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editor's note

We are causing a revolution. We no longer want to work for the hugest firm, we want to make our own firm. We no longer want to have the “ideal look” we create our own looks. We no longer want to depend on man-made medications to heal us, we take our health into our own hands. We no longer sit and wait, we get up and create.

This issue of UHURU Magazine demonstrates the unapologetic take on life that my fellow millennials have. It’s completely acceptable to be proud of where we came from, but have no doubts about where we are going. My team taught me the importance of utilizing all of the social platforms, networks and strengths of professionals that surround us to make the vision come to life. They taught me how to be a #GirlBoss and the significance of the trending news such as the highly talked about political campaigns in addition to trending hashtags like #BlackLivesMatter and #BlackGirlMagic that are deeply rooted in our history.

Through conversations and debates we have in our weekly meetings I’ve noticed the complex yet proactive perspective on the world the writers on UHURU possess. With this issue we hope to articulate our revolutionary stance to our loyal readers as well as welcome the new.

Sincerely,

Toni. J. Hunt, Editor-in-Chief
One of the best social media trends to date began in 2015: #blackgirlmagic. According to Julee Wilson’s article on The Huffington Post, the hash tag was created by CaShawn Thompson “to celebrate the beauty, power and resilience of black women.” To me, #blackgirlmagic is just what I needed. Black women have been seen as a stereotype for so long; whether it be the help, the sassy black friend, the ghetto girl or the rags-to-riches story. Because of this, it’s hard to remember that black girl magic comes in all shapes and sizes. The lack of appreciation for black beauty combined with the lack of representation of black women in the media has caused many deep-rooted issues in the black female community. #Blackgirlmagic is a step in the right direction for repairing the damage; no longer do black women feel the need to dull their shine for fear of being under-appreciated and unnoticed.

This movement may have been inspired by the magic of black women, but people of all races and genders have appreciated it. It’s about accepting the diversity in everyone’s beauty, not just abiding by society’s warped Eurocentric standards. Here’s what some other KSU students had to say about it.

**Holly Disch, 19, Public Relations**

“I feel like it’s a great hashtag because it embraces the culture of just being black. It’s a positive movement going around and it’s meant to bring out the beauty of black women, and not necessarily the white culture that has been worshiped since, I don’t know, the beginning of time? It’s pretty great.”

**Janaye Bullock, 20, Fashion Merchandising**

“Black Girl Magic is W an irresistible aura of being a black woman.”
Nya Coleman, 20, Broadcast Journalism

“Black girl magic means that I can be proud of who I am. I can be proud of my hair, I can be proud of my features, and not have to walk around with the stigma that it takes being white to be beautiful.”

Bailey Coppenger, 19, Undecided

“I think that black girl magic means loving yourself and just being a black person. Not many people in 2016 have the confidence to be happy in their own skin because of how the world has been in the past years. It’s nice cause black lives matter and black girls matter. Signed, sealed, delivered.”

Jamie Shell, 20, Environmental and Conservation Biology

“Black girl magic shows how the standard of beauty differs from person to person based on what they find in themselves as being beautiful but also what they find in other people as being beautiful.”

Jordan Epps, 21, Interpersonal Communication

“I think black girl magic is really about understanding the essence of what you stand for or who you are as a black girl. It’s about embracing that while being able to uplift others as well.”

Dana Miller, 21, Multimedia News Journalism

“To me, it’s just an empowering thing. I think it’s especially good for younger girls, because in the media you see a lot of Caucasian lead roles and models. I think it’s good for them to see black girls and relate to them and think ‘Wow, if this person is beautiful then I am too.’ I like the movement because it helps spread the diversity of beauty.”

Andrew Keiper, 24, Print Journalism

“Black girl magic to me is the empowerment and full validity of black women in their own skin.”

Daijah Monai, 20, Fashion Design

“The beauty of being black has turned into a trend: our lips, our skin, our hair, our ‘boxer braids,’ and black girl magic is our way of reclaiming our beauty as our own.”

Raven Fulton, 21, Broadcast Journalism

“It’s great. We don’t have so much self-hate anymore, other people are hating but they can hate. When I think of black girl magic I just think of all the skin tones we are, all the hair types we have, all the features we have, we literally are magic. We’re very different, and it’s a good difference, not a bad one.”

“Black girl magic is about seeing the inspiration of all these black women who are just thriving. It’s about being a strong black woman; it’s about the Nia Longs and the Michelle Obamas and even our mothers. It’s about standing up for what you believe in. Black girl magic can be so much and it means so much to me. Black girl magic is just strong black women thriving in this world.”

-Ndea Lee-Orsely

#BlackGirlMagic
The summer before 12th grade something magical happened. I felt as if I had bloomed into a flower. I gained self-approval, which is something that not everyone accomplishes. Finally, I was happy with myself in the physical sense. My hair had grown noticeably longer (and I now had permission to wear clip-in hair extensions), my makeup skills were legit, and due to cross country and my new breasts that came out of nowhere, my body was finally taking on the hour-glass shape every girl longs for. I was at last, getting all the attention I always wanted. It’s as if everyone who ever said, “Faith, you’re just a late bloomer,” was finally right. After years and years of failed attempts at putting on cakey foundation and ultra pink lipstick in order to look “older,” my time was finally coming. Imagine that: the girl who everyone shamed in elementary and middle school “glo’ed up.

“Gloing up” is basically a form of progression, the kind of progression that eventually makes people take notice. And when I say “people,” I’m referring to the ones who previously shamed you or never gave you a second look while you were in your awkward phase. I may sound a little bitter, but this is my personal experience. Middle school was very rough. I was merely a 4’7” girl with crooked teeth, a practically shapeless body, a killer femstache and wild hair that not even a ponytail could tame.

“Gloing up” is basically a form of progression, the kind of progression that eventually makes people take notice. And when I say “people,” I’m referring to the ones who previously shamed you or never gave you a second look while you were in your awkward phase. I may sound a little bitter, but this is my personal experience. Middle school was very rough. I was merely a 4’7” girl with crooked teeth, a practically shapeless body, a killer femstache and wild hair that not even a ponytail could tame.

Oddly enough, I didn’t hate myself back then. I wouldn’t necessarily categorize myself as pathetically unconfident. I’ve always loved myself for as long as I can remember. But I was always longing to be more. I’ve always been the girl who wanted it all --- to be the one people envied for having beauty, brains and talent. I knew I had A LOT of room for improvement. And my peers NEVER let me forget that. I still remember everyone who called me ugly and suggested constantly that I needed to shave my “mustache,” do my hair or wear clothes that fit. I wanted more than anything to be unaffected by their words, but a huge part of me was so weak. Let’s be honest here, it’s almost impossible to completely love yourself in a world where everyone constantly bashes you. I wanted more than anything to have the complete package. Being the ambitious girl I am, I made a plan to accomplish this mission. This is when I consciously decided to start working on my physical adjustments.

My freshman year of high school, is when I made it a point to consistently work and develop my outer self. I dibbled and dabbled in makeup and fashion more than ever before. I shopped way too frequently and experimented with various styles (some I admit were ridiculous.) I learned the garments that flattered my body and finally ditched the frizzy ponytail. This is also around the time when the YouTube beauty community exploded into major popularity. Hours and hours a day I hooked myself in front of the computer to watch beauty videos. I was hoping that learning the proper way to line my lips and apply mascara would change the way people thought of me. I was on a journey to perfect my look for this was the key. This continued into sophomore year, when I learned techniques for hair straightening, doing “everyday” makeup and, most importantly, how to thread facial hair. To my surprise, after about a year of constant practice, I actually started getting good.
As 11th grade rolled around, my body had naturally started developing in addition to my new interest in fitness exercise. Squats and lunges did my body a ton of favors and I eventually took on a nice shape. This is when I really noticed differences among my peers. I discovered that with my new-found looks, came new-found popularity. Out of nowhere people were making direct efforts to strike up conversations with me. Prior to my new looks, I rarely got looks from guys or offers to “chill.” Although, this sounds superficial, there are a lot of people in this world who treat people differently solely based on their looks. Believe me, I saw it firsthand. People who had previously thrown dirt all over my name were now choosing to speak to me. I guess I was finally “worth” in their eyes. A part of me felt that maybe these new friends were befriending me for the wrong reasons, but another part of me just wanted to feel accepted. I started becoming more and more known. And the attention gave me some sort of fulfillment. I thought “I was finally on my way.”

I could hardly wait for 12th grade to start. I was happy that I liked every part of myself when I looked in the mirror. Well, at least when I had all of my “additions on. I thought I was bomb. I received reassurance during school and was receiving numerous compliments on my hair, butt, makeup, and outfits. It never phased me when people said things like “Faith you look so much better with long hair” or “you should wear makeup everyday.” I didn’t seem to mind because when I fulfilled their superficial expectations, I felt as though I was living the life I had always imagined. My peers praised me so much that they even voted me best dressed by the end of the year.

I lived for the approval of everyone around me. If they didn’t see my value, then my personal value didn’t matter. I wanted to be the favorite, the one people admired. My self-worth started to depend on the number of guys who asked for my number or how many likes and heart eye emojis I could get on an Instagram picture. I found myself envious of those around me who got more attention. I was always putting myself in a never-ending competition with other girls who I should have been supporting. The closer college got, the more terrified I became that I couldn’t keep up my image. I just kept thinking of all the girls who would be on campus—would I stand a chance? It deeply frightened me that I may not be as praised as I was in high school. Being knocked off the pedestal I had worked so hard for, was something I had to avoid.

Ultimately, as I started college, I was worried about all of the wrong things. My looks were everything. I mean, sure, academics were still important, but not as crucial as all the attention I wanted to seek. When I entered college, I still gained a lot of attention, and it went straight to my head. I thought getting attention from college athletes and frat boys would deem me worthier than ever. As the direct messages were pouring in, I relished in the constant admiration. When I spoke with them over the phone, and through text; I noticed their topics were always sexual. I thought they liked me for me, but the content of our conversations were always materialistic and objectifying. I was left unfulfilled, even though their admiration of my looks was gratifying. I became a victim of a very selfish love. If their attention strayed away from me, it made me feel like I wasn’t enough. Their acceptance and adoration was like a stamp of approval. What my male counterparts thought of me, was the only validation I needed.

After numerous events that left me feeling empty, I had to look within myself to find the real issue. It occurred to me that I had spent so much time and effort trying to perfect my “status,” that I lost sight of my true self. A few my friends were wary of the attention I was getting and eventually distanced themselves from me. I couldn’t see the error of my ways, so ultimately I angrily lashed out on them thinking that they were jealous and I was misunderstood. I developed a lot of hatred, my grades started to slip and I couldn’t understand what was going on. I then realized that I never took time to work on my inner self.

"I had to look within myself to find the real issue."
The most common preconceived notion of student athletes are that they don’t pay for anything, they’re entitled, trouble-makers, party animals, and womanizers. Student athletes who get the most flack for simply being student athletes are football players. Some people think they’re obnoxious, annoying, free loading, and very arrogant. In my experience, I have seen some of the football players from Kent State on an outing and they are a bit loud, but boys will be boys.

When it comes to the athletes who play for Kent State, there is more than meets the eye. Since basketball and football are the two most popular sports at Kent State, I decided to interview students from both teams to get their idea of what athletic privilege is and how they are affected or unaffected by it. In the news we often hear about a number of issues that surround the world of college athletics. The scandals with rape, athletes being passed in classes for doing little to no work, athletes taking bogus or fake classes just to get an A and boost his GPA, and also their obnoxious party lives and overall rude or destructive behavior.

There are people who feel as if student athletes are in college without having to work for anything. “It’s a legitimate job, we get paid all this money [In scholarships] to play. The sport is
something I love, but it's also a business and it is
my job,” said Justin Rankin, a freshman transfer
student who plays for the Kent State football
team. Justin spoke out against the stereotypes
about football players because he loves the sport,
and he loves being a student athlete. On the
scandals in college football concerning coaches
not caring about the players’ grades, Justin said,
“[At Kent] Our coaches are all about the school
work. My coach said to me, ‘I could care less
if you don’t see a football field because of your
course load, I want you to have good grades.’”
So the idea that the student athletes don’t work
hard, or they get every thing handed to them,
is out of the question. While there are cases of
student athletes passing simply because they
play, that’s not the case at Kent State.

One stereotype about most student athletes is
they’re just “dumb jocks.” People on the outside
looking in have a lot of misconceptions about
students who play sports in college, when I
spoke to some of the student athletes; they
were very articulate and spoke eloquently. I
spoke with head coach of the basketball team,
Rob Senderoff, to help me learn more about
the balance between student and athlete. “We
practice a maximum of 20 hours per week, plus
time with trainers, plus traveling, on top of that
they study. There are times when they miss
family time, and miss school due to basketball.
Our kids work very hard to represent the school.”
This amount of juggling applies to the football
team as well. Justin spoke about how full his day
is: “I wake up for workouts super early, then I
have class, and then I sit in the MACC and study
and my day doesn’t fully end until 9 pm.” This is
the life of the student athlete, and the thought
that some people judge them for being in school
with free rides for their athleticism upsets Rankin.
“There are so many genuinely smart students
that they probably could have made it to Kent on
an academic scholarship.”

When Gia Newsome, a freshman nursing Major
was asked what she thought about student
athletes, she spoke about football players in
particular: “I heard they were fuckboys, I know
one who is [a fuckboy] but I hope they’re not
all like this.” There is a lot of controversy, when
it comes to student athletes and how they treat
other people. Football players get the most
attention when it comes to the opposite sex.
There have been many scandals about women
being raped or mistreated by football players
on other college campuses, and this can make
students who don’t play football judgmental of
those who do.

The preconceived notion that student athletes
don’t have to do anything, or they get things
handed to them, is wrong according to Chris
Ortiz. “Live the same 24 hours I did yesterday.”
He explains that people don’t “see the hustle.”
When I asked him about how it feels do be in the
public eye, and subject to so much scrutiny, he
said, “If you come to a game, you know who we
are for 2-3 hours maybe.”
"Most do not know how hard we work to try to be successful in both school and sports, but think we only worry about partying."

The athletes are so busy with school, practice, and games that most people only see them when it's game time. This creates a barrier and keeps people from seeing who they really are off the court.

In some high schools, the teachers pass student athletes just so they can be able to play. In college it's a little different. At Kent State, there are several tutors and academic advisors on call to help the student athletes. Justin explained that the football players are, indeed, just as smart as other students: "Our student athletes are really smart. Our team GPA is 3.2, and that's not awful." When I asked the head coach of the basketball team about grades being changed and whether or not the athletes take easy classes, get A's simply for playing ball, he responded, "That's not what college athletics should be about, and it doesn't happen here . . . We check classes almost every day to make sure they're attending and we check their grades. My biggest job is when parents trust me with their son, I tell them, 'We'll do everything we can do to make sure your son is on track to graduate.'"

The discrimination that the student athletes receive from other people is overwhelming sometimes. Justin sometimes feels ashamed to be a football player because people seem to look down on him: "I don't like to wear my football hoodie in public, because it makes me feel like a target. People look at me and I can see it in their face: 'You're a football player, you don't pay for anything.'" He says he also gets approached just because he plays football: "The other day I was sitting at the Student Center by myself, just trying to eat my food, and these three girls came up to me and said, 'Oh, you play football, we know this person...'. I didn't ask for you to talk to me. I'm just eating my food. And they'll say, 'Oh, give me your number so we can hang out.'"

Chris Ortiz feels people don't understand how hard it is for him to be a student and athlete: 'I have a professor right now who doesn't treat me nice, because I play basketball. There's a football player in my class, and she treats him better than me; he's also not black.'

There are also many perks to being a student athlete. Kellon Thomas, a Junior point guard for Kent State's basketball team, had this to say about the pros: "Being a student athlete is a very eventful lifestyle. I feel like I am always busy and always have something to do. I enjoy being a student athlete, because I gain lifelong friends.
from playing on the same team.” Chris added; “The sweat suits, and to travel the way we do, that’s the perks. We don’t really get anything for free, though, no one gets cars or free stuff.” Justin has a genuine love for the game: “Football is fun, it’s exhilarating.” That’s a perk, too.

When I asked the athletes what they think about people who profile and judge by what they see or hear, Kellon had a very insightful view: “I think people judge student athletes because of what they see on television or in movies. They think that we only care about sports and that we are entitled to things. Most do not know how hard we work to try to be successful in both school and sports, but think we only worry about partying.” Head coach Senderoff responded, “Students that come to Kent are here to better their future. These guys [basketball players] are not just athletes. They want to better themselves; our basketball players fall into that same category. Some guys come and want to play in the NBA, just like some political science majors want to become president. It’s unfair to generalize any group on campus; until you know these guys, it’s hard to say.”

Writing this article was a long journey. I spoke with a lot of different people from various backgrounds. I talked to people with negative views and those with positive views. I started this article feeling as though the athletes do somehow have unfair advantages. As I wrote and collected more information, I learned the athletes are more like me than I ever imagined. They lose sleep, they have emotional strife, and they go to class just as I do. I saw the passion and emotion behind these guys’ eyes as I spoke to them about the sports they love. When I spoke to the head coach of the basketball team, he talked with such compassion, and it was clear that he viewed these young men as more than just numbers on jerseys. These student athletes are so much more than the sport they play, and they represent the school with such poise’ that it’s hard not to love them. Coach Senderoff said it best: “I would say these guys are ideal student athletes; they’re part of the fabric of our university.”
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2016 The Year of Being Unapologetically Black
I think we all can agree that 2016’s black history month, as well as the events leading up to it, has been extraordinary for the black community. From Beyoncé’s new song Formation to Kendrick Lamar’s Grammys performance, 2016 is now unofficially the year of being unapologetically black.

In recent years, from a media standpoint, there has been a steady increase in black individuals who want to celebrate the dopestness of being a black person in America. Just as in the movements in the 1960s and 1970s, more black people have been advocates for reclaiming our blackness as our own. Instead of sitting idle, the black community has also been addressing issues that have gone on for too long.

To me, being unapologetically black means that I am proud of my heritage, my melanin and my people. It means that I am proud to be who I am, I will never apologize to anyone for that and I will never dull my shine because it makes some people uncomfortable. I will never be ashamed of my people and I will always fight for more than just equality; I will fight for equal representation and an end to my culture’s appropriation. I will also continue to learn about my people and myself as we all go on this journey figuring out what it means to be black.

Social media movements like #BlackLivesMatters and #BlackGirlMagic are examples of how we are raising our voices to speak on what it means to be a black person in America. We are starting a conversation and starting a change, which makes it a great time to be alive. However, this isn’t your mama’s movement. This time we aren’t doing sit-ins and singing “We Shall Overcome.” Those things were amazing, and I will always give my props to the greats (Angela Davis, Nina Simone, Malcolm X, Huey Newton, Marcus Garvey, Sojourner Truth etc.) but this is different.

We have moved past fighting merely for equal rights, we are fighting a battle against the philosophy behind a system that was never built for us. We are fighting to fix the identity crisis all black people in America experience: we are no longer Africans in America, but black people who were born and raised in American society. We as a community are still coming terms with that, while also fighting institutionalized racism that is often hard to see clearly. Gone are the days of wanting the right to vote; now we are battling the complexity of the racial tension in the Western world. This ain’t your mama’s movement.

Ephraim Nehemiah, a Kent State student has dedicated his life to exploring these topics. Nehemiah is a Pan-African studies major and uses poetry as his personal form of protest. Since he is studying the history of the African diaspora, he can see a shift over time in terms the ideology of black people.
"I feel like we are moving into a time where we are trying to liberate ourselves from all the blankets of oppression," Nehemiah said. "Where as the past, it was very narrow, because it was all about 'we have to get our rights,' and so now that we have the illusion of this freedom, a lot of the attitudes that feed the system are starting to be attacked, opposed to just the particular law."

Kent State's assistant professor and President of the Pan African Faculty and Staff Association, George Garrison, was alive during a time where basic rights were seen as a privilege to many black people. Garrison was born in Rock Hill, South Carolina while the country was still very much segregated.

"We were working hard to open the doors. The doors are now open and you guys walked through the door. We were trying to open up the doors to universities, to Wall Street, and in the institutions like the military," Garrison said. "Now, we want to see that you guys have fair representation in all of the decision-making arenas that exist in this country. We need black voices."

Although it is clear that society has progressed in terms of racial inequality, it is obvious that racism still exists. Because of this, black people still continue to fight towards a better world and Garrison believes that the young generation is key in carrying on this fight.

"From generation to generation the struggle changes; it morphs and it evolves. The same goes for racism and bigotry; it morphs and it evolves," Garrison said. We need a vigilant group of young people in every generation to monitor that and help facilitate that struggle."

The struggle of today is no longer fighting to be seen as equal in the eyes of the law. Now, we are fighting institutionalized racism instead of covert individual racism. We may have been liberated physically of our shackles, but we need to liberate ourselves from the effect of those shackles.

"People want to be liberated from their oppression," Nehemiah said. "They want to be respected for who they are, they want to be aware of how the system creates attitudes for oppression."

As a 22-year-old activist, Nehemiah says that one of the biggest challenges today is not only fighting a system that is built on discrimination, but also recognizing that black people do not always fall under the same category. Some black people..."
experience privilege based on class, sexuality and gender, and that adds some complexity to today’s issues.

“I definitely notice a movement towards liberation...before I don’t think those things were highlighted,” Nehemiah said. “In my personal journey, the first step was being made aware of the past and our history. Recently, I was able to notice why people are saying ‘all black lives matter,’ instead of ‘just black lives matter.’”

Unifying the race has been a constant theme for black people since the day we were brought to this continent. Whether this means unifying to fight for our equal rights as citizens, or unifying against systematic racism, black people will, and have, continue to fight to see a better day for our children.

“It is the responsibility of each generation to pass down to the next generation a better world than what they found,” Garrison said. “Henry Highland Garnett said that we should not pass on our wretchedness as slaves. I feel that way still about my generation and you should feel that about yours.”

Above all, we must remember that we do have the power to change the world. Maybe we aren’t marching on Washington or establishing the Underground Railroad, but we can still make a difference. We can still become the best doctors, lawyers, writers, teachers or anything else we put our minds to. We can still become senators, judges and governors. We can make our voices be heard in a world that wants us to be quiet.

“You have inherited a great position. Despite all the problems that young people see in the world and the United States in particular, you are the most privileged group of Africans that have ever lived and that live anywhere else on the planet right now,” Garrison said. “Despite Ferguson, despite Eric Garner, despite Tamir Rice, despite all of that, if you were to survey any group of black people in the world, they would trade places with you in the drop of a hat.”
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*As I'm listening to one of my favorite songs, "Flashing Lights" on surround sound* let’s take it back to 2004 when I personally became a fan. I was eleven and the very first Kanye song I heard was “All Falls Down.” This video was where I first fell in love with not only point of view angles, but also where I became the diehard fan that I am today. Looking back and realizing the first song of The College Dropout is “We Don’t Care,” I chuckle a little because Kanye has never cared what anyone has said or thought about him and he made it a mission to relay that same attitude to the people. He has children in the background singing “We wasn’t supposed to make it past 25, jokes on you, we’re still alive,” and not just any children, but young children from Chicago, from Chicago where the homicide rate was 435 people per year in 2004 according to the 2011 Chicago Murder from the Chicago Police Department. Singing that verse and with Kanye at that, had to have given those kids hope and inspiration that they would make it out, but not only make it out, but become someone great. His music still has that effect on me. The College Dropout has a simple, yet immaculate theme; the Come up of Kanye West. He artistically expresses his indifference towards college and working for minimum wage doing something he hated. He shares his faith in God and love for his family as well as his grind where his phrase “five beats a day for three summers” was coined. He shares his transition from Kanye to Kanye in “Last Call” after being evicted in Chicago and going to New Jersey to meet Jay-Z and Dame Dash, which launched the inevitable career of one of the greatest, Kanye West.
Continuing the education theme, Late Registration dropped the following year in 2005. Since his freshman album was great, his sophomore album was highly anticipated, just like all that would follow. Production wise, the higher quality of his second studio album is quite evident as well as the usage of the eclectic music styles. Fusing string arrangements with the drum rhythms in his music which was different for hip-hop, Kanye is no stranger to differentiating his sound and being unique with his work. Out of the five singles that were released from the album, "Gold Digger" was the most popular and topped the Billboard Hot 100 at number one. I don’t think there is a fan who does not appreciate the sexy women, perfect Ray Charles imitation by Jamie Foxx, and bright neon colors that are in the video. Although this video is great, the video for "Diamonds from Sierra Leone" is equally great in a different way, bringing awareness to the blood diamond trade in Sierra Leone. Along with voicing his social and personal issues, Kanye also sheds light on healthcare, drugs, poverty, the love for his mother and racism, and earned the title of best album in 2005 from Rolling Stone, and was number 118 on the 500 Greatest Albums list of all time in 2012.

Furthering the education themed albums, Graduation was released in 2007 and happens to be my personal favorite. I love this album because I can let it play all the way through without skipping, and a few times at that. Also because some of my top favorite songs "Good Morning," "I Wonder," "Can't Tell Me Nothing," "Flashing Lights," and "Homecoming" are all on the same disk. Although Kanye came out of the womb showing off, I feel like this was the point in his career where he was really allowed to do so. By that, I mean he had the rights to brag and “flex,” considering his achieved accolades and fan base, and he knew that too. "Mr. by himself he’s so impressed," made sure everyone knew that he was a strong champion, and that no one could tell him anything. Although the previous studio albums proved that Kanye made it out of the broke college slums, Graduation was the album where he knew that his place in the rap game was solidified. He "did it for the glory,” and received more by earning his third Grammy Award for Best Rap Album and going double platinum.
After suffering from the loss of his mother and the breakup from Alexis Phifer, his fiancé at the time, depression and anger for sure inspired this album. Depression has been known to help the creative process but for him, it practically sped it up. 808s & Heartbreaks was recorded quickly over a three week span between September and October and was released in November of 2008. Inspired by 1980s music, Kanye thought singing and the sounds that were created by the 808s would evoke emotion and express exactly what he was feeling internally. Although some people on his team weren’t 100 percent sure about the direction of the album, Kanye found it coincidental that the area code where he was recording in Hawaii was 808, which he found out after he named the album, which inspired him to pursue the album even more. As previously stated, Kanye is no stranger to creating a new sound, and 808s & Heartbreaks is another reminder. He wanted to go against the typical sound of hip-hop again which he did, and created the arguably most influential album in the music world, bringing back auto tune and vulnerability in lyrics, earing the title of one of the 40 most groundbreaking albums of all time in Rolling Stone.

Although many fans may hate Yeezus and think it is Kanye’s worse album, I personally love it. It was probably the most experimental album he’s ever created, which turned some fans off in 2013. Grant it, I did have to listen to it twice after thinking “what the hell is this?” but after the third listen, I was sold. Every time I listened to a song, I heard something new, like the dogs barking in the chorus of “I’m in It,” and even his old sounds like singing with auto tune. Despite the commentary division within fans, the sixth album, Yeezus, still had substance, with focuses on fame, love, confidence and modern day mental slavery, debuting at number one on the Billboard 200.

Following the year of the infamous drunken mic snatching from Taylor Swift, Kanye exiled himself in Hawaii in 2009 and emerged with his fifth album, My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy. He was able to create a piece that incorporates all the sounds from his previous work and even went above and beyond to film “Runaway,” the 30 minute video that I still love. To this day, I still can’t listen to this album without picturing the amazing visuals in my head. The album deals with themes of celebrity status, race, alienation, culture and the idea of the American Dream and even has details of the messy relations with Amber Rose and Kim Kardashian.

According to Amber Rose’s former publicist, she accidentally called an ex of hers while Kanye was on the phone which inspired the song “Blame Game.” Kanye also later said that “Lost in the World” began as a poem he wrote for Kim Kardashian. Wait, check out the time lapse, hmmm, how interesting. Although he calls this his “apology album,” those who hated 808s & Heartbreaks said that this was a necessity to save himself, and he was successful. My Dark Twisted Fantasy brought timeless visuals and heightened the levels of his artistic ability, debuting at number one on the Billboard 200 and earning the title of best record in 2010.
Despite his gemini-ish and out of line moments, there is no doubt that Kanye is one of the greatest artists of all time, and has earned the title as a music pioneer by thinking out of the ordinary and experimenting with new sounds. His cocky attitude may turn some people off, but for others, that’s exactly what is needed. I, myself will forever defend his music because he’s always been my personal hype man by making me feel like a million bucks. Possessing his confidence on a down day through his lyrics, I can feel like I can take on the world, and will therefore, forever ride the wave of Kanye through his continuing evolution.

Lastly, Kanye’s seventh album, The Life of Pablo was released in 2016 after his longwinded twitter rants and pushed back released dates. I will admit, I was anxious to hear the album considering no one really knows what Kanye’s next sound will be like. Anything was possible, but I was not disappointed. Addressing the statements that have been said over the years in “I love Kanye,” I thought it was funny that he made a song about missing the old Kanye, which a lot of people do. Kanye is still able to express his calmness and faith in God on one of TLOP’s popular tracks “Ultralight Beam,” regardless of his off the wall actions at times. To me, this album has the least substance out of his previous works, but there is always at least one song where he has some real verses. In Freestyle 4, which is one of my favorites because of the dark, edgy beat, he mentioned “rich slave in the fabric store picking cotton,” which immediately diverted my mind back to the mental slavery theme in “New Slaves” on Yeezus. I will say however, it took me a minute to fully grasp the theme of the album until I finally realized there is no theme. Every other album of Kanye’s has a theme that reflects where he was in life, and although TLOP lacks one, it still reflects him. His kamikaze, yet gentle ways has him all over the place, resulting in a messy, yet great composition like TLOP.
Today Hip-Hop can arguably be seen in every facet of popular culture. It can also be argued that Kanye West is in the forefront of Rap whenever the topic is discussed. West has been holding the torch for Hip-Hop on and off for the past ten years. In my opinion, West has been one of, if not the most, impactful and influential artists since Michael Jackson. He has crafted Hip-Hop into what it is today, and he has shattered the glass ceiling in terms of Hip-Hop and fashion. Whatever this man has touched has essentially become gold. And let’s not get into Kanye and his shoes (well, I’ll save that for a little later). Whether you agree or not, you could never deny Yeezus’ impact on pop culture.

Kanye West came on the Rap scene in 2004. While utilizing uplifting lyrics, soulful beats, along with having a backpack style, he was viewed as odd or an outcast early in his career. Time passed and Kanye ascended into stardom, selling over two million copies and winning a Grammy for “Best Rap Album” for his debut release, The College Dropout. With this new-found fame and huge following, his unusual college boy/backpack style gained the attention of the masses. The Louis Vuitton backpacks and rugby shirts would soon be the new fashion trend for Hip-Hop and other cultures. What makes Ye so special at this time is the state which Hip-Hop was in. Sex, guns and money were the prevalent topics in Rap music. When Kanye erupted with his new sound and style, he would sooner or later change the structure of Hip-Hop, which was exactly what hip-hop needed. With almost every album created by this man, a new-found sound or lane of Hip-Hop was generated. Kanye has always been known for pushing the envelope of music and evolving his sound.

The College Dropout, Late Registration and Graduation are all albums that provided the wave of the backpack rappers, such as Lupe Fiasco, Kid Cudi, Big Sean and J. Cole. Albums like 808s & Heartbreaks and Yeezus are both prime examples of West throwing away all the rules in Hip-Hop and chasing something new and fresh—something only an innovator could come up with. No one can deny the overwhelming influence of this artist, and I mean artist in every sense the word has had in our culture, pop culture.

“Albums like 808s & Heartbreaks and Yeezus are both prime examples of West throwing away all the rules in Hip-Hop and chasing something new and fresh—something only an innovator could come up with.”
"...Mr. West’s art has shifted the way entertainment industry is viewed, time and time again."

With West emerging as a dominant presence in Hip-hop, he began opening many doors for artists who shared the same rhetoric. Now, Kanye has always been known as a dapper fellow, pushing the boundaries of fashion and flaunting his sense of style, from being among the first few people to start wearing retro Jordans again...to creating a clothing line that in the eyes of many is considered high fashion. He has increased revenues for multiple fashion companies, such as A.P.C., Alpha Industries, Fear of God and many more. Years down the line, Backpack rap would soon become the “wave,” curated by Ye himself. Kanye West continued to control the charts of Hip-Hop and pop music. As a result, character and lifestyle began to follow suit.

Kanye West toppled the charts in Hip-Hop and fashion. Alongside the music charts, it would be a fool of me not to bring up the topic of Kanye and what he has done to the shoe industry. West created some of the most sought-after sneakers since Air Jordan. The collaboration with Nike in 2007 catapulted Kanye, creating his first shoe, Nike Air Yeezy or “Air Yeezy,” which released May 2, 2009. Three years later, Kanye would release his second collaboration, “Air Yeezy 2,” selling for $245 at retail and for almost 15 times more than that on the reselling market.

Kanye would be noted as the first non-athlete to fully collaborate with a Fortune 500 athletic apparel company, breaking history. Soon, however, a sweet relationship between Kanye West and Nike would become a stagnant drama-filled breakup. Royalties and creative freedom would be the source of the problem. Later down the road, Kanye would find himself working with Nike’s competitor. Adidas in 2013 would have one of the greatest artists working alongside with their team and an even better sweeter relationship blossomed. West would release the Yeezy 350’s, 750’s and 950’s alongside his fashion line, each bearing a different aesthetic. Once again, Kanye was pushing the envelope. The 350’s sold at $200 retail and would resell for $500 to $1000, while the 750’s went for $350 retail and on average resells for $2500. Once again, the perception “anything this man touches essentially becomes gold,” comes to mind. It seems Kanye West has done nearly everything that can be done in pop culture and continues to do more. He has created countless trends or “waves” that many have followed and created from his likeness. Mr. West’s art has shifted the way entertainment industry is viewed, time and time again.
KUUMBAA
portraits by: LORA LEWIS
portraits by: DARYL ARTSHOW
portraits by: BRINA JEFFRIES
I remember her saying once that when she was a kid she didn’t like white people’s kids because she thought they had it easy. She didn’t see that she was making a lot more work for herself. Those white kids who had everything handed to them without a struggle, and yet she had to eat off of the ground. Her parents didn’t have enough money to provide for her. They had to work hard to keep her alive. She should have been grateful for what she had. But she wasn’t. She was always wanting more. She never seemed to be satisfied. She always wanted more. She always wanted more. She always wanted more. She always wanted more. She always wanted more. She always wanted more. She always wanted more.

(POETRY BY: JAKIM “JAH” HARVEY)

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
"HANDS UP, DON'T SHOOT"

Hands up don't shoot is what happens when a protest trades its bite for a whimper. It's how quickly we learn walking while black can become a bloodbath. Driving while black can become a bloodbath. Living while black can become an oxymoron.

Hands up don't shoot sounds more surrender than protest. Sounds like Black fist swallowed by the shame of white flag waving. Like a father's realization that he has to warn his son against wearing hoodies at dark. For fear he will spark into 6 feet of never come home blues.

Hands up don't shoot is grief practicing self-preservation. Is the shallow water drowning and knowing that you're supposed to stand. Erect enough to breath but being unable to do anything, but suffocate. It's the police sanctioned protest against the police. The words of submission pouring out of our mouth. Like stomach, vomit of false nourishment. Like our bodies don't trust our tongue to speak survival. Like it fears fight back and bad child defiant gon' find their way. Fire building rescue stomping to the surface. And we would have to force ourselves to forget. How often we almost trip over the title of martyr.

Hands Up don't shoot is when we march and Instagram, 32 teeth of painted smiles. And we feel good, and go home. With just enough tired to Purell wash our guilt away for not being activist enough. Look at us assistants now... I mean activist now. Hands up, don't shoot. Me.

(Poetry by: Ephraim Nehemiah)
I remember her saying once that when she was a kid she thought the stars were so tiny,
but now that she’s older it just shows here how small she is in a big world,
I recognize her thinking but all it did was show me how relative size can be,
Because I don’t think you can measure yourself in terms of feet,
For volume has nothing on value and your wealth has yet to reach its peak,
Cause in my opinion,
Your assembly of atoms is one of the greatest collections of art I’ve ever seen,
Something made up in dreams,
Stepping into lucid realities of a Goddess’ workshop,
In which she is an artist creating art but the art is really the being,
So in knowing that the true artistry was in everything the mirror was seeing,
Lips supple and plush,
Peach fixtures cracked open to reveal a sweetness of voice that brung a yearning for taste,
Eyes like fixed diamonds,
Encrusted with visions of beauty,
Placed with the task of bringing such virtuosity from imagination to canvass using fingertips as vessels,
Hair coiled and brimming,
Mane crowning like the Nemean Lion,
Leo can I call you Sun...
For we as planets revolve in your orbit as your spirit pulls us closer,
And soul warms our galaxy,
Yet to us only holds the size of a quarter in the sky,
So you I hope you don’t have to ask yourself why I see no correlation between value and size

(Poetry by: Jakim “Jah” Harvey)
portrait by: KALEB THOMPSON
artwork by: DANIELLE FLOWERS
OUR MISSION IS TO MOTIVATE THE VARIOUS BLACK ORGANIZATIONS ON THIS CAMPUS TO COME TOGETHER AND PROSPER IN UNITY.

KEY EVENTS:
Ebony Achievement Awards, Annual Comedy Show, Renaissance Ball, Love Lottery, Suicide Awareness Walk, You, Me & Africa!, Bridging the Gap, Black History Month Photo Collection, Study Tables, Monthly Mass Meetings
Mental Health in the Black Community

By: Valerie Williams

Quite often in the African-American community, when the topic of health comes up, we only discuss our physical health. Why is it much easier to tell someone you have back pain, as opposed to feeling depressed? Why does mental health in the African American community tend to be disregarded? According to Mental Health America, 63% of African Americans believe that depression is a personal weakness; this is significantly higher than the overall survey average of 54%. Only 31% of African Americans believe that depression is a “health problem.” In fact, African Americans are more likely to believe that depression is “normal” than the overall survey average.

According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, African Americans are 20% more likely to experience serious mental health problems than the general population. Truthfully, many African Americans misunderstand what a mental health condition is, and most don’t even talk about this topic. We have to stop viewing mental health conditions as personal flaws, and learn how to better help those who are struggling. Many African Americans have difficulty recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions, so they underestimate the effects and impact of mental health conditions, as stated by the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Conditions such as depression are looked at as a “phase” and sufferers are often told that it will pass. Due to this lack of knowledge, many African Americans are reluctant to seek treatment because of the embarrassment and stigma associated with it.

There are other reasons behind the Black community’s hesitation to seek help for psychological problems. One is misdiagnosis. Let’s keep it real: African Americans have been and continue to be discriminated against in the health care system. “Misdiagnoses, inadequate treatment and lack of cultural competence by health professionals breed distrust and prevent many African Americans from seeking or staying in treatment” (National
The Affordable Care Act has made Alliance on Mental Illness. So socio-economic factors play a huge role. The Affordable Care Act has made it easier to get health coverage, but prior to that 19% of African Americans didn’t have health insurance. Without insurance, no one wants to come out-of-pocket for another medical bill, so that’s just another reason many choose not to seek treatment.

Most recently in the media, twenty-year-old singer and songwriter Kehlani made public a suicide attempt by posting a photo on Instagram in a hospital bed, starting the caption with “Today I wanted to leave Earth.” This was following a photo that fellow musician, and ex-boyfriend, PARTYNEXTDOOR, had posted on Instagram of Kehlani in his bed. The photo eluded that Kehlani was done with the “shenanigans” and back in PARTY’s arms. The Internet exploded with rumors that Kehlani had cheated on her boyfriend (we later found out they were broken up at the time) Cavaliers player, Kyrie Irving. The saddest thing about that story to me is how the Black community ridiculed Kehlani even AFTER her known suicide attempt. Memes, jokes, and snide remarks about Kehlani being “mad she got caught” flooded social media. I found it all to be more than insensitive, but disgusting. This young woman tried to take her own life because of so many mean and nasty comments, and yet people continued to downplay her mental state. One tweet read “...yeah that’s what b*tches do...mess up and then act depressed...oh well just die then!” Oh my gosh. This tweet received over five hundred retweets, and an equal amount of likes. How can that be the mentality when people are really dying?

Mental health hits home for me because this past year I lost an aunt to her battle with mental health. Her death was highly publicized in the media and community, one reason being that she was found dead while in police custody. Not only that, but she had passed just a week after Sandra Bland, another Black woman who died suspiciously in jail—smack-dab in the middle of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Suspicions were raised surrounding my aunt’s untimely death, but what the media and other news outlets didn’t report was that Ralkina Jones struggled with serious mental illness leading up to her demise.

It is important that as a community we become more aware and educated on mental health so we can get help as fast as we can, for ourselves AND loved ones.

Here are a few common mental health disorders in the Black community, how you identify them, and treatment options:

**Clinical Depression**

The persistent feeling of sadness or loss of interest that characterizes major depression can lead to a range of emotional and physical conditions. (Mayo Clinic) African-Americans experience major depression at higher rates than whites. (Huffington Post)

**Signs:** Decreased energy, insomnia or excessive sleeping, extreme irritability, constant aches and pains (headaches), appetite loss or overeating, loss of interest in things that were once pleasurable, thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts. **Treatment:** Since major depression can possibly lead to suicide, treatment with a mental health counselor immediately can help prevent things from getting worse.

**Anxiety**

A mental disorder categorized by feelings of anxiety, apprehension, and fear accompanied by physical symptoms. Different types: panic disorder, phobias, social anxiety disorder, and generalized anxiety disorders.

**Signs:** Feelings of apprehension or dread, tense and jumpy, sweating, tremors and twitches, Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath, or an upset stomach. **Treatment:** Treatment options would include medication if needed, as well as treatment with a psychologist and/or psychotherapy.

**Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)/Attention deficit disorder (ADD)**

A condition with symptoms such as inattentiveness, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. Symptoms always begin in childhood.

**Signs:** Inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity, trouble getting organized, easily distracted, lateness, restlessness, and trouble starting manageable tasks. **Treatment:** Treatment options include medication, psychotherapy, and hiring a life coach.

**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**

An anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events. African Americans of all ages are more likely to be victims of serious violent crime than are non-Hispanic whites, making them more likely to meet the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder.

**Signs:** Hostility, flashbacks, fear; insomnia or nightmares, inability to feel pleasure, guilt, or loneliness, self-destructive behavior. **Treatment:** Treatment options included family therapy (PTSD often causes strain on the immediate family), medication for the relief of secondary symptoms associated with anxiety, and frequent counseling.
Crystal healing has become increasingly popular in the last few years. As people try to move away from prescription drugs and constant doctor visits, holistic health along with the crystal method has become a more sought-after treatment in curing and preventing disease. I found out about crystal healing and stone meditations a year ago, and I can say I’m a more balanced person for it.

Crystal healing means using crystals and stones that supposedly have healing properties and positive energy in order to cleanse and heal one’s body. Healing crystals can be used for meditation purposes and, depending on what kind of crystal, will attract things such as luck, stress relief, etc. For example, my favorite crystal is the amethyst, which is a purple and clear crystal that can be used for creativity among other things. So on the days when I have a paper to write, I meditate for about five minutes and think about what I want to achieve with the paper, article, or essay that I’m writing, and I allow the amethyst to harvest that energy. Then when I start writing, the ideas simply flow through me.

The crystals can also be put on the body and used to heal a part that is hurting. For example, if a person wanted to gain more confidence, he or she wants to purchase rose quartz, which aids with self-acceptance. These types of healings are associated with the chakras, which are key points on the body that attract and exude energy.

The chakras are seven spiritual powers that flow through our bodies at different levels. They are aligned with our spine and go from the tailbone to the top of our head. The chakras are called Root, Sacral, Solar Plexus, Heart, Throat, Third Eye and Crown. I found out about chakras around the same time I learned about the crystal healing. As I bought the crystals and began meditating, I learned that each crystal I had connected to a chakra, and I began to get better use out of my crystals when I started using them to heal and open my chakras through meditation.
CROWN CHAKRA: This chakra is at the top of our heads; it represents divinity and strengthens our spirituality. Clear quartz should be used in seeking divine knowledge; it can be worn, placed under a pillow at night or used in meditation.

THIRD EYE CHAKRA: Represents intuition and understanding. This center of energy is found in the middle of our eyebrows and promotes awareness and imagination. Labradorite is a great stone to aid in activating the chakra.

THROAT CHAKRA: Located on our neck, this chakra represents our voice and ability to communicate. Blue Kyanite should be used in meditation and is a great because the color of the throat chakra is blue.

HEART CHAKRA: Represents our ability to love. It's located in the center of the chest and allows us to love and have self-love. Rose quartz represents a song love vibration.

SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA: Gives us the ability to feel confident and in control of the life we live. This chakra is connected to self-esteem, self-worth, and is located in the upper abdomen. Citrine crystals are the best to wear, because they will assist with self-esteem during the day.

SACRAL CHAKRA: Our connection and ability to accept others and new experiences. It's right under the belly button. Carnelian crystal is the best to use for the healing and channeling of this chakra's energy.

ROOT CHAKRA: Represents our foundation and feeling of being grounded. It's located at the base of our spines, the tailbone area. The color for this chakra is red, and the crystal/stone that is used to meditate with is bloodstone, or hematite.

After I learned about chakras and crystal healing, I wanted to know how I could learn more. I found most of my information from books and people who sold crystals. Alice Rain, a crystal user from Gaithersburg, Maryland currently studying nutrition at Bowie State University, has been using crystals for two years. Her attraction to crystal healing came from being diagnosed with depression. "I knew I didn't want to be on medication," she said, "so I started to look into holistic solutions...I found crystal healing when I learned about meditation." Alice has been doing yoga, eating clean, and practicing herbal medicine along with crystal healing. "It sounded strange at first, to meditate and retrieve energy from rocks, but it also makes sense, because we came from the earth, so why not get our energy from it?"

Where does one acquire crystals? Crystals are sold everywhere from online to organic stores and "hippy shops." They can also be found at flea markets and, if you're feeling adventurous, you can take a trip to Arizona or Arkansas, where crystals are abundant, and dig for them. I buy my crystals right here in downtown Kent. Zalla, "The Jewelry Lady" who runs Silver and Scents, an eclectic clothing store, has been selling crystals since the beginning of the semester. "Some people come in because they want some fine jewelry to wear, others come for information, and some come in to buy the crystals because they're full aware of the power of healing." Her tiny shop feels like a calm and relaxing place. I could spend hours looking at each crystal she has on display in the store. She also sells jewelry, candles, and incense. When I asked her what advice she could give to beginners in crystal healing and holistic health in general, she said, "Give yourself time, and be patient, this journey to a healthy life is full of surprises."
If you're old enough to read about sex, I'm sure you've received the "back in my day" lecture from the older generations that we all dread. As all things transition however, individuals in the newer generations have fashioned their own opinions towards sex, while some have stuck to more traditional ways, creating a world of eclectic viewpoints on sexuality and its double standards.

The concept of virginity and promiscuity has a strong background due to religious beliefs and practices that have been followed worldwide and passed down through teachings during puberty, especially to young girls. We've been taught that once our virginity is taken or given away, we're no longer pure and innocent, making some feel ashamed and embarrassed by their actions, especially with premarital sex. However, when young men lose their virginity, they are often glorified and considered "a man," as if it's rites of passage, and nothing damages their image, which has been a double standard for quite some time.

"Double standards are bullshit," says 25 year old Asia Davis. "But with that being said, I was raised in a Christian household myself and constantly catch myself saying and thinking misogynistic things and slut shaming other women...while these unwritten laws are bullshit, they still apply to how we are perceived and how we perceive ourselves."

Even though some men are empowered by having many sexual partners, others are equally empowered by celibacy, the action of abstaining from sexual activity. 23 year old Andrew Howard tries his best to live by the bible and practice celibacy and remains strong, even when tempted.

"In today's society, temptation takes us all," says Howard. "We're influenced by the media and settle for instant gratification. I want to be "evenly yoked" and have a soul tie to a woman before sex and I believe that happens when both unions are joined together in one."

Even considering the aforementioned statements of women keeping their virginity, it seems as if in modern times, young girls and women are still ridiculed for their choice of practicing celibacy. Unfortunately, the decision to be celibate plays a big role in whether or not someone wants to date a person. (Not that you should base your ways off of that, just sayin'.)
"I'm just assuming here, but I think men may be afraid to date a woman who is still a virgin because of their inexperience. I think there's this unfair stereotype of a woman who's a virgin not being worthy of having sex with, or less than a woman who has had that experience," says 20 year old Lauren Rathmell.

On the other hand however, some men may choose to date a woman who is still a virgin. "A lot of men choose to date a woman who is a virgin because they want that title of the man that took her virginity as if it's a badge of honor," says Howard. "Another reason is that isn't a girl who's been messed over by a man."

When it comes to men, Rathmell says that she wouldn't have an issue dating a man who is still a virgin, but she's not like the women Howard tends to meet and says he's always turned down when he tells a woman he's celibate. "We are human and have our needs, so I understand," he says.

As mentioned before, women who are virgins are seen as "pure and innocent," but why isn't this glorified in men? A guy's manhood is often times challenged when he's practicing celibacy more than a woman's which is yet again, another double standard.
The opposite spectrum of virginity of course, is casual sex which leads to different sexual preferences and participation in acts that were and still may be considered taboo to the more traditional person. But there’s no doubt that sexual taboo acts are more “acceptable” today, slightly easing the viewpoints on sexuality now. Over generations, sex in general has become a more open topic within families, classes and even through censorship in the media, so it’s only natural that we adapt to that as well. Being open and free has influenced the modern viewpoints on sex and even the changing times have influenced the way people live, especially millennials.

“Our generation has this awesome feeling of freedom. We are more accepting of other than many generations before us, and it’s really an amazing thing,” says Rathmell. “I think we are the generation who emphasis the idea that it isn’t right to judge others, so we don’t pay too much attention to who is having sex and who isn’t. There’s not a scandalous aspect to it anymore.”

Although there are multiple aspects of sexuality, celibacy and double standards, society today feels the need to comment on everyone’s personal lives, through advice, admiration or mockery. Even though we all may not agree on the behavior of some, it is still no one’s business of the lives of others. The important thing is that we are all respectful of others’ choices, are having protected sex or are confident in the decisions to not have sex and are happy with ourselves whether others agree or not.
It seems like the fashion industry is constantly growing, with hundreds of new brands popping up every day. Many of these brands are started and owned by everyday people coming from all kinds of backgrounds. If you want to start up a brand, but think it’s too hard, think again. There are plenty of people who start without fully knowing what they’re doing; the main thing is having the passion for it.

Rod Swiner, a Kent State sophomore from the Upper Marlboro, Maryland, is a great example of an entrepreneur with a fashion brand. His brand, Too Exclusive Clothing, stemmed from the lack of originality in the styles he was seeing around him. “I started [my brand] my junior year of high school as a way to bring some original designs to light in my school. Every dress down day people were wearing the same Jordans and shirts, so I came out with my own thing. I made a difference in the world of fashion and in my school. People walked differently with my brand on. It’s dope!”

Another great example of a young entrepreneur in fashion is Egypt “Ify” Ufele is a 10-year-old girl from Queens, New York who has recently gained a lot of attention from media and business moguls nationwide after starting her own clothing brand, called “ChubiiLine.” The inspiration from Ify’s line came from being bullied in school about her size. But instead of letting the bullies get to her, she decided to turn it into something positive.

Her love for fashion began by Ify hand-sewing clothes for her dolls. However, recently she showed an amazing fashion collection during New York Fashion Week featuring designs for men, women, and children of various sizes. At just 10 years old, Ify has become a fashion designer and an entrepreneur, and she has made an impact on those who once made fun of her.

Yes - owning a business is a lot of hard work and dedication and it can be overwhelming sometimes, but if there truly is a passion for it, that’s all that really matters. If you’re having trouble figuring out where to start, look for resources that can help you. As Kent State Students, we have LaunchNet, located in the student center, right in front of the bookstore. Lynn Buchinsky, one of the many helpful LaunchNet associates, was willing to sit down with me and give me her expert advice, and a few steps into becoming a successful entrepreneur.
Define Your Idea

Starting a business, particularly in the world of fashion, can be intimidating since it’s such a large industry and there are many other companies doing the exact same thing you may be trying to do. But that shouldn’t be enough to slow you down, especially when you have “an idea that you’re mad passionate about.” Lynn, from LaunchNet, told me that “A great business starts with a spark. And once you find that spark, that idea becomes your best friend.”

Do Your Research

You need to find out if there is a market for what you’re selling. In other words, are really going to be making money? Look up companies that are similar to yours. What makes them successful? What makes them unsuccessful? Also, ask around and find out how excited people get about what you’re bringing up. Take note of people’s reaction to your idea, because if you get good feedback before you even really get started, then you’re onto something great!

Make A Spreadsheet

One of the most important steps in the creation of a fashion brand is sourcing and pricing. Think about what it takes to create your product, and then figure out how much of those materials cost. After figuring out the total cost, you can’t forget to make a profit! So how do you get that? If you are making the product yourself, think about how long it took you to make it, then figure out how much your time is worth in order for it to be added to the product’s final cost. The easiest way to look at all of those numbers is with a spreadsheet.

Start Now With What You Have

Once you have established your market, differentiated your brand, and figured out your costs, now it’s time for you to get started. Do what you can with the resources you have, and take advantage of anything you can find for free or at a discount. Use every social media platform to market yourself and your brand. More importantly, as you’re starting up, build relationships with customers and anyone who will willingly endorse you and help take you further. Also, it’s important to build relationships with people who are already in the industry. Networking is key! Go to expo’s and enter contests! It’s guaranteed that you will catch somebody’s attention.

Rod Swiner, CEO of Too Exclusive Clothing, let me know that the hardest part of getting his brand started was coming up with a business plan. “There were so many factors from the design to marketing to the distribution, but eventually I got it right. It took a lot of trial and error and research.” Lynn told me that she noticed that one of the hardest parts of starting a business: “Sticking to the process, and the idea. Getting caught up in negativity.”

It’s easy to romanticize the idea of becoming this successful brand owner, the hard part for most people is actually putting in the work to get to that point. And it’s even harder to keep the hype up once you’ve built it. It can be a lot easier to fall into the negativity that may come with success, but try to remember that the good outweighs the bad and all of the hard work you put it in is worth it.

Once your brand has up and running and successful, remember to remain passionate! And most of all, remember why you started, One really great piece of advice from Lynn was to keep this in mind: “There is no magic bullet to the finish line. You have to remain passionate, tenacious, and persistent.”
A girl boss is someone who gets what she wants because she continually works for it. As young college women, we are all aspiring towards something greater. Perhaps you have aspirations of becoming a manager, a media mogul, an entrepreneur or a CEO. These ladies share their stories and tips on working towards true boss status.

ERIKA SYKES
CEO of GO-TO-E LLC
SPORTS MANAGEMENT

I got to sit with the play-by-play announcer to commentate on girls high school and college basketball. I was also a manager for the women's basketball team at Syracuse. I was learning the operational side of things while I was learning the broadcast side with Time Warner. I then ended up moving to Cleveland to work for Clutch Agency, which represents LeBron James, and I was working as an assistant to Rich Paul. I learned the legal side of the business. Initially, I wanted to be an agent but then I thought I could turn it into a career. So I decided to start my own company, Go-To-E.

Q: How did you get started in your career?
A: I went to Syracuse University for sports management and communications. I always knew that I would do something in sports, I was a news reporter/ intern. That then resulted in them hiring me to be a freelance color analyst. I got to sit with the play-by-play.

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Q: Do you have anyone in your life who inspires you?
A: My previous boss, Rich Paul. He literally taught himself the business by throwing himself into situations and learning the business along the way. So for him to be in the position he's in now and representing the number-one play in the country without even having a college degree is incredible. A lot of agents in the industry are lawyers or attorneys and they have an extensive education, whereas Rich combines book smarts and street smarts to put himself in the right situations and near the right people to create what he has today. And also Ashley Taylor and DJ Steph Floss these two have really been more than great friends but huge supporters and I owe a lot of credit to them for shaping me over the past two years into the person, entrepreneur I am today. They have equally pushed me into finding my purpose and turning my passion into a paycheck. I learn a lot from them business wise and overall life lessons. Both of their personalities are contagious so high spirited and positive. Being around them on a daily is rewarding in various way. They motivate me and challenge me to reach new levels. I guess they are like in a way mentors to me...because 'I really look up to them both.'

Q: Where do you see your business in five years? Do you plan on expanding?
A: Oh yeah! In the industry there's a lot of men who have the credibility to represent people who are more known. But as far as the women's side [goes], we're kind of lacking. I want to be a big dog in this game. I want to be a top manager in sports, as well as expand into entertainment management.

Q: What is your advice about conquering these stereotypes?
A: Stay true to who you are. Don't ever feel that you have to conform to be something you're not to be accepted. Don't sell yourself short. You really have to find yourself a backbone and develop a thick skin. And say what you mean, and mean what you say.

Q: You seem to be very ambitious; what is it that drives you?
A: A lot of different things. I am really passionate about helping people. One of my biggest aha moments is when people tell me their vision or something that they need, and I love completing the tasks and seeing the feeling that they get when I put all the pieces together. Being able to bring their vision to life is what excites me. I love helping people achieve their dreams, and... I feel accomplished because I'm helping them.

Q: Did you face any obstacles when starting your own business?
A: Being a female in a male-dominated industry is a huge challenge. You have to prove yourself to different athletes to take on different projects, but you also have to prove yourself to other people in the industry. Because you're a female, they see you as inferior to them or act as if you don't have the knowledge or the expertise. You have to be ten steps ahead in the industry but also make yourself credible to the athletes as well. It takes a lot to be taken seriously as a woman and to not have them say, "oh, let me take her out on a date, she's cute," but for them to want to work with you. Another challenge is just being patient. When you start your own thing, you want it to happen a certain way. You have to tell yourself, "If I'm doing this today, it's going to pay off later."

Q: How do you feel about women struggling to be bosses or CEOs?
A: I think we're making strides. It's hard, but I feel that if there wasn't a struggle, we wouldn't appreciate the grind or the reward that comes with it. I personally like a challenge. I try to see struggles as a challenge to overcome adversity and to eventually see the final picture. I think struggles are good. Nothing is ever easy; you should embrace the struggle... [It] is where you gain your most experience. A lot of times the down-side of things is what makes us unique.

Q: What advice can you give to someone who wants to have a career in sports management?
A: Network. I don't think I've ever interviewed for a job before. Everything that I've ever got is from my own work ethic, people seeing it and word of mouth. Having a good personality and treating others well go a long way. People usually take to that. And any situation that I have been put in, it's been a reference. You never want to burn bridges. Because you never know who you come across. I'm so big on treating people accordingly. It kills me when people are constantly saying nasty things. I'm so big into creating a happy vibe and networking.

Q: And finally, what advice can you give to young women about conquering their dreams and becoming true bosses?
A: Karen Civil has this T-shirt that says, "I bet on me." I think that's something important. Every female should bet on herself. Believe in who you are and your capabilities, even if you feel that you don't have all the answers (which you never will). Just have attitude and confidence to exude something different. Having the courage to take the initiative, and have that faith in God. Just believe in yourself and go after it. Whatever it is, just go after it. Don't be scared. You just have to take the steps and do it. You can talk about it all day, but just do it and have the confidence that things will work out. Even if they don't, there's always other options. You never really fail. You always fail ahead [what does this mean?]. There's so many ways to figuring out where you want to go. It's all about figuring out which one is the right one.
Q: How did you get started in your career?

A: I got started because I was always passionate about producing media or being creative... In high school I was the editor and chief of my yearbook at Martin Luther King High School in Detroit. And when I entered college, I majored in mass communications, but during my first two years of college I was really not involved. But I've always been a determined and motivated individual. And whenever I try to do something, I always try to do my best and give it my all. And my junior year of college is when I really got serious, and I've always been a writer, so I really wanted to apply my degree.

Q: How did you know journalism was your niche?

A: I knew journalism was my niche because I was always the type of person to try everything. When I was in high school, I tried tennis. My parents gave me piano lessons, but music was not really my thing because I didn't have rhythm. But I was always writing. Even as a child I made little magazines, and I used my mom's fax machine to make copies. I sold my magazines at school for a quarter. It was so stupid, because no one ever bought them from me. I was surprised that my parents let me do it. I've always wanted to be a journalist, but not just a journalist--a storyteller. I just wanted to be in media. Period. I feel that passion was always there, but college opened up a lot of opportunities. And not just going to college but being involved in programs that complement your discipline.

Q: Do you have anyone that inspires you?

A: The people of the stories that I tell. Because what keeps me going is when I publish an article of someone who has an excellent success story and he or she sees it in print and knows that there are now other people reading that story. That is what keeps me motivated. And it inspires me to keep going.

Q: How did you know journalism was your niche?

A: Yes, all the time! I'm facing an obstacle right now. As college graduates, we have this privilege that says right after graduating, we're supposed to have this huge career. And a lot of people don't know that when you're going into a creative field such as journalism, it's going to take time and be competitive. You're going to have to work for free sometimes. And that separates the doers from the naysayers. People who are not really passionate about the field are going to drop off like flies. They are going to have to understand that sometimes the work that you do is going to go unrecognized. It's going to go uncredited because some people try to not give credit towards work. But you can't let that discourage you. I also think that going through obstacles builds you into a better person and humbles you. I have been humbled very much since graduating from college, because I realized that the job hunt is not how you might imagine it. You may be the top performer or best writer at your university, but when you get out in the real world, you're just a small fish in a big pond. Eventually you will find an opportunity that embraces you, so you just have to keep working hard.

Q: How do you feel about women struggling to succeed in the industry?

A: Women will experience struggle in the industry, period. A lot of those who are higher up are going to be males. Another thing is that women of color have a harder time, because it's just the industry. But those are the older ideas. I feel that newer ideas are falling more into place because in media, it's not about content. It's about sales. It's about how well that publication or media company can sell. Eventually, race and gender are going to be out of the picture, because we are moving at such an abrupt pace. You can't let those kinds of statistics stop you from [taking advantage of] any opportunity. If you're a hard worker, then no one can stop you from your destiny.

Q: What is it that drives you?

A: The thing that drives me is knowing that my parents worked very hard to get me to the position where I'm at. My parents are workers. They both went to college but never finished. And also my Daddy passed away due to cancer my junior year of college. People always say, "How did you graduate from school on time after going through all of that tragedy?" I just honestly believe that life is going to happen to everybody. A lot of times people get stuck in their emotions and stuck in their situations, so they feel that there is not going to be a brighter day. The ambition just comes from wanting to do better than what people have set for me.
Q: What is your advice on conquering the stereotypes?
A: My advice is to stay true to yourself and know that you can only be out-worked if you allow yourself to be. If you remain disciplined and diligent in your field, you should not have to worry about any of those types of stereotypes.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?
A: I see myself being successful in the field of media. But I also see myself still learning and trying new things. I don’t want to put myself in a box. Right now, I’m just looking for an opportunity in media, because I have a love for media, business and talking to people.

Q: What advice do you have for young journalists trying to break into the business?
A: Learn how to write correctly. Make sure you learn your co-attributes and AP style. When these companies look at you, they’re looking to see if you are an asset to their company. Most of journalism is writing. Make you skill more than just journalism. Learn Adobe and how to do graphic design, video production and photography. It’s not just journalism now; it’s multimedia.

Q: What advice can you give to women about conquering their dreams and becoming true bosses?
A: Invest in yourself. Never put anything out that you wouldn’t want the world to see forever. Within the social media age, you want to be careful. And not to sound cliche, but “brand yourself.” Carry yourself [in a way that will] be respected. In this industry, it’s all about how you respect yourself and how you respect others. The first thing to becoming a boss is to have self-respect and self-love. If you have those, then you’ll be fine.
Q: How did you get started in your career?
A: I had been looking into the Kent area and I had the money so I just decided to open up some kind of business.

Q: What drives you?
A: Well, in Kent there are no hair stores at all. And also there are barely any black owners of hair businesses in the hair store industry. The thing that really drives me is my children. I want to leave a legacy for all of them. My main goal was to start a business and from that I’ll go from there.

Q: Did you face any obstacles while starting your hair store?
A: Yes! One main one was the fact that I didn’t have a lot of connections. Me and my husband definitely had to find a lot of avenues. There was no direct connection for hair and products, so we definitely had to work hard to fulfill those needs.

Q: Do you have anyone who inspires you?
A: Definitely, my children, my husband and all of my family. My Grandfather had his own T.V. shop for 20 years and my mother had her own business for 10 years. Entrepreneurship is in my blood.

Q: What advice do you have about conquering the stereotypes?
A: There are a lot of different stereotypes depending on what type of business you have. With my business people tend to assume that I am a hairdresser. I am not, I work on the business side of the industry. But I think if you ever endure a tough obstacle, you definitely want to try to figure it out and try a different avenue. Always remain positive, even if it doesn’t work the first or second time; try again.

Q: What was your main motivation to starting a hair store in Kent?
A: I actually went to high school here. And my Grandfather’s business was located here. But also the students motivated me because I know that it’s tough for young women to get there hair needs while at college. I knew they didn’t have anywhere to go to purchase products, so I felt that that would be a great clientele to target.

Q: Do you see yourself expanding your store in the future, if so where do you see your store in 5 years?
A: I do see myself expanding in the future. I think I have the perfect location as of right now. But expansion is definitely in the plan.

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A: I do see myself expanding in the future. I think I have the perfect location as of right now. But expansion is definitely in the plan.

Q: What advice do you have for women who want to start their own business?
A: Don’t stop until you get there. Keep working and set small goals for yourself. When setting and accomplishing those small goals you will eventually get to your larger goal. Never give up and pray a lot. And confide in people that trust you and have faith in you.
YOUR HOME
AWAY FROM HOME TO
EAT, STUDY,
GET INVOLVED
OR SIMPLY HANG OUT.

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When students were asked “What does Pan-African Studies mean to you?”

This is how they responded:

“Self-awareness and self-enlightenment”
Asia

“...the motherland welcoming her children back home...Africa teaching her children to be human again...love trying to forgive oppression”
Damien

“...knowledge of self.”
Sameera

“Healing”
Paige