

# GPBT

GOOD PEOPLE GREAT THINGS

INAUGURAL ISSUE!  
OCT 2015

**NICOLE WYLIE**  
**Atlanta Vitiligo**  
**Beauty Owning it**  
**and Calling You to**  
**Conquer Confidence**

Terence & Cecilia Lester  
**Showing What "Love**  
**Beyond Walls" Really**  
**Means by**  
**Revolutionizing What**  
**it Means to Serve**

*J.Paul (Jared Foster)*  
Reach Records  
Collaborator  
Singer/Songwriter  
Demonstrates  
Dreams Do **Come True!**

Deborah Hughes &  
Debaron Hughes  
Sister & Brother Duo  
Living Fiercely &  
Free as Creatives  
in the Industry

Brandon Harris &  
Tiffany Daniels

Brilliant & Black  
Showing while  
Sex Sells,  
They've Chosen  
Love Instead!

**Plus Pointers to Push Your**  
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## INAUGURAL



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Letter from

# editor



It has truly been a long time coming, but well worth the process and the product. It seems that when God is striving to push us into purpose there is a lot that comes with the territory. Though we may not like it, this may even include a lot of pressure and sometimes pain. Because God's will is made perfect and complete, we will ultimately come out refined if we choose to endure the process.

Like most things we do at Write The Vision Creative Works, LLC, (owned by Jerrell and Valencya Thompson) **GPGT** was birthed as a Holy Spirit – led project which means 9 times out of 10 we had no idea about what God was doing until we reached the finish line.

**GPGT's** core belief is that, "God uses good (regular, ordinary) people to do great things" and it is our goal to feature them in this publication. Please send your feedback or inquiries to [info@valencyathompson.com](mailto:info@valencyathompson.com) with GPGT in the subject line. Perhaps you'll be featured in our next issue's *Letter to the Editor*.

If your business desires to advertise in our next issue, please email us to request a media kit while special introductory rates are still being promoted! We will release issues quarterly.

God's Blessings to You!  
May You Be on **Path** to **Purpose**!



# Purpose Pusher!

*Pushing You on Path to Purpose*

## Faith:

The road to purpose can often be a lonely one. This will be a great time to exercise your faith more than you've ever before!

#1

## Consistency:

It's so easy to allow "life" to knock you around if you're not careful, but it's important to be consistent, especially in the building phase of any new endeavor.

#2

## Block Out Naysayers:

Nothing is more important than pursuing God's purpose for your life. This means that you must constantly protect your peace!

#3

*So many are perplexed about their purpose or God's calling for their lives. Well, it is my belief that in identifying our spirit(of God)-led passions, we might be propelled into purpose.*

**S**top where you are right now. Stop dead in your tracks. Ask yourself, "What kind of relationship do I have with God?" "Do I even believe in God?"

Perhaps you're thinking, "Get on with it already, give me my tips so I can execute my plan." If you are thinking this, allow me to take a few moments to re-direct your expectations. This is not just some advice column where you'll get a few nuggets that you can put into practice. No, this is a *call - you - out* moment! You will now be placed into a period of self-reflection that can literally change your life, IF, you take it seriously.

It is impossible for a woman to know who she is without first knowing God. Yes, I'm prepared for many to challenge this notion, but the mere fact that you're still reading this article indicates that you know something about God or are at least curious. Because God created you for a specific purpose (see Jeremiah 29:11), it is evident that you connect with God to tap into it!

**There are many battles over defining gifts versus talents.**

Some deem them as the same, and others as starkly different. Either way, we must all acknowledge that God has "gifted" each of us.

Also, because these gifts lend themselves to specific areas, we may establish talents (with proper training and practice) in a variety of categories.

It is important to be mindful of where you put your hands. Just because you are good at something, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is

**good for you to do.**

Many assume because something is legal, ethical, and moral it's good to do; though, this is not always true. Tighten your connection with Almighty God so that you can know what God deems is GOOD FOR YOU TO DO. ■



**-ValencyaTheVisionary**

## Passion for Purpose:

*It is time for the people of God to put down the expectations of others and pick up God's purpose for their lives.*

*Release the shackles of living for others and receive God's perfect plan instead.*

*With focus, determination, and mindfulness of God's Holy presence, along with, intentional pursuit of God daily; you will and you can succeed at whatever God's perfect purpose for your life God designed for you, and ONLY you, to complete.*

**#PUSH**



# B.E.D.S.

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# Women to Watch



Tiffany Anthony

The Globetrotter

BY VALENCYA  
THOMPSON

Images by Jerrell Thompson

## PROFILE

**Age:** 33

**Marital Status:** Married to Cedric Anthony

**Hobbies:** Running & Reading

**Favorite Food:** Mexican

**Motto:** Be Yourself. Be Authentic.

*"I try to do right by other people and exercise my full potential."*



*“My journey has inspired me to help more people, reach out more, and take advantage of what I have.”*

**So you left the country recently, where did you go?**

Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Hong Kong

**How were you able to take this trip?**

My job asked me to temporarily fill a position for someone on maternity leave.

**How were you selected?**

This was due to a training I previously conducted in Poland.

**What is your position?**

I'm an engineer by trade in a Process & Training Manager position, which means I create processes and conduct trainings for sales people and pricing groups.

**Did you ever believe you would be able to take a journey such as this when you were a child?**

I never thought I would go to Asia, of all places. My Director called to ask if I could go to Singapore for 4 months. I said

I needed to check with my husband, Cedric. He agreed and my job even flew my husband in to visit during my stay. Cedric was going to take leave from his job to spend this time with me, but the week before I left he was laid off - so he was able to stay with me for an entire month. The testimony here is that once he returned stateside his job was reinstated.

**What was your greatest experience or adventure abroad?**

Just traveling in general, meeting people, and experiencing different cultures.

**I know you mentioned traveling to Poland.**

**Have you traveled to other places abroad prior to that trip? If so, how was this experience similar?**

I traveled to Europe the year prior with my job and a common occurrence was the way natives responded to me because I am a Black woman with big curly hair. I stood out. In Asia people bombarded me for pictures. It got on my nerves occasionally when people gave me “stank looks”. People from Vietnam and Thailand were most enthralled with me and provided the most positive response. The response from people in Singapore was different in that people would just stand in one position and look at me. My most bizarre experience was in a clothing store in Mo Chi

Minh, Vietnam. When I walked in the owner yells out, “Rihanna” and starts singing her song “Where have you been?” Once the lady realized I wasn't her she said, “Oh you have to see the video.” She then pulled me to the back of her store to show it to me. While Rihanna is beautiful, I don't see any resemblance, but in the video she is featured with big curly hair. After this, the lady talks me into buying some \$20 pants that were \$15 in other stores. She's joking around and saying stuff like, “you Rihanna, you can afford”. My favorite places to visit were Vietnam, Thailand, and Bali in Indonesia because the Hindu people were so nice. Many lived in huts with no electricity, but they were so happy.

**We can learn a lot from them.**

**As one who believes in God, how has this experience impacted your spiritual journey?**

My journey has inspired me to help more people, reach out more, and take advantage of what I have. I especially want to volunteer when traveling abroad in other parts of the world because I've seen extreme poverty in the places I've visited.

**What do you believe is the greatest gift to the world and why?**

Jesus. Jesus came for our sins, He was brought here just for us.

**If you could complete your journey all over again, what would you change?**

I wouldn't change a thing. Everything I've been through made me who I am. Because of my journey, I have grown up, and I'm a smarter person. Being who I am is a result of the challenges I have experienced, and my prayer is that I will always feel that way. ■



## RECESSIONISTA'S CLOSET

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R

RECESSIONISTA'S CLOSET



I was able to successfully land this interview while on a visit with Debaron's sister Debōrah Hughes (also featured in this issue). It was a random Wednesday afternoon, or so we thought. God often works this way. After hitting and missing appointments, I wondered if it would be possible. Thankfully, Debaron is kind and he obliged my request to get his interview completed at the spur of the moment on one of his rest days. God showed up and it was an inspiring and spirit-filled conversation! Debaron was raised in a musical household. His Mom sings, his sister dances, sings, and is also a clothing designer. Debaron was definitely cultivated in creativity!

### VOCATIONAL JOURNEY:

*In 8<sup>th</sup> grade I said, I really love Jesus, and I really love music so how do I put these two together? I told Mom in 8<sup>th</sup> grade I don't want to go to college. 12<sup>th</sup> grade came and I still did not want to go to college. I loved the marching band, but I didn't put forth effort on the band. I tried producing, but I was no good at it, I could never bring 'it' out. Thankfully my sister brought home a CD by Lecrae called "After the Music Stops." I started following him and 116 Clique and every Christian Hip-Hop person out there. The first night I listened to their music until like 3 am in the morning.*

### EVEN THE GREATS BEGIN SMALL:

In 12<sup>th</sup> grade Debaron's friend, Sebastian, sold him 2 turn tables for approximately \$250 and this was his introduction into the land of disc jockeying - and he had no idea of how to use them, but this was soon to change.

### KNOWING GOD FOR HIMSELF:

*I've been here (ATL) a year and a half, and I am going through a program called The Downline Ministries (discipleship program for college-aged students) that teaches "faith in topical studies." I want to see people change. I am inspired to reach others.*

### DEALING WITH LETDOWNS:

God: "but I'm here."

"I've called you to do this, and if I call you to do something you better do IT AND DO IT WELL."



Alias DJ 4:12 – from 1 Corinthians 4:12 (NIV): “We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it.”

## Debaron Hughes

DJ 4:12

“It's a joy to be able to do what you love for a living!”

“1 dj, 2 turntables, 2 records, 2 needles, 3 reasons: love GOD, love people, love music.”

always

#Unashamed

By Valencya Thompson

#Glory2God

#Worldwide

#movement

Debaron's house has been broken into, his car has been broken into, and even totaled in an accident. He has shared a vehicle with four adults all at once and while someone else might mistakenly say, “I guess it's not meant to be,” Debaron establishes, “God was showing that He was our provider.” Debaron recalls hearing God say, “You can have everything and not have me, but I am giving you ME.” “God is showing me that if I don't believe in Him or have faith that He will take care of me, then nothing else matters.”

*I asked God, “Give me your heart.”*

**HOW TO TRUST IN GOD:**

*I am now quitting my job and going to be a full-time DJ - I asked, "Jesus what does that look like?" God's response: "I'm going before you and I have already prepared the way." Everything I do is always for His glory and for my good. Debaron references Luke 11:13: 'If as bad fathers we know how to do things for our kids, how much more will our heavenly Father do for us?' "God I know you have this dream and vision you have given me, but I also have to work. So if I am going to pursue this dream, I will need to sustain myself with it."*

**None of my time is wasted, instead everywhere my time has been spent, counts.**

*God has called me to go, and God has called me to work, and God is supporting my dream. There is a story in the Bible (1 Kings 13:11-33) where God is talking to a prophet and tells him to go to this place and then go straight home. The prophet runs into another prophet who says we're both prophets - let's go eat together. He obliges and subsequently dies, after God had already said, "hey I told you to go straight home."*

**This helps me to understand that some things are for me and some things are for other people.**

*God has allowed me to see at a young age that I limit Him by my imagination...if we give over to God's will, He can really paint a beautiful picture.*

**DEALING WITH DOUBT:**

**"Now my naysayers are my greatest supporters because I am standing strong in faith."**

*Yes, I could have done things differently, but I trusted in what God wanted ME to do.*

**HOW TO DO THIS AT 20:**

*This is what it looks like to love Jesus. Understand I have heartbreak, but I choose to rest in Jesus' love and hope instead. The difference is we have hope that God's love prevails. Debaron is a proponent for Bible - teaching churches where parishioners can learn about Jesus.*

**FINAL WORDS:**

*First and foremost know who Jesus is. If you're not a believer, become a believer. Ask God to show Himself to you. God is not afraid of challenges. He wants us to know who He is and to have a mission, but before He challenges you to do anything, God wants YOU to find His heart. Some of the things that have kept me going for sure include my family. My brother bought my first mixing board, my sister is an extreme prayer warrior, my father and mother brought me into the earth, and my older sister, Debörah, showed me what it means to love Jesus, to love The Creator. God has allowed me to do many things. God thank you for the things you do and for unscripted adventures.*

Debaron had resided in Atlanta for a year and a half at the time of this interview, and was already working with a few Christian Rap artists AKA Truth artists: such as Lecrae, Thi'sl, Canon, and Sho Baraka.



(Photos provided by Debaron Hughes.)

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# LOVE PAST PAIN

Brandon Harris  
&  
Tiffany Daniels



(Photos by Jerrell Thompson.)

JTP

## A Love Story (unorthodox)...

### Profile

#### Brandon:

- 24
- Preacher
- Seminary Student
- Born in Detroit
- Raised in Rochester, NY
- 2 Parents
- One Younger Sister
- October Birthday

#### Tiffany:

- 22
- Senior at Lincoln University
- Raised in Newark, NJ
- Youngest Child of 6
- Discerning Spirit
- Prayer Warrior
- October Birthday

## “Like a Rollercoaster”

### TIFFANY’S STORY:

Tiffany describes her process as “like a rollercoaster.” *When I was younger, the pain that I had when my sister was diagnosed with cancer of the lymph nodes impacted my decision to go into oncology. I did this to have a connection with her. I realized later that I wasn’t operating on purpose, but pain. God wanted Tiffany to shift in order to use her strengths.*

**PURPOSE VS. PAIN** - *Everything I was doing in preparation [to enter oncology] was painful – I did not have the motivation to get up in the morning, instead it was an obligation linked to pain. Knowing that I can wake up and do something that brings me joy is much better.*

*The day following my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, my dad passed unexpectedly in his sleep. I clung to Mom, but she pushed us away because she didn’t know how to grieve. She remarried 7 months after my dad passed.*



*Through everything I was going through, all the pain that was around me I still felt a sense of peace that couldn’t have come from anywhere else. In a way with all of the confusion around me, death, etc. science says you should crack – that’s what happened to my brother, but God sustained me. ~Tiffany*



*-I believe that everyone has a purpose. We are all on a journey and everything you do connects with the purpose that you have. I think I am identifying my purpose currently. I am walking steps towards it. ~Tiffany*

*My step-dad was completely against our family dynamic and this caused a big division in our family. My brother who never really knew how to communicate his feelings, was diagnosed the following year with schizophrenia. It was spiritual and mental. It was demonic.*

Tiffany's step-father was a Muslim and former drug addict. He assaulted Tiffany's brother who had an intellectual disability. Tiffany recalls that she felt disregarded as her mother dismissed her feelings and she began to withdraw. She stopped attending school as her sister's health deteriorated.

With mom working, siblings out of the house due to their jobs and hospitalizations; Tiffany was the only one able to take care of her sister.

*One day I had to call 911 because she started screaming and it was terrifying. My peers in school would speculate and make up reasons about why I wouldn't come to school as though I didn't care, but they had no clue. My sister was gradually preparing me. She was saying she would miss me and I would get sad because she was all I had. She passed away my senior year (high school) and it was really difficult.*

### **BRANDON'S STORY:**

Brandon describes his birth family as "very driven, very ambitious." It wasn't a question of whether or not he was going to college. Brandon's father is an educator and his mother is the Chief Medical Officer Vice President of a hospital. Brandon grew up in a White suburb and attended a Black church on Sundays. "Black kids said I wasn't Black enough, White people said I wasn't White, and I always had issues with fitting in. I was called ni\*\*er and they attempted to label me special ed." (For the record, Brandon is a Candler School of Theology scholar).

### **"Am I Black enough? Am I manly enough?" ~ Brandon**

"I got called all kinds of names, and I had a great family, but questioned, 'Who am I?'"

Brandon's pedigree includes the first Black Chief Judge in his city, a member of the Democratic National Committee, several PhDs, and Master Degree holders. Needless to say there is a lot of pressure there. Consequently, Brandon often found himself tempted to fit in while in undergrad and he participated in acts that were not in-line with what his

family taught him or demonstrative of his love for God. Brandon even questioned his faith. Brandon recalls saying, "I ain't a Christian. I am a Unitarian. I don't believe in Jesus." Brandon visited the campus mosque once, and quickly understood the Muslim way of life was not for him. Brandon acknowledges God used *Black and White* to develop him into manhood

and Tiffany plays a huge role in his working through his struggles with identity.

### **THEIR STORY:**

*Relationships are first meant to glorify God. ~Brandon.*

Brandon and Tiffany met each other while both were in transition. They soon discovered they had met their match and found a sanctuary for prayer hidden in each other's hearts. ■



# Meet The Browns!

## One Man's Perspective on Faith, Family, & Finances

<b>Where did you grow up?</b> Anderson, SC	<b>What is your occupation?</b> Configuration Analyst in the Healthcare Industry	<b>THE BASICS:</b>	<b>What is your age?</b> 41	<b>What is your educational background?</b> Bachelor in Business Administration & Master in Healthcare Administration
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### When did & how did you know Sheila was "the one"?

I knew Sheila was the one when she was visiting me here in Atlanta and it was time for her to return to SC...I will never forget the feeling I had when it was time for her to leave. I left for work and she followed me to the exit and when I looked in the rearview mirror and saw her take the exit to SC...the feeling that came over me told me that I never wanted to be without her and at that moment I knew she was the one!

### How do you know that God is real?

I know God is real because I have tried to do things on my own and without His guidance they have never worked, but when I sought His advice through prayer it has always worked, and I mean always. Things may not work the way you want them to and It causes you to question God at times, but somehow it all reveals itself as to why it didn't work later and you realize why God took you through that situation....the key word is THROUGH....

### What have you learned from your children?

My children have taught me the meaning of unconditional love and also, I've learned that innocence is fleeing and that I can't protect them from life - if that makes sense, especially with technology...

**"Women think men are complicated and we can be at times, but the one thing I know is that every GOD-fearing man wants to do the best he can for his family."**

### What do you have to say about family & what have you learned about life compared to growing up in your birth home to the family that you have created in adulthood?

Family is everything to me! My parents have been together for over 45 years and they instilled and demonstrated the importance of family and to never put anything before that. There are things that come up in life and those things will come and go, but family is forever and I live by that. I will never put anything before my family!

### What have you learned about God through your challenges & victories?

I've learned that there is nothing without GOD! You have to have FAITH and I've come to learn what that word means (**Forsake All I Trust Him**), and that's what I live by and remind myself of in times of need.

### What has been your greatest trial & what have you learned from it?

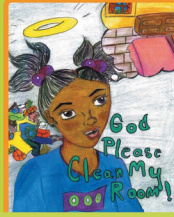
My greatest trial or test was when I decided to change careers. This test came with a lot of prayer due to being unemployed for a substantial amount of time and being led to pursue a Master degree in a totally different field. That was the hardest two years of my life, the support and prayers of my wife and family gave me the courage to see it through and now we are experiencing the fruits of that labor!!

### What do you know about your purpose & call in this life?

I have been on this journey of finding my purpose for years and just recently realized what it is: to **SHARE** in all facets of life! Maybe doing this interview is a step in that direction, considering how private I am.

### What else would you like our readers to know?

I am in no way perfect but I am a work in progress and I continue to seek GOD and do the best I can for my family. Women think men are complicated and we can be at times, but the one thing I know is that every GOD-fearing man wants to do the best he can for his family. The pursuit of this sometimes gets lost in translation when we as men are not where we would like to be in life, but remember this is what all men want! ■



2nd Edition  
By Valerica Thompson  
Illustrated by [unreadable]

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# Nicole Wylie

*The Vitiligo Beauty*

**“It should be known that **Vitiligo** is not something we chose and you shouldn’t make fun of us.”**

Interview  
by  
Valencya  
Thompson

I believe people should have Vitiligo awareness and I try to spread as much information about it as possible. It’s not contagious – there is still life with Vitiligo.

Vitiligo is the loss of pigment in stages. There are two types: one being stabilized (half of an individual’s body may change pigments, while the other half never does; some may have it localized in one area and it never spreads and these individuals are candidates for re-pigmentations); the other is unstable (where there is no control over where it manifests on the body). It should be known that Vitiligo is not something we chose and you shouldn’t make fun of us. It can appear at any age, your child or you could have it. There is no true known cause. Doctors speculate about what causes the onset and sometimes it runs in families.

I met a woman through social media with Vitiligo. She was not very confident due to childhood cruelty. People would say things to her like, “You look like a Dalmatian,” or “you got burned.” This lady reached out to me for the same reason others do on social media because my wedding photo went viral. My viral wedding picture is one of the best things that happened to me because it helped me realize that people out here are really hurting. I was raised with so much love and I was taught to love myself. As a result, I have always let love outweigh the negatives in my own life.

Unfortunately, many kids with Vitiligo suffer in silence because they don’t want their parents to come and “show out” at school.

So in order to maintain a sense of respect amongst their peers, many children withstand unnecessary abuse and bullying from others when coping with differences. One early memory comes to mind about my own encounter with a bully in second grade. A girl picked on me the entire year and I didn’t retaliate. She finally stuck me with a pencil and that is the only reason I told my mother. I was really timid when I was younger...and I still don’t like confrontation. Once I told my Mom, you better believe that she handled the situation immediately.

It has been my hope that all people come from homes where they are valued and raised with a healthy level of self-esteem, but this isn’t a perfect world. Because of this, I have learned that people with conditions like Vitiligo are ashamed to show their bodies. Some people are depressed and have even contemplated suicide due to feelings they struggle with related to having Vitiligo.

One remarkable thing I’ve experienced are the individuals who don’t have Vitiligo, yet, still reach out to me because they are battling with issues of low self-esteem and suicidal thoughts. I have found it best to pray before responding to individuals who come to me for encouragement. This is especially true for individuals who don’t know me in real life, but have connected with me via social media. The Holy Spirit has guided me to respond with approaches specific to the person I am interacting with at the time. I was once led to respond to one individual with “tough love”.



This kind of response is completely foreign to my normal style. I am high-spirited and nurturing so I felt it could only be God encouraging me to move forward in this way. The neat part about being a confident woman with Vitiligo is that those who know me saw my encouragement of others as ministry. This was before I even realized what God was birthing through me. I enjoy it. It feels really good to connect with people in this way. Not only am I a mother and a wife, but I am also able to help others in the world through these avenues. As a stay-at-home Mom, I've often questioned, "What am I good at?" Knowing that I am beautiful, inside and out, has inspired me to inspire others and promote healthy living and maintenance of positive self-esteem. I always strive to make others happy around me and help where I can.



I want my girls to be proud of Mommy and I want my girls to be confident go-getters! I tell them: "Know that we all have highs and lows, know that because you are still living and breathing you are going to be okay!"

Nicole lives in the metro-Atlanta area and is the wife of Brandon Wylie and mother to three beautiful daughters: Elle, Lauren, and Layla featured below.



(Photos Provided by Nicole Wylie)

***"I have found it best to PRAY before responding to individuals who come to me for encouragement."***

#leafit

Love, Embrace, Accept, & Flaunt It (whatever "it" is).

*No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."*

**Stop letting others determine your worth! I possess so many qualities that outshine the tones in my skin. I refuse to let anyone make me feel unworthy and neither should you!**

*Nicole Wylie*



# Bosses in Business



## ANDRA HALL OWNER OF CamiCakes



***“Some days you make mistakes, and it’s really what you do after making the mistake that defines you...”***

**GPGT: Growing up, what was your family dynamic like? What did your family instill in you that drove you to become who you are?** My mom was single. She had us all young. She had my brother at 17, I came two years later, and my sister like a year and a half after me. So imagine this 20- year-old woman with three little babies running around. My mom had a trailer next to my grandparents. I grew up in a mobile home. My grandparents' home was my second home and they provided stability. They were both hard workers. My grandmother was a domestic worker and I started working with her at a very young age. I can remember being my daughter's age now, working in the summers with my grandmother. My grandfather was in construction. We had very early mornings. I'm from a really small town and there was a factory that made aprons, so my mom sewed

nightgowns and aprons. I also grew up around my aunts who were schoolteachers and my uncle worked for the state. In Tallahassee, you were a schoolteacher, a state worker, or something like that. My family was very close-knit. My aunt was like my second mom. I just hovered around her. My mom, grandma, and my aunts raised me. My entire family taught me that if you want something, you have to work for it, and I learned this at a very early age.

**GPGT: Where are you from?** I'm from Monticello, in the sticks... off a dirt road right outside of Tallahassee. My brother is a police officer and my sister, a former educator, owns a separate cupcake business. She first started out with a yogurt shop and then transitioned to cupcakes.

**GPGT:**

**Do you consider yourself to be a Believer?**

Absolutely. *WITHOUT A DOUBT.*

**GPGT:**

**What has your faith taught you about owning your business?**

Oh wow, what hasn't it taught me? It's taught me that my business wouldn't be possible without it.

**GPGT:**

**What gave you the audacity to attempt this?**

It still goes back to faith. Of course I had a dream, but I know that none of it would be possible - had I not believed there was a power out there bigger than myself to help guide me and reveal certain things to me. I didn't come from a background of business. All my prior work was administrative; although, I worked in corporations and in government, I only learned how to develop a business plan because of God's guidance.

**GPGT: How do you feel about that?**

I realized what's for me is for me and what's for her is for her.

**GPGT: How long did it take you to start CamiCakes?**

I've always been a baker on the side, but it took about two years from the planning of the idea to getting the capital together to launch CamiCakes.

**GPGT: How did you get the capital to start your business?**

We refinanced our house. I first approached my family with my business plan. It was simple and nothing fancy. They were like, "It's a good idea, but can you really make money from cupcakes?" Others were like, "I don't think it's a good idea."

---

**PGGT: Why did you start your business?**

I always baked, but when I thought I had the job that I could see myself retire from, Camille (Cami) got sick. I was working for a builder as a design consultant assisting buyers with choosing plans. Due to Cami's illness, I was off for some time and I had to quit. We needed more money. My husband was doing what he could, but we needed more. I served as a night auditor at a hotel. I worked from 12am-8am and took Cami to therapy sessions in the daytime so I was sleep deprived. I had this gift and a desire to work in this arena, but I had to determine my direction and if I wanted to do whole cakes or not. I scratched cakes because from experience I knew how long it took to make them. I decided to nurture the cupcake side instead. After getting everything together and the house refinanced, I walked into the mall, shared my story and the first store launched. This is how I know faith is real because though I did the research, I didn't have the business background. I knew we needed to market, but I had a small budget. So I did a press release and sent it out to each station. I informed news stations and radio stations, and because of the coverage we sold out the first day. After a year and a half we opened another location on the other side of Jacksonville. A year and a half after that, we opened in Atlanta. To tell you how naïve I was I thought we'd open the Atlanta store and I would come check on it once a week. So we came over the summer right before Cami started school with just the clothes on our backs and never returned to live there. We met new opportunities and met new people. We literally rented the apartment across the street from the store and we returned to Jacksonville (to pack up) two years later with everything still intact. We had to donate all of Cami's clothes because she'd outgrown them.

**PGGT: What was the timeline from your initial business launch to its current expansions?** In 2006 we opened our

first store in Florida. In 2008, we opened the second across town in Jacksonville. In 2009 we opened the Atlanta location, which was followed by Vinings in 2011. We then, opened the production facility off Marietta Street in Atlanta in 2013, and in 2014 we opened the creamery. In 2015 the Alpharetta and Camp Creek locations opened and my body feels it. Adding two stores at once is kind of rough. I want to reiterate having the right team and infrastructure in place is essential. I've been married for 16 years. My husband and I work together and that can add stress along with Cami's needs, but overall we love each other and we manage.

**PGGT: What kept you going in times that you knew you wanted to quit?**

Just holding on to the bigger picture. I visit Pastor Olu Brown's church, Impact. He once preached "whatever's inside of you will come out during stressful times or when things are not going right." He mentioned a songwriter whose wife died during childbirth. The message reminded me of how CamiCakes came about because of what was going on with my daughter Camille. Sometimes in tragedy you will birth your best gift to the world. The opposite is when people turn to drugs and other things that ruin their lives. Having vision keeps me from making choices like that. Also building a team of folks who share that vision and can help you get there is essential. It is difficult to get to the finish line without help.

**PGGT: If you had to do it all over again, what would you change about the way you navigated your journey?**

My first instinct is to say absolutely nothing because I believe what you endure is a lesson for the next time. If I have to choose something, I would trust my own gifts and talents. When I first launched in Florida, I thought I needed my cousin to be my spokesperson because she was more outspoken. I even bought her a uniform and she forgot to show up on the date I that we scheduled. That was my cue from God that it was me who needed to do it.

**PGGT: Do you mentor women?** I do, but not in the traditional sense. Whenever anyone asks me questions, I take the time to answer them.

**PGGT: Why do you think mentorship of other women entrepreneurs is important?** It is so important; you

actually gain more as the giver. You learn so much. You learn from the people that you think you're helping. I also think back to what happened to me when I first started. I walked into a beautiful cake shop in Jacksonville hoping the owner would be willing to offer advice and she looked at me as though I was crazy.

**PGGT: What valuable life lessons would you want to share with our readers in general and specifically to women of color?** The thing that I want

to be remembered is that you're your own CEO. You are really responsible for yourself. I believe some individuals think that someone else has to make a way for them, but you're really the person who is responsible for making things happen. No one else can break you. You're really responsible for being who you're supposed to be. It can never be, "I need for them to give me a chance." It can never be "I need someone else's help." You really have to be the person who can see (the vision) and the person to go out and make it happen.

**PGGT: Is there anything else you want our readers to know?** A lot of people

think that getting to the next step is easy, but everything has a process. Some days you make mistakes, and it's really what you do after making the mistake that defines you, your longevity in the business and in your circle. There are a lot of talented people in many fields, but some can't handle certain situations so it all leads back to faith. ■



# 2 SIDES



Remember there are always two sides to every story and then **the truth!**

*“2 Sides” is about a young couple, Ronnie and Michelle, living happily together. After a tragic family death, they battle through grief and family secrets. This drama incorporates elements of comedy, theatrical dance, and song. Contact us if interested in sponsorship or hosting opportunities.*

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# Highlights of a Servant-Heart

Terence Lester

with

LOVE  
BEYOND  
WALLS

Mobile  
Make-  
Overs

By Valencya  
Thompson

**T** Terence Lester founded Love Beyond Walls (LBW) alongside his wife, Cecilia Lester. Terence is not only a husband, but he is also a father, a minister, social activist, author and speaker. Last winter, Terence had the audacity to go homeless for 30 consecutive nights as a way to generate a following and campaign for the homeless population that is often overlooked by many in society. GPGT had the privilege to interview Terence while he was in the middle of his campaign. At that time, Terence slept on top of a bus and blogged daily about his experience. The bus was donated to LBW by a church so that it could be used to provide immediate makeovers for the individuals LBW serves. As it is with faith – walking, the bus needed a makeover so that it could makeover people. LBW's plan was to reconstruct the inside of the bus so that it might include showers, barber chairs, and a clothing closet amongst other features. This interview includes the expressions of Terence as he went through this life-changing experience. We literally interviewed him from the ground while he was on top of the bus on a cold day late in the afternoon.

*“That taught me sometimes God uses pain to lead us to destiny!”*

**GPGT: How are you doing out here?**

**Terence:** People have been sending me hate mail on Instagram. (Terence explained how he was being taunted for advocating for the homeless population. If there was ever any doubt in our minds about the reality of spiritual warfare, this is a prime example of it. Who in their right mind would chastise a man who is standing for a cause like this?)

**GPGT: What is the premise behind Love Behind Walls (LBW)?**

**Terence:** LBW is a part of a larger platform, which will roll out in phases and encompass social justice (sex trafficking, homelessness, and poverty), educational resources, and community development.

**GPGT: How did you know where to start?**

**Terence:** A mentor told me to focus on one area and there is a book by Dave Gibbons, “*Xealots: Defying The Gravity Of Normality*,” that taught me sometimes God uses pain to lead us to destiny. (Terence describes some of society's pain, such as people who have been treated as outcasts, as though they too are homeless.) In October 2013, we received a check to incorporate LBW. The check was dated for December 22<sup>nd</sup> and soon it will be a year since we started working on these concepts. I am willing to walk in the shoes of the ones I want to serve. I asked my wife, December 2, 2014, if she was okay with the movement (to go homeless).





A lot of issues separate people and erect walls. What would happen to people's love for God if we could break down those barriers, to live like Christ before the people we are trying to reach? I focused on one thing to see what God would do. I communicated this and was intentional about my focus.

**GPGT: How do you secure the (wo)man power to do this?**

**Terence:** My volunteer email list includes close to 3000 people. It is open to the general public via social media. Volunteers are notified and paired according to their service interest. My core team includes 13 people. We serve communities and this bus can help us do so more effectively.

**GPGT: What is the most heartfelt response you have received while conducting this campaign?**

**Terence:** The most heartfelt response I received was at 6:12AM when a woman brought me coffee and said "We appreciate you for standing up for people like me." I asked, "Where's your car?" She said, "I don't have one, I am walking to work." That was so touching. To think that this woman would walk out of her way in the cold just to bring me a cup of coffee.

**GPGT: Tell us about your children. How is this campaign impacting them?**

**Terence:** I have two children, one girl and one boy, 6 and 3 years of age. My wife

brings my children to spend two hours with me daily while I'm up here. Some days they miss me. Some days they think it's kinda cool. They will understand better as they get older.

**GPGT: How do you occupy your time?**

**Terence:** While out here, I have been thinking, watching sermons, reading books and calling people, especially when I begin to feel down.

**GPGT: What makes you not give up?**

**Terence:** I keep going because I'm not a quitter. Why would God give me a free bus?... People keep coming.

**Is there anything else you want our readers to know?**

My wife is the most important factor of this story. She allowed me to do it and is a part of the idea. We are doing it together. Also, this is about missional theology. You may not go to Australia, but you can be on a mission and join God's work wherever you are!

GPGT is proud to report that not only did Terence and LBW meet their goal, but they have also served many as a result and have since the time of this interview launched other initiatives with LBW such as the Dignity Art project, which provides a trade for unemployed individuals to create art from repurposed wood pallets that is sold at Art Shows for profit. To stay abreast of Love Beyond Walls' current initiatives, please visit [www.lovebeyondwalls.org](http://www.lovebeyondwalls.org)! Watch this video to see Day 1 of LBW's Mobile Makeover campaign <https://youtu.be/aRTuobWLK90>!

### GPGT SPOTLIGHT:

1 Corinthians 13: 4 – 7 ESV

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*



THE JOSEPH FAMILY



(Photos on location taken by Jerrell Thompson, all others provided by Terence Lester.)



# RUTH UBALDO

## THE HEART BRIDGE BUILDER



By Valencya Thompson

**W**hen I first moved to English Avenue in Atlanta, I had just graduated from Willamette, a liberal arts university, the oldest college in the West. As a Methodist I noticed incongruence and an interruption in my life. This was a continuation of what God has been doing all the while; I have always felt that I live in between two worlds (bridge builder). I have been blessed to be exposed to a variety of people, places, and sights. Even now living here in this neighborhood (under-resourced) while going to Candler School of Theology (well-resourced). I am Mexican and American. I speak Spanish and English. I am experiencing a life continuance of what God is doing and what God is equipping me for. Life in Atlanta is a big adventure with Jesus.

Since the launch of this publication, Ruth has begun a study abroad program for a year in Germany. While there she finds herself experiencing a period of isolation from all that is familiar to her. This isolation is more than physical; though a body of water separates Ruth from her home(s) in the US, but she is also experiencing yet another language barrier (her parents speak to each other in an indigenous language, while they

speak Spanish to Ruth and her siblings. This is coupled with Ruth being raised in an English learning environment while she grew up in American schools). Ruth has a special gift for working with and understanding people from diverse backgrounds. This is neatly packaged, as only God can, alongside her special gift of being a giver. If you've ever encountered someone with this gift, it is truly something special. These individuals take gift-giving very seriously and they share things that will make a positive impact and will



(Photo provided by Ruth Ubaldo.)

connect spiritually with the recipient. They have a remarkable way of saying, "I see you," to the rest of humanity.

Ruth is also a mighty prayer warrior who basks in God's crazy love daily. Ruth demonstrates for the body of believers how to do "single" well, though she acknowledges having her down moments like the rest of us. She is not wasting her days away longing for a relationship; instead, she recognizes her current season as one of preparation. She thanks God for and embraces the present. ■

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Valencya Thompson

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*Tykeani Etheridge*

# Deborah Hughes

**Creative Director - Choreographer - Dancer - Clothing Designer - Extraordinaire**

I will never choose one. Dance and design because both are me. I've always been creative. My Mom said I would dance when music would play as a child. I can go into an empty space and see a finished product. At age 10 I knew I could dance. At 12 I knew it could be a career. As a child I even rented out a space and choreographed a dance for a local event.

I was invited to churches and other local venues. At 12 years old I received my first check, and I was like, "I can get paid for this?" At 12 and 13, I operated with a strong sense of self.

Once, I said to my mother I want to sell something. Mom said, "lemonade." I said, "Everybody sells lemonade, I want to sell flowers." I had employees and even a spreadsheet for inventory. I picked up dandelions and other weeds and tied them together, made a profit, and paid my workers. There was no dance school where I grew up, so I perfected dances through HipHop.

**"While my teachers were trying to convince me to have a Plan B, my response was, 'You don't say that to someone who aspires to be a doctor or a teacher.' "**



(Photo provided by Hughes.)

*"When I would try to supplement with a regular 9 - 5, God would allow the attempt to disintegrate because God wanted me to be available for my art".*

I attended Spelman College at age 23 where I took Contemporary Modern Dance, Ballet & Jazz. **I was never scared to do it (dance, create, etc.) because I always knew I was supposed to do it.** I prayed and God put me in front of the right people. I hung pictures on the wall, along with affirmations and vision boards. I took classes to study and show myself approved. I was on tour when I was accepted to Spelman and returned 2 days prior to classes starting. I missed orientation and by grace, it was pardoned. My dance professors understood, but others didn't care about my art.

In middle school I began designing. My grandma sewed and my mom inherited her sewing machine and supplies when she passed away. My mother and I prayed for a teacher and soon after, a high school

teacher taught me. My high school discontinued using a set of design books before I started so I was able to take them (for free). My mom got me a mentor who could sew also. My first shirt was hideous. My mom wore it and she even made my sister wear hers.

Currently, I am seeking additional investors for my design projects. **I am very disciplined in how I save my money.** I tithe 10%, live on half, and put the remainder into my arts. The profits I make from dance go back into dance, design back



*into design, and so forth. Different formats (of living as a creative) work for different people. It hurts so much when people try to tell you to do something else or get a real job. I am an artist full time. I teach dance and everything I make money from is related to dance and design. When I would try to supplement with a regular 9 – 5, God would allow the attempt to disintegrate because God wanted me to be available for my art. You must surround yourself with like-minded people.*

**If someone wants to rent an apartment their entire life, they won't get that I'm trying to OWN IT.**

*You have to check the climate of people around you and the words you speak, they both impact the keys to your success. Know what you're doing and why you're doing it. This is my baby, not yours, that's why God gave it to me. Be careful of who you share your dreams with everyone is not ready to receive them.*

Debōrah is the owner of D'Varia Design and has served as the Creative Director for many art projects including music videos, short films, and photo shoots; to name a few. She has danced in and choreographed several productions. She grew up as the oldest of four children. She resided in the metro-Atlanta area before most recently deciding to freely travel from gig to gig and design to design both stateside and internationally. ■

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# Kickin' It with J. Paul

AKA Jared Foster

HIS STORY ON ADOPTING PURPOSE

Reach Records  
Singer/  
Songwriter



**B**orn in Tulsa, Oklahoma, raised in Dallas, Texas, and adopted at 8 weeks old;

Jared's adopted mom and dad then separated when he was nearly 3, soon after Jared and his mom migrated to Dallas. Jared met his biological mom a few days shy of 20 years old. Jared acknowledged that though he has spoken to his biological father on the phone, he hadn't met him in person. He recently learned of a brother and sister on his dad's side. When Jared first met his biological mom he had no intention of replacing his relationship with his adopted mom, but he notes it was good to answer certain questions.

By VALENCYA THOMPSON

*"I'm adopted and I was loved, and being a Christian makes being adopted by God make a lot more sense."*

Jared jokingly mentions, "why am I so short?" *She's 4'11 and my father is 5'6."* I wanted to build a relationship with them to align personality traits. I'm a hothead like my mom, and my father sings. It was cool to meet them, but I really wanted a relationship with my siblings. Jared describes longing for siblings being raised as an only child.

#### BEING ADOPTED BY GOD:

*I always knew that I was adopted, but I never felt like I was adopted.* Jared describes a close bond with his adopted mother's family and trying to fit in on his adopted dad's side. *My father's side is athletic. I played football to prove myself, I was good at it, but I just didn't have the size. It was definitely helpful to know I was adopted growing up versus randomly finding out.*

*I have other friends who were never told and they stumbled upon the information and felt their world was shattered, and experienced major identity issues. My birth name was Andrew Keys so I thought I was related to Alicia Keys, and then I found out that wasn't her real last name, lol! For me, it was I'm adopted and I was loved, and being a Christian makes being adopted by God make a lot more sense. I was willingly adopted by a family and given everything, it really matches up with God, with Jesus, how He takes care of us, loves us, and does not remove anything, but takes us as His own.*

#### THE CALL:

*I definitely feel like I'm in "it" (purpose/call) The Lord put me in a great place,*

*being around the people I've been around.* Jared further discusses his life experiences as connecting with his purpose, which include being adopted as a child.

*I was raised in Tony Evans' church, and I would have never met my youth pastor (if not adopted). Lecrae and BJ took me under their wings to teach me what it's like to be a man.* Jared continues to describe amazing opportunities.

*I got to do a video with Kirk Franklin. I remember doing 15 minutes of a song with Kirk and got a check for \$250 in my hand when I walked out of the studio. Lecrae invited me to tour on the road with him until my own music takes off. God allowed all of these things to be put into place. I would love to have my own record label at some point.*



*Out of everything that has happened in life, that I've been influenced by, those are the things and the ways that the Lord has allowed for me to see this is definitely the purpose that I (God) have for your life.*

**WORDS TO READERS:**


*My youth pastor always told us to MARRY YOUR PASSION TO YOUR PURPOSE. When you become saved people (falsely) believe you become this robot and you should shift into doing things in a completely different way when you should actually take your passions and use them in your purpose.*

*Like I love music, I love teaching – Bible, how to do music well, different ways of saying different things. I have a voice to sing, I don't have an issue with big crowds, I don't have an issue with making friends.*

*Okay Lord this makes sense with what you're showing me. I am definitely an 'emo' (meaning emotionally-led) writer – whatever my emotion is, I am good at writing (lament). Jared explains his song-writing approach further. I am good at... "So what is this song about?" "What are you trying to say?"*

*I did a song with Derek Minor, "Save Me" (he experienced several deaths, was messed over with money, etc.). In the song he was like 'Lord, I need you now to save me because I feel like you hate me.' Jared speaks on how he was able to pull from his own experience to help write this song. From June 2013 to June 2014, I had the hardest time, I couldn't find a job, and then I got a phone call from Lecrae asking me to do a song. The song makes Billboard charts and everything!*

*I had to tap into those things that I was dealing with at that time. That's how I write. I have to go into those life experiences that I've dealt with.*

J.Paul recently returned from Lecrae's Anomaly tour. Download J.Paul's latest single, So Good on your favorite music player! 

*From June 2013 to June 2014, I had the hardest time, I couldn't find a job, and then I got a phone call from Lecrae asking me to do a song. The song makes Billboard charts and everything!*



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By Valencya Thompson

I became interested in illustration as a kid. I had a strong affinity for cartoons and Anime (Japanese cartoons) in particular. Daily, I scribbled on my Grandma's yellow pads. At 7 years old in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, my teacher encouraged me to sketch and draw in an afterschool program. As I got older I knew I enjoyed it, but it wasn't until high school that a teacher really encouraged me to seriously pursue my artistry. My teacher noted that I had my own way of drawing and wanted me to broaden my perspective. This teacher recommended books and that I focus on the human face. My senior year I had four open blocks available, so I registered for two art classes and two free study periods where I was able to draw as much as I wanted. I began a studio art major while at Gordon College and there, I realized that my skillset was not up to par with color combination and sculpting. I was once instructed to build something that "would allow you to see the world differently" as an assignment. I created a pair of glasses with multi-colored lenses,



*"We need to encourage people to pursue their dreams and not just a major. When you have passion for something, it will never leave you. When you have passion for something, you should never let it go."*

and failed. That discouraged me and made me want to drop my major, but I stuck it out. I pursued art for two years while at Gordon, and for one additional semester when I transferred to Georgia Southern University. I discovered that I was able to maneuver 2D sculpting, but 3D was not for me. I failed the course twice. I, then, changed my major to Graphic Communications. I was able to print and design publications for businesses in this program. I enjoyed it, but it was rigorous. I had the pleasure of conducting screen-printings, creating brochures, and magazines. I learned how to build things on computers. I was also required to have two minors – Information Systems and Marketing. I actually excelled more in my minor areas. To this day, I regret giving up art. You shouldn't quit because something is hard.

In the Black community, there's a push back on pursuing art majors. Typically business, engineering, and education are encouraged. We need to encourage people to pursue their dreams and not just a major.

When you have passion for something, it will never leave you. When you have passion, you should never let it go. So I currently express myself through weird thrift-ed outfits and make-up. I also have models requesting to be a part of my make-up portfolio. I am saving money to take professional courses in this field as well.

**By the time of GPGT's launch, Chasity had already served as make-up artist & wardrobe stylist for 2 Sides The Stage Play in Atlanta, as well as, on professional photoshoots. She was also already a published illustrator of *God Please Clean My Room* children's book and had begun a modeling and acting career. Chasity's most recent activity in the arts and entertainment industries was catapulted by her being downsized from a sales position at a major corporation. Turns out that God is still in the purpose - pushing business after all. ■**



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# Eyes on Entertainment

**Kelvin**

**Summerhill**

The Actor

29

From Huntsville, Alabama

Currently resides in New York



**His  
Pursuit  
of  
Purpose**

By Felicia Walker

*“This isn’t a video game, I don’t get another shot. This is one life. Right now this is what makes me happy and I’m gonna do it.”*

**What do you know about your purpose? What do you believe God has called you to do on this earth?** My ultimate purpose is to inspire others. The immediate form is through modeling, acting, and blogging.

**What are you passionate about now?** I’m passionate about learning new stuff. Devouring new stuff. I’m in the midst of a 6-month campaign to listen to new material. As my cup fills I want it to overflow into others to inspire them, as well as, living a creative life with the freedom of entrepreneurship, mastering the training of the art form I want to pursue. Getting training, knowledge, and building my tool belt are important. Living in the hectic city of New York and finding a job to financially support that art form so that I have the freedom to do what I need is also important. I am establishing a foundation to support myself and also do the psychological work to allow my mind to shift to where it needs to be so I can pursue my goals. I am also eliminating fear. I say to myself, “You’ve done the psychological and spiritual work, now lets skydive - lets put yourself out there.”

**Tell us more about the psychological and spiritual work you’ve done to overcome your fears.**

Currently, I’m participating in Dan Miller’s

“48 Days” - 6 months challenge to listen to inspirational and instructional material daily. This has helped me overall and allowed everything else in me rise to the top. I also see a psychologist twice a week and it allows me to really work on myself and take my own life to the next level. Exercising a Sabbath on one day each week, so I can have at least one day where I do nothing and just recharge is also something else I practice.

**What keeps you motivated? What keeps you going?**

When I think about it, there’s nothing else that I love. From the classes or when I’m acting there’s nothing else that sparks “it” like it does. I would do it without pay because it fuels my spirit and feeds it, and it is the only thing that does so at that level. It’s like manna from God in the Bible, especially when I feel like I’m in the wilderness. Not everyone supported me going down this path, but I asked myself, “What do I want to do?” “What is my why?” That (acting) is my why. I could be doing something else, but would I be happy? Would I be happy at this level? This isn’t a video game, I don’t get another shot. This is one life. Right now this is what makes me happy and I’m gonna do it.

**Thinking back to 15 year old Kelvin growing up in Alabama, what piece of advice would you give him?**

I would tell him he is enough. He is worthy. He is worthy now. Fearfully and wonderfully made. Live courageously. Don’t be afraid to reveal all of who he is and all of that magnificence. Keep pressing on. You’ve got it! One thing I didn’t know then, is that I was worthy. SO run full force ahead. Don’t shrink.

**Is there anything else?**

I’m excited about this magazine and the people’s lives that it will impact and for them to take their lives to the next level. ■





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