris became more pronounced when Kris became pregnant with twins. They were afraid they might be replaced in his life by the new babies, a boy, Austin, and a girl, Isabella. But Kris and Terry remained steady and loving through this transition. The children all fell in love with the twins very quickly.

The couple worked hard to build strength into their new blended family. Naturally there were challenges as the kids entered the teenage years. But when the difficulties came, the Walkerlys sought help from a therapist. She helped them learn that they could only control what happened

in their own home versus what might be going on at their biological mother's home or their school friends' homes. All they could do was to maintain consistency at their home. One way the couple maintained order was that Terry handled discipline with his first three children and the couple never discussed their differences in front of the kids. "Don't be afraid to seek out advice and professional help if you need it," Terry says.

Terry did not attend college, but he wanted a college education for his kids. Since Kris was a college graduate, she saw the college application process as an opportunity to show her love for them. It gave her the chance to build her relationship with the girls without having them feel disloyal to their biological mother. She navigated the entire process for Autumn, from the ACT and SAT tests to college visits and more.

So what makes it all work? In retrospect, Kris and Terry's advice to blended families is always open communication, consistency in discipline, maintaining a united front, and making sure the kids know they are loved unconditionally. There will be challenges, but eventually the kids will realize that everything was done with their best interest at heart. Good counsel from close friends and loving extended family members was also very important.

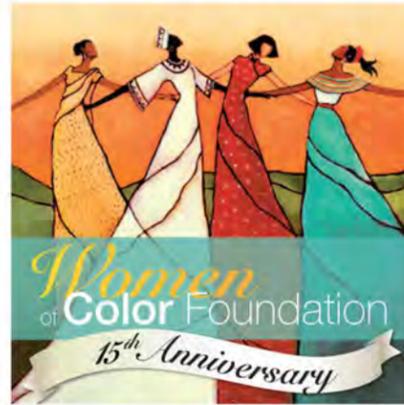
Through it all, they both agree it's critical to keep the marriage strong. Like the oxygen masks on an airplane, you have to place it on yourself first before you can help anyone else. So they made sure to prioritize time for themselves on date nights and special occasions.

Kris's advice for a step-parent is to maintain perspective. "Keep in mind you are jumping into a moving car," she says. "The process started long before you came on board and you probably don't have the steering wheel."

Terri advises, "Don't be afraid to seek out advice and professional help if you need it."



Sharon O. Williams
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MARYSVILLE, OHIO (BY INVITATION ONLY)

2nd Annual Special Women's History Month Program
Thursday, March 9, 2017 ■ 12:30pm – 2:30pm
Ohio Reformatory for Women (ORW)
1479 Collins Avenue, Marysville, Ohio 43040

CLEVELAND, OHIO

5th Annual "Speaking of Women! A Dialogue Series for Women in Leadership"

Thursday, March 30, 2017 ■ 12:00 noon – 1:30pm
Special Women's History Month Leadership Symposium
Cleveland Clinic – Main Campus – Bunts Auditorium
9500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44195

AURORA, OHIO (BY INVITATION ONLY)

15th Anniversary "C-Suite" Executive Summit
(NEW Exclusive Event!)
Sunday – Tuesday, April 9-11, 2017
Walden Inn & Spa
1119 Aurora-Hudson Road, Aurora, Ohio 44202

CLEVELAND, OHIO

15th Annual Personal and Professional Development Retreat for Women of Color

"Connections, Community and Career 2017"
Thursday, May 11, 2017 ■ 8:00am – 5:00pm
Case Western Reserve University, Tinkham Veale University Center
11038 Bellflower Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44106

CLEVELAND, OHIO

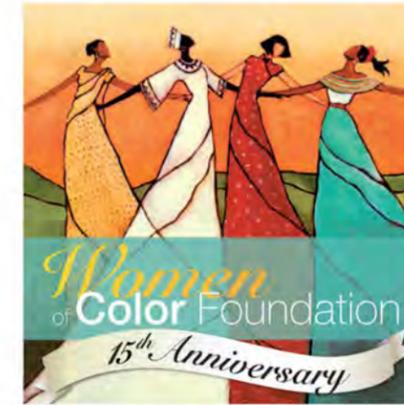
6th Annual "Speaking of Women! A Dialogue Series for Women in Leadership"

Thursday, June 8, 2017 ■ 11:30am – 1:30pm
Women's Leadership Symposium
Dominion East Ohio
1201 East 55th Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44103

CLEVELAND, OHIO

15th Anniversary VIP Reception and Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon

Thursday, July 20, 2017 ■ 5:30pm – 8:00pm
Cuyahoga Community College - Corporate College
4400 Richmond Road, Warrensville Heights, Ohio 44128



CLEVELAND, OHIO

2nd Annual Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) Women's Leadership Symposium
Wednesday, August 16, 2017 ■ 11:30am – 1:30pm
NEORS Cuyahoga Heights Facility
4747 East 49th Street
Cuyahoga Heights, Ohio 44125

MARYSVILLE, OHIO (BY INVITATION ONLY)

3rd Annual Special Prison Outreach Program
Thursday, September 7, 2017 ■ 12:30pm – 2:30pm
Ohio Reformatory for Women (ORW)
1479 Collins Avenue, Marysville, Ohio 43040

CLEVELAND, OHIO (FOR STUDENTS ONLY)

PowHERful™ Foundation in partnership with the Women of Color Foundation
2nd Annual PowHERful™ Enrichment Conference with Soledad O'Brien
Saturday, September 23, 2017 ■ 8:00am – 5:00pm
Cleveland State University – Student Center – 3rd Floor Ballroom
2121 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115

CLEVELAND, OHIO

11th Annual Women of Color Leadership Development and Training Institute & Awards Luncheon

Thursday, November 2, 2017 ■ 8:00am – 2:00pm
Cleveland State University – Student Center – 3rd Floor Ballroom
2121 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115

For More Information, Please Visit: www.womenofcolorfoundation.com

or call: 216.391.4300, ext. 311 ■ Toll Free: 866.962.3411

Fax: 440.815.2389

A NEW Understanding

Reality says women are to be housewives, secretaries, nurses, waitresses and anything else that keeps tradition. Actions speak louder than words and reality speaks louder than hope, but even that truth can be falsely told. Women learn to be sweet girls, act like young ladies, and be great wives and better mothers. Women have fought for suffrage, academia, economic stability, and to be seen but yet reality seems to always strike. Tradition is not the problem but there is something wrong with not realizing every possible opportunity for greater success. There are wars to fight, mountains to climb and skills to learn so that when given the chance, women will grow.

Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW) has opened my eyes to realize change is still to come. NEW is a workforce development program for women to get involved in blue-collar careers such as construction, utilities and maintenance. Pat Chambers Daly, vice president of development and external affairs, explains that their board of directors developed partnerships with construction and real estate companies to advocate on behalf of the women in the program. They are building apprenticeship programs and promoting inclusion in the workforce to create a fighting chance for every woman involved.

NEW helps each woman perfect her craft through the seven-week Blue Collar Prep and the eight-week NEW at Night programs, which teach trade math, measuring, drawing, carpentry, electrical and plumbing skills. They are trained to carry heavy equipment so their physical strength can match the male-dominated career they seek. For many NEW women, the program is their path to enjoy a sustainable income that can at least put them in the middle class. To this day, every dollar a man

makes, a woman earns 77 cents. Most of the positions at NEW start at \$17 an hour plus benefits. Women can look beyond jobs and begin building careers. Graduating students choose to defy the odds and walk away from society's customs of what a woman should do.

The women involved in NEW's programs have mentioned that they wish they had the chance to learn the skills at a younger age, so NEW has plans to work with New York City's higher education to open programs for young men and women. They are also creating a more simple trade program for young girls, 14 and older. Graduates from these programs will have an automatic entry into one of the core programs that NEW offers. Involving younger women allows exposure to career options other than the traditional employment route.

Nani Noverita, one of NEW's star graduates, lived at a homeless shelter with her husband before the program. With just \$84 in her pocket, she had high hopes to change the direction of her future. Within a year and a half, she started work with Local 46, paid cash for her car and lives in an affordable home with her family. She changed her circumstances. She understood that believing in herself only made her stronger.

Pat Chambers Daly acknowledges that the best way to ignite change and support NEW as an organization is to "Identify that women can!" When we recognize that women can handle a male-dominated field, true change will begin to occur. NEW has taught me one very important lesson and that is to embrace all that success has to offer. So I pledge to stand behind NEW and fight for women's equality in every aspect and I hope you do too.



Mone't Roberts
C L Magazine Intern/Blogger
www.zoominmo.wordpress.com



Spring Recipe:

Grilled Spring Vegetables and Lamb Chops

Lamb Chop

- * 2 trimmed racks of lamb
- * 4 T good extra virgin olive oil
- * 4 T Good Bordeaux Wine
- * 1 T crushed black peppercorns
- * 5 cloves of garlic (crushed)
- * 3 T fresh rosemary & thyme leaves
- * Sea Salt for seasoning

Vegetables

- * 4 C mixed spring vegetables such as baby carrots, spring onions or ramps, asparagus and radish

PREP

Marination

Using a heavy knife, cut between the bones of the racks, separating the lamb into individual chops. Lay the chops flat in a shallow, non-reactive dish. In a medium bowl, combine the olive oil, crushed garlic, red wine; whisk until thoroughly mixed. Add the rosemary and thyme and black peppercorns; spoon the marinade evenly over the chops. Marinate overnight, turning once.

Preheat grill.

Vegetables: Season your vegetables with sea salt and cracked pepper and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil use a vegetable grill pan and Grill first until you want a little crunch left in your spring vegetables.

Chops: Remove the chops from the marinade, scraping off the solids. Season both sides with salt and pepper. Grill on medium-high to desired level of doneness (about three minutes per side for medium rare, recommended).

Plate and enjoy!



Chef Lisa Delgado
www.whatsfordinnerlpd.com

Suffering in Silence

In this quarter's column, I'm providing women with a few tips for surviving and thriving in these anxious times. If you want to know more about managing your anxiety, send your questions to CL Magazine's Facebook page. We regret that questions cannot be answered individually.

In a world full of alternative facts, anxiety is at an all-time high. We never know what a day may bring. Rules and regulations are constantly changing, microaggressions are on the rise, and doom and gloom dominates our social media feeds. Is it any wonder that our nerves are frazzled? As we celebrate spring, here are some tips for surviving and thriving in anxious times.

1. Call it what it is. You're not down to your last good nerve or about to lose your mind up in here—you are anxious. Anxiety has both a physical and mental component. Once the physical sensations (e.g. rapid heartbeat, trouble breathing, sweating) stop, it is the thoughts that keep you anxious.

2. Recognize who and what triggers your anxiety and change your response. There's always someone or something that knows how to push your panic button: your kid, your spouse, the unreasonable boss, the empty gas tank, the missed deadline, etc. You can't change the behavior or the event, but you can change the way you respond to it.

3. Don't fight the panic. When you have a panic attack, your natural response is to either fight it or flee from it.



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Both make the panic worse. Relax, use positive self-statements, and allow the attack to happen. In doing so you will learn that panic can only go so high and then it will subside.

4. Start the day positive. Rather than waking up and immediately reaching for your phone, take 10 minutes to surround yourself with positive affirmations from a favorite book or podcast. If you're a journal keeper, take the time to reflect and write down a gratitude list. Starting the day on a positive note protects your mind and spirit.

5. Get a theme song. When the anxiety starts to build, play or hum a song that soothes your nerves or gives you hope. It really does make a difference.

6. Exercise. The research is very clear: exercise helps clear your mind and elevate your mood. A 30-minute walk does wonders for your anxiety level.

7. Ask for help. There is no shame in asking for help. Anxiety is treatable and there are many good cognitive-behavioral therapists who are ready and willing to assist you.

Dr. Angela Neal-Barnett is a full professor in Department of Psychological Sciences at Kent State University and the CEO of Soothe Your Nerves, Inc. She is the author of *Soothe Your Nerves: The Black Woman's Guide to Understanding and Overcoming Anxiety, Panic, and Fear* (Fireside/Simon & Schuster).



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Standing Tall

5 Tips for Female Entrepreneurs

to Building a Strong Reputation in a Male-Dominated Industry



When I was a curious eight-year-old, I was always enchanted by my grandmother's closet. From fuchsia to ivory and royal blue, her modest, yet classic collection of high heels (or "pumps" as she called them) was a dream for this little girl playing dress up. And though many were worn, dated, or needed slight repair, I never noticed. Grandma Irene cared for them with such affection. To her, they were much more than shoes. They represented elegance and class. Irene stood tall, and she carried herself with grace in every aspect of her life. That's where my desire to stand tall like Irene started.

Here we are, in 2017, years removed from Grandma Irene's post-World War II era of suburban migration and incredible civil and human rights movements. But how much has really changed? Sexism. Racism. Ageism. As a young female entrepreneur in the public affairs and communications industry, I still see these issues.

More than ever, it's our responsibility to change our world, especially as female entrepreneurs working in male-dominated industries. The following are five ways I try to do this on a daily basis:

1. **Be human.** Remember, we are all members of one unifying race: humanity. Often I am the only woman at a conference table of men. Instead of feeling uncomfortable, I embrace being a woman, having a different perspective and offering new ideas. Remember, you have something to offer that they don't. That's why you're there.

2. **Find your tribe.** In the last 10 years, I have moved nearly a dozen times. That disruption taught me how vital it is to have a support system. I always say, my success is not just my own. It truly does take a village. Surround yourself with individuals who raise you up — men and women, older and younger, who support and love you.

3. **Keep the balance.** I aim to keep my "Six F's" in balance at all times: Family, Fitness

(Health), Finances, Friendships, Faith, and Fun. It's a constant effort to keep these things in check, and yes, getting off balance is normal. Try it. Your success and inner peace will thrive.

4. **Think big.** Then think bigger. It's amazing what I accomplished when I stopped relying on personal relationships, other people, or unfulfilling jobs to make me happy. Set goals that scare you. Plan for the week ahead, plan the next six months, then plan for five years from now. I'm 32 and own a successful PR firm. This goal still makes me sweat! But I've wanted this for more than 10 years, and guess what? It was one of the first goals I ever put in writing.

5. **Embrace grace.** Grace doesn't care where you're from, how much money you have, or the color of your skin. Grace is holding your head high, firmly shaking someone's hand, and treating everyone with respect. And grace is reciprocal. The more you give, the stronger the reputation you build for yourself and your brand —

and the more others respect you.

Regardless of one's political affiliation, Michelle Obama's sophistication and elegance over the past eight years has been undeniable. She is a true example of standing tall.

During the 2016 Democratic National Convention, she discussed lessons she and President Obama try to instill in their daughters regarding grace, decency and character: "We explain that when someone is cruel or acts like a bully you don't stoop to their level. No, our motto is: when they go low, we go high."

Remember that, go high. For me, it was unshackling myself from the limitations of working for someone else. It was finding freedom in being a self-made woman and knowing my diverse perspective and valuable input matters. Dig deep within yourself, find your own version of Grandma Irene's proverbial fuchsia pumps and fully, unequivocally, fearlessly stand tall.



Holly Mueller
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Arts & Culture

Every year, springtime brings with it the promise of rejuvenation and discovery. With the coldest blows of winter behind us, it's liberating to know that we can retire our goose down coats and trade up for sunshine and sandals. As famed comedian Robin Williams once said, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'" So in the same vein, let's shake off any residual cabin fever and try one of these foolproof spring pick-me-ups.

TASTE OF BANGKOK

Cooking Class, Cleveland, OH | April 7

Gather your girls for what's sure to be a fun night out, or, in? Led by chef Eric Wells, this cooking class promises to teach traditional Thai culinary methods in a fun and engaging atmosphere. From the most accomplished cook to the self-admitted novice, this class walks participants through a five-course tour of Thailand's most notable dishes. Starting with an inviting Bangkok salad topped with miso dressing and ending in a mango rice pudding that's sure to satisfy, this course is well worth the \$35 price of admission. Want to complete your meal? Don't forget to pack your favorite bottle of Riesling or any other dry wine to accompany your masterpiece at plating.

Purchase tickets at skyelaraes.com/upcomingevents



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CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Washington D.C. | April 1, 8, and 15

In 1912 Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo gifted 3,000 cherry blossoms to the city of Washington, D.C. and nestled them around the Tidal Basin. Honoring their resurgence, the U.S. hosts a month-long festival every year with varying events and activities geared towards the entire family. This April, the National Cherry Blossom Festival concludes with some springtime staples worth taking the trip. The Blossom Kite Festival is perfect for families with small children; bring your own kites or build your own kite at one of the activity stations. Not into the whole kite thing? Join onlookers at one of the largest events in Washington, D.C., The Cherry Blossom Parade. The mile-long parade features elaborate floats, celebrity entertainment, and marching bands from across the country. Finally, the month concludes with The Southwest Fireworks Festival on the water. Head to Washington's wharf with your closest friends for an evening of fireworks and fresh fish. This culminating event is an all-day excursion complete with live music, a beer garden, food trucks and activities for all ages. Oh, and of course fireworks!

For more information, visit nationalcherryblossomfestival.org



Arts & Culture

GLAMPING AT THE AUTOCAMP

Santa Barbara, CA + Sonoma, CA

Who says kids are the only ones who can enjoy spring break? AutoCamp is redefining the outdoor camping experience for adults everywhere. I mean, if you're into layering and tent pitching, then have at it! But for the rest of us who, perhaps, aren't outdoor enthusiasts, glamping is our go-to. With one location in California's wine country and another on the Santa Barbara coast, AutoCamp is a luxury outdoor lodging experience that features modern Airstream accommodations. Book a weekend stay for two or bring your girls along for a true glamping experience. Don't forget to pack your camera for all the memories you're sure to create.

Book your trip at autocamp.com

PITTSBURGH WINE FESTIVAL Pittsburgh, PA | May 4

If you're looking for an escape a little closer to home, look no further than Pittsburgh's annual wine festival. The celebration of food and wine takes place at the home of the Pittsburgh Steelers and features hundreds of wines from across the globe. Not only will there be food and wine tasting stations, but the Pittsburgh Wine Festival provides seminars to take your wine knowledge to the next level. Go ahead, take this one-hour trip across the border for an evening that's sure to satisfy.

Purchase tickets at pittsburghwinefestival.com

ESSENCE FESTIVAL New Orleans, LA | June 29 - July 2

Diana Ross. Mary J. Blige. Chance the Rapper. Solange. John Legend. This year's line-up is star-studded to say the least. In between musical sets on the main stage, take a tour of Essence's exhibition station for the latest products and technology in the industry, and perhaps steal away for a makeover or manicure mid-day. But what's a trip to the Big Easy without a trip to Bourbon Street? Create space in your stay for a meaningful visit to the strip and eat and drink at one of N'awlins famed restaurants. The festival begins on June 29 and ends on July 2nd, making it the perfect end to spring and an even better start to your summer.

Get your spot at essence.com/festival-2017



Pittsburgh
Wine Festival



#SelfcareSunday



Think of being outside trying to change the course of the wind. Imagine the exorbitant amount of energy wasted fighting something that was never meant to be fought. Take a moment to realize that every second, every minute of every day we are bombarded with contrast, conflicts and an array of conditions.

It's easy to get caught up in the matrix of moving and doing constantly. Regardless if we're conscious or unconscious of it we become responders to conditions of which we have absolutely no control over.

In addition to our responsibilities to our careers, our families, our friends (all of which are exhausting at times), the one thing we absolutely have control over is ourselves. We pour out so much of ourselves, which is no small task. However, I am a huge advocate for taking the "me-time" we all need to fulfill ourselves as individuals and to fill ourselves back up.

We all need time for ourselves. What that looks like will vary from one individual to the next based on our needs, but here are five essential steps I believe are important to investing back into yourself:

1. **Be Intentional and Commit.** Choose one day out of the week and dedicate yourself completely to yourself. This doesn't have to be an entire day. It could be a few hours, so long as you have some uninterrupted time to self. My personal day of choice is Sunday.



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2. **Create Some Space for Quiet Time.** Despite being bombarded with conflict, contrast, and conditions, we're equally bombarded with insight, knowledge and new information. We're only able to take advantage of it if we're in the receptive mode and can find the time to get quiet. I try to find time to meditate daily; however, on my dedicated day, I like to delve a little deeper and spend a bit more time in meditation.

3. **Take Care of Your Body.** In order to give anything of substance to anyone else, taking care of yourself is essential. Take this time to spice up your mundane recipes and try something new and fun. Go for a run in the park or a walk in the neighborhood — anything to get your blood pumping. Cycling is my personal favorite. When I'm really feeling it, I'll ride for at least 30 miles.

4. **Treat Yourself.** This is the time to indulge in the things you may not normally have the time for, including a steamy hot bath and lots of candles, paired with your favorite album and a glass of red wine.

5. **Pursue Your Passions.** Dedicate this time to doing the things that make you happy. For me it's creative writing and long nature walks. Of course pursuing your passion doesn't necessarily mean you're in isolation from the rest of the world. For you it could mean surrounding yourself with the people who brings out the best in you.

Ultimately, it's about taking care of you and showing yourself just as much love as you do to everyone else.

Embrace Consulting specializes in providing Diversity and Inclusion consulting and leadership development services to champion employee engagement and drive for business results. Embrace Consulting is positioned to partner with your Leadership Team(s) as well as your Business Resource Networks to ensure alignment of business objectives, cultural competencies and skill development opportunities.

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Food for your Soul

From Oddity to Inspiration: A Personal Reflection

In 1843, Danish poet Hans Christian Andersen wrote *The Ugly Duckling*. This story details the journey of discovery for an ugly bird that was born in a barnyard and was bullied by the other birds for being different. She felt all alone until she discovered that she was not a duckling but was instead a beautiful swan. The lesson of the story is this: as long as the ugly duckling measured her beauty against others in her environment, she would never recognize the full brilliance of her swan-hood.

Personhood operates in similar ways. We may measure our beauty, importance, and success by others' standards. In order to gain approval, we may also pattern our priorities after what others in our surroundings have said or done, but doing so robs us of the opportunity to express our natural genius. Yes, others can indeed provide direction concerning certain goals in life, but they do not dictate the ultimate course of action. We each are meant to shine in our own way, and our oddities can become sources of inspiration only when we embrace them.

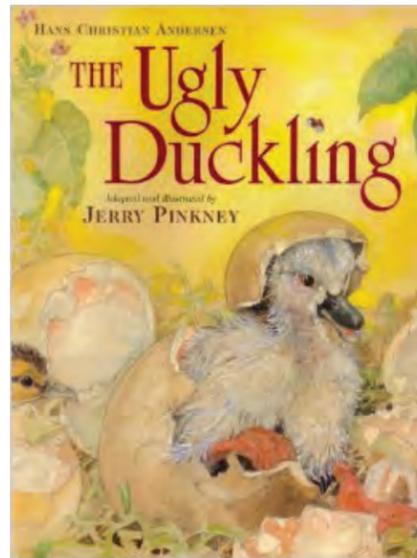
My belief in the power of embracing difference is built on my personal experience of never fitting in. Because I endured childhood taunts of being nerdy, overweight, poor, and unattractive, I spent many of my adult years obsessing over whether I was acceptable to those around me. I loved language but was teased for talking "too proper" and using "fifty dollar words." As a result, I downplayed my knowledge. One day, I decided to embrace myself without apology. It helped me realize that my passion for big words—an insecurity—would define a multifaceted career as a pastor, poet, and as an English instructor.

The decision to embrace my eccentricity helped me recognize that it takes incredible energy to avoid criticism. I no longer wanted to waste precious energy on the impossible task of fitting in when I was created for distinction. I made an internal commitment to focus only on those things that contributed positively to my newfound sense of purpose. Only then did I discover what peace is.

I wish I could write that I have not since encountered pressures to conform. It is a delicate balance; pressures do creep in occasionally. This difference is that I now recognize who I am, and my strong sense of identity keeps me grounded.



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Charmaine D. Brown
President

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE: Tracey Bell

Luster Products' marketing director uses data and problem solving skills to help position a 60-year-old family hair care business for continued success.

Tracey Bell is the Marketing Director at Luster Products, Inc., a family owned African American hair care brand. Her responsibilities include overseeing growth and development of some of the industry's most iconic brands, including Luster's Pink and S-Curl, as well as newer brands like You B-Natural, Pink Kids and a recently launched S-Curl extension line for men's beard care.

Bell has been with Luster just over two years, but she brings a wealth of experience in brand marketing across industries. Here she discusses her career trajectory and why she's excited to work with a 60-year-old brand.

Learn more about Luster's 60-year history [here](#).



company. I entered the personal care industry as director of new products for Soft Sheen/Carson, a division of L'Oréal, where my professional love affair with hair care and all things beauty began. After that, I studied at the Aveda Institute and became a licensed esthetician. I've done beauty consulting for several small salons, spas and brands. I joined the marketing strategy team for K-Mart, to experience strategy development from the retail side of the business and found my way back to hair care. I became the marketing director at Luster Products, Inc. and have had the challenge of launching new brands and revitalizing classic products in the ever-changing world of ethnic hair.

Tell us about your career progression and positions you've held?

I started my career as an insurance underwriter for Liberty Mutual, then went to graduate school for an MBA, with a focus on marketing. My first job was marketing for Trident and Chiclets (gum) and Certs (breath mints). From there, I did business marketing for Ameritech, the Midwest telecommunications

What has been one consistent element that has helped you advance in your career?

I can take a piece of data and transform it into a marketable idea or product. In other words, uncovering meaningful problems and then addressing them. For example, from research, we know that perceived lack of hair growth is a major problem for



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African American women. By understanding a woman's daily routine, the ways she styles her hair, and the ingredients she prefers, we launched a line of products that addressed hair breakage with scientifically proven ingredients. Why address breakage? Because the perceived lack of hair growth is not based on hair not growing, but hair breakage along the shaft. Tackling the problem from multiple angles provided a practical and profitable solution.

What is most appealing about your current position?

I am developing products for consumers who are just like me, my family, and my friends. Hair care and grooming are part of everyone's life. A marketer can market any product or service, but it's much more fun and meaningful when those products are part of your everyday life.

People are super passionate about hair (and beauty), as demonstrated by the endless number of blogs on the subject. Does getting that kind of instantaneous feedback from users make your job harder or easier?

Getting instantaneous feedback is a double-edged sword. Because people are so passionate about hair products and ingredients, often that passion is perceived as expertise, which can cause heated debates and confusion. It's great to experience that interaction and interest, but it's sometimes difficult to provide proper and accurate information, especially if there is a level of distrust about who is manufacturing that product. On the other hand, it's awesome to have your products praised in online discussions.

There is a lot of responsibility in promoting a brand that is one, 60 years old and two, owned by an African American family. Does this legacy carry significant weight in the marketing decisions you make?

Absolutely. However, the family owners are very involved, so no decisions are made in a vacuum.

You've worked with companies that have seemingly unlimited resources for R&D, marketing, promotion, and advertising. How do you take what you've learned in those environments and apply it within a smaller organization?

My experience in larger organizations has sharpened my skills, allowing me to master many tasks. I can plan and execute across a variety of functions, and have learned that the best way to manage is setting up strong processes that others can follow to achieve objectives. For instance, in a few organizations, I have set up a new product development process that covers all aspects of launching a new item from concept development to research and distribution. Using this type of tool ensures that you don't miss any steps in the development process, and it provides accountability to others who are key to the process.

You are new to Luster. Was looking at the brand with fresh eyes important? What have been the results to date?

Having a fresh perspective, combined with hair care experience, has been valuable here at Luster Products because we have filled gaps in our product offerings, and contemporized iconic brands like Luster's Pink and S-Curl, which are staples in African American households.

Are you actively mentoring others?

I am not doing any one-on-one mentoring, but I make it a point to discuss my career path in marketing, beauty, and corporate with student groups, like those participating in Year Up.

EDITOR NOTE: *Since the release of this issue, Tracey Bell has accepted a new opportunity.*



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