

TWK

This Woman Knows Magazine

Lynae Vanee
Keeps it...

Black
But
Brief

Love &
Healing
Personified

SHARON KAPP

THE PHENOMENAL WOMAN ISSUE | SPRING 2024

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QUEEN



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Award-winning screenplay written by Lisa N. Alexander

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Editor's Letter



As we commemorate Women's History Month this March, it's a time not only to reflect on the countless contributions women have made to society but also to celebrate the remarkable achievements of those among us today.

This year, I am thrilled to shine a spotlight on the incredible women who have been recognized as our 2024 Phenomenal Women for their exceptional work in entrepreneurship, education, healing, social activism, and black women's health.

Entrepreneurship has long been a vehicle for women to express their creativity, determination, and resilience. The women honored exemplify this spirit, breaking barriers, and forging new paths in the business world. Through their innovative ideas, leadership, and tenacity, they inspire us all to pursue our dreams fearlessly and to carve out our own space in the world.

As we honor Women's History Month and celebrate the achievements of women past and present, let us also recognize and uplift the incredible women who continue to shape our world today. Their courage, passion, and unwavering commitment to making a difference inspire us all to strive for greatness and to create a more inclusive and empowering future for generations to come.

Enjoy,

Lisa N. Alexander
Editor-in-Chief

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Chelsea C. Elliott, MSW
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EMOTIONAL WELLNESS MADE SIMPLE

WHO WE ARE

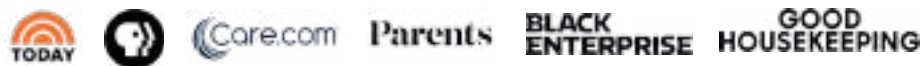
Since 2021, Somocom Lab has been on a mission to help people *feel their feelings*. Our mission is to help people, young and old, communicate and connect more effectively by increasing their emotional intelligence and improving their emotional wellness.

With the resources we create in the "Lab", parents, educators, and workplace leaders can create emotionally healthy and safe environments that foster positive relationships and communication.

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Understanding Spiritual Women

BY OLESSIA KANTOR

I'm blessed to be surrounded by women whose spirituality means as much to them as mine does to me. That said, our encounters, particularly those of us who date, have been made more interesting by our deep involvement in spirituality. We've all encountered men, as well as other women, who don't understand how spirituality can touch every area of your life. I've taken it upon myself to remedy this and provide you all with a quick and easy guide for understanding the modern spiritual woman.

Spiritual women depend on feelings and instinct. By tuning into the spiritual world, spiritual women learn how to depend on their feelings and tune into instincts given to them by their surroundings and experience.

For this reason, it's important to nurture their spiritual selves as much as possible with meditation, yoga, periods of introspection, and more.

Spiritual women get impatient waiting to put a plan into action. They are in tune with the limited time we all have on the Earth and want to make the most of the journey in this plane. Since spiritual women are constantly seeking to fulfill their purpose, they take on many projects with an attitude that lets you know they can do it all.

Spiritual women can be unapologetically straightforward. Of

course, we care about feelings but we also care about the here and now, the reality of the situation. The spiritual woman in your life will not only have a heightened awareness of her own actions but those of everyone around her. That can be tough for someone who doesn't deal well with directness, but it will certainly get you thinking. If you can find your own standpoint, a spiritual woman will not argue points with you, but rather guide you in the direction of growth and fulfillment.

Spiritual women enjoy the company of other spiritual people.

It's less about being around like-minded people and more about being around those who will have those deep, mentally arousing conversations.

Spiritual women often find comfort in group activities where they can share and swap ideas, rituals,

beliefs, and theories with others who are willing to tune into themselves and their surroundings on a deeper level. In turn, people who lack depth and only engage in small talk will likely be considered boring or stunted to a spiritual woman.

Spiritual women will try to get you out of your comfort zone. Only you can know if that's right for you, of course. Spiritual women are all about pushing themselves, obliterating boundaries, and becoming every

person they can be. A spiritual person will encourage you to step out of your comfort zone, but never force you. The real question is if you can keep up with her doing so day after day.

Being a friend or partner to a spiritual woman is never a dull moment. You'll learn a lot and get the opportunity to live vicariously through their never-ending life adventures. In understanding their core values, you will come to see them as they really are rather than seeing how they are different from others. ■





Black Maternal Mental Health Advocate

- Nonprofit Leader
- Speaker/Author
- INSPIRE Method Training Creator

Kay Matthews
WWW.THEKAYMATTHEWS.COM

Spirit Led

The Women Leading FINO Tequila

In the traditionally male-dominated spirits industry, the emergence of female-owned brands is a refreshing and inspiring phenomenon. One such trailblazing example is FINO Tequila, a company that not only produces exceptional tequila but also shatters stereotypes and challenges the status quo, and lives by their name...Failure Is Not an Option.

Founded by a team of passionate and determined women, FINO Tequila is making waves and

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FINO co-owners Jana Iyer and Sonali Patel

How I Became Friends With The Other Woman

BY PETRA VALICA

There was no way we should have become friends. She was the one that my husband (well now ex) had cheated with. I couldn't believe another woman would willingly be a part of this – fully knowing that her actions were hurting another. That was the version in my head, however, it's never this simple or black and white. She was supposed to be my enemy. My friends heard me rant about how she was just not good enough for him. About how I was so much better. How I was thinner, hotter and smarter. Everything – I was just better in all ways. I was the woman my ex should still be with. In my hurt and anger that is what I told myself. I was supposed to hate her forever. I wanted to hate her, and yet for some reason, I couldn't. It didn't happen overnight and it took a great deal of healing to realize that I wasn't better. That she wasn't really the cause of my pain. She was just as beautiful as I was. She was also a person who had fallen

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Keeping It Black... But Brief

BY LISA N. ALEXANDER



When you hear her iconic intro, "It's Friday! So, imma keep it Black but imma keep it brief," you know you're about to be hit with a melodic retelling of social justice shenanigans happening here in the U.S. and around the world.

In the realm of social and political commentary, few voices resonate as powerfully as Lynae Vane's and we at TWK love her!

Through her thought-provoking content and fearless advocacy, she has emerged as a beacon of truth, justice, and empowerment in a world often fraught with division and injustice.

Now, with the launch of her new venture, [VANE](#) Lynae is taking her passion for social change to new heights, empowering individuals

to make a difference and create positive impact in their communities.

Lynae's journey into the world of social and political activism began with a deep-seated desire to speak truth to power and amplify the voices of marginalized communities.

Through her online platforms and

Continued on page 21



BY LISA N. ALEXANDER

LOVE

AND

Healing PERSONIFIED

“If you’re not breathing, there’s no yoga asana happening!”

“Be kind to your body. Ahimsa is the practice of nonviolence. It isn’t about forcing your body into a pose, but finding strength and ease in the pose.”

I can guarantee you that if you attend any of Sharon’s yoga classes, you’ll hear her repeat those phrases.

When I wandered (or was divinely led) to Sharon’s studio, my body and spirit were in need of a lot of ahimsa. Because after decades of living off of antacids, and being downright soul weary, my entire being screamed for change.

Thankfully, not too far from my home, I found a sanctuary of healing and tranquility, led by the remarkable Sharon Kapp.

Visiting her studio for the first time was the beginning of my healing journey. Her words stayed with me. Especially her guidance about time on our mat translating to life off of our mat. If we could breathe and find strength and ease in each pose, then we could breathe and find strength and ease during each of life’s challenges.

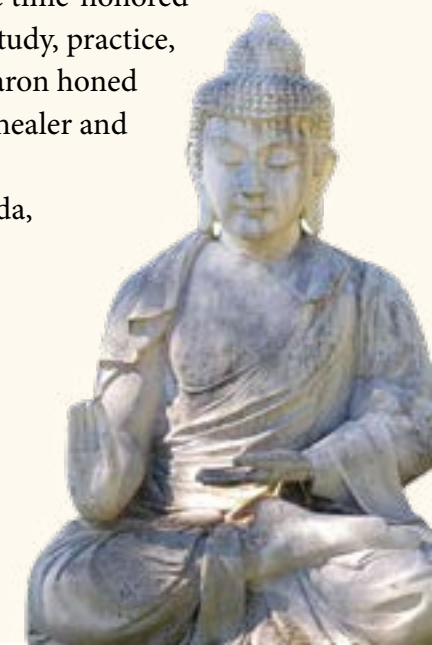
She didn’t lie.

As the founder of Houston Yoga & Ayurveda Ashram, Sharon has dedicated her life to guiding

others on their journey towards holistic wellness, inner peace, and profound transformation. Through her expertise, compassion, and unwavering commitment to healing, she has touched the lives of countless individuals, offering them solace, support, and the tools they need to thrive.

Sharon’s journey into the world of healing arts began with a deep desire to understand the intricate connection between mind, body, and spirit. Trained in both yoga and Ayurveda, ancient systems of healing that date back thousands of years, she embarked on a path of self-discovery and exploration, immersing herself in the wisdom of these time-honored traditions. Through years of study, practice, and hands-on experience, Sharon honed her craft, becoming a master healer and teacher in her own right.

At Houston Yoga & Ayurveda, Sharon offers a wide range of services designed to nurture the body, soothe the mind, and uplift the spirit. From yoga classes and meditation sessions to Ayurvedic



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In the annals of history, there are individuals whose stories illuminate the path of progress, whose tireless dedication paves the way for future generations. Dr. Jacqueline Dansby is one such luminary, whose journey from humble beginnings to esteemed educator and mentor exemplifies the transformative power of education and the indomitable spirit of determination.

Born in Detroit and raised in San Antonio, Dr. Dansby's early years were marked by challenges and adversity. Yet, buoyed by a steadfast belief in the transformative power of education, she seized every

opportunity that came her way. As a high school student, she was selected to participate in the inaugural cohort of Upward Bound, a federal program under President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society initiative, aimed at empowering low-income, high achieving students. Despite initial hesitations from her family, she embraced the opportunity, recognizing it as a beacon of hope amidst the socio-economic constraints that surrounded her. In her words, she was "poor, Black and a girl but wanted to go to college because she knew education was the way out." Upward Bound was a dream come true.

Dr. Dansby excelled academically, earning accolades and recognition for her exemplary performance including Valedictorian of her high school graduating class. She had also gained admission in several universities, including the University of Texas, which at that time was considered the number one university in the State. It was during a chance encounter at a college fair that her trajectory took a fortuitous turn. Encountering a nun from Incarnate Word, Dr. Dansby was drawn to the university's promise of a financial aid package that didn't burden students with loans.

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Dr. Jacqueline Dansby

A Trailblazer in Education and Mentorship

BY DR. FELICIA J. SCOTT



Photo Courtesy of Dr. Dansby

Trailblazer

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Embracing this opportunity with fervor, she embarked on a journey that would not only shape her own destiny but also inspire countless others along the way.

Graduating with honors and double degrees in Math and Chemistry in just three years, Dr. Dansby's academic achievements were just the beginning of her illustrious career. While obtaining her teaching certificate, she attended a teacher's conference and while there learned of an opportunity to tutor for a newly established Upward Bound program at St. Mary's University.

What began as a part-time tutoring role soon blossomed into a full-time position, as Dr. Dansby poured her heart and soul into nurturing the next generation of leaders. For over five decades, she dedicated herself to

this noble cause, touching the lives of countless students and instilling in them the values of excellence, resilience, and service. She believed she was on "a mission from and for God to pay it forward."

Reflecting on her journey, Dr. Dansby remains steadfast in her belief that she is merely an instrument in a divine plan. "I owe God everything," she humbly asserts, "He has a plan for us all, we have to see it and have the courage to follow the message he sends us." Her unwavering faith, coupled with her relentless determination, continues to inspire all those who have the privilege of crossing paths with her.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us pay tribute to trailblazers like Dr. Jacqueline Dansby, whose life and legacy serve as a beacon of hope and a testament to the power of education, perseverance, and the human spirit. ■

An advertisement for Ronnie, a cash flow management tool. The top part features the 'RONNIE' logo in a stylized green font with a smiling face, and the tagline 'The cash flow management tool built for small business owners.' Below this, it announces a 'Pricing Mastery Virtual Workshop' on 'THURSDAY, 4/4/24 AT 10:30 AM CST'. A green button with a white link icon says 'Register Here'. The background is white with green dollar bills and an illustration of a person sitting on the floor with a laptop, a calculator, and an invoice.

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Celebrate The Dreamer



Dr. Lynette Charity

It was 1849 when Elizabeth Blackwell MD, originally from England, became the first female in the U.S. to graduate from medical school. In 1864, Rebecca Lee Crumpler MD was the first African-American female to graduate from medical school. These women were dreamers. And because of their perseverance, many women successfully followed in their footsteps. Yet medicine remained male-dominated and segregated well into the 1970's. African-American physicians, male or female, were only allowed to treat African-American patients. I had the opportunity to meet one of the pioneers who helped make changes to that philosophy.

Lynette Charity, MD recalls being asked by patients, "Are you really a doctor?" Or she was told "I don't want you to take care of me. I want

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Friends

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love. Was it her fault? Yes and no. It wasn't her fault that she had fallen in love with the man that I was supposed to spend the rest of my life with. No, that wasn't it. It was her fault that she chose to become involved with a married man, however. She had her reasons. We all have our reasons and sometimes the heart causes us to do things that are selfish. Or we simply want to believe that what we are doing is OK and not hurting anyone. We want to believe the story we are being told or are telling our self. I wanted to believe that she was an evil and selfish person. And then one day I heard the other side of the story.

After about eight months since the affair, I received a message.

A very surprising and out of the blue message. It was from her (the other woman). I will call her Sarah. Sarah was in pain. Sarah was hurt and wanted answers. Sarah had inevitably become me and her only source of solace was to find out the truth. And that truth was hidden within my own pain.

I was still jaded and hurt. Why on earth did Sarah deserve answers? I was however curious. Who was this other woman who my husband had left me for? Who was the woman who had successfully destroyed my life?

My friends told me to leave well enough alone. Not to engage. My curiosity, however, couldn't resist and I agreed. I also wanted answers. These answers could help with my

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Flowers

Fl Giving Phenomenal Women Their



Ebony Harris (left) and Misti Beard share a plate!

Ebony Harris had been labeled a phenomenal cook since childhood. Owning her own food truck was just a dream; a dream her son heard her talk about and one he took to heart.

The Food Fien Food Truck is now a reality! This custom-built truck was funded by her beloved son!

Sadly, he passed away during the build, so every day Ebony honors his memory by pushing through the pain and providing her delectable lamb chop bowl along with her infectious smile to all her customers.

Submitted by Misti Beard
-The Food Truck Lady



Jamesina Green, Founder A Mother's Cry

Jamesina Greene epitomizes relentless dedication and passion amid her own health challenges. This sarcoidosis warrior understands the challenges faced by mothers in underserved communities, and tirelessly advocates for their rights and provides vital support systems. Through her initiatives, she has transformed countless lives. Greene's commitment to empowering mothers and families makes her a beacon of hope and inspiration in the realm of social justice advocacy. She remains a constant voice for those in her community.

Submitted by
This Woman Knows



Kay Matthews, Founder Shades of Blue Project

Kay Matthews' work with the Shades of Blue Project is a beacon of hope for countless Black mothers navigating the challenges of postpartum depression. With unwavering dedication, Matthews has crafted a supportive network that not only raises awareness but also provides essential resources and teaches compassionate care. Her tireless advocacy efforts empower Black mothers to seek the help they deserve, making a profound difference in the landscape of Black maternal mental health across the globe.

Submitted by
This Woman Knows

Spirit Led

Continued from page 9

redefining what it means to succeed in a traditionally male-centric industry.

At the helm of FINO Tequila are female visionaries, co-owners Jana Iyer and Sonali Patel. These phenomenal women dared to defy what a strong business owner looked like, and make it, not one but, two fearless females.

What sets FINO Tequila apart is not just its exceptional quality but also its commitment to empowering women and promoting inclusivity.

In an industry where women are often underrepresented, the owners of FINO Tequila are leading by example, proving that women can thrive and excel in any role, including ownership and leadership.

The two hope to empower others to achieve their dreams through the FINO mindset and embrace Failure Is Not an Option.

From the sourcing of the finest agave to the meticulous distillation process, every step of FINO Tequila's production is overseen with care and dedication. The result is a range of tequilas that are not only delicious but also imbued with the spirit of empowerment and resilience.

But the impact of FINO Tequila extends beyond the bottle. By breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes, the founders of FINO Tequila are inspiring a new generation of women to pursue their passions fearlessly. Their success serves as a reminder that with determination, resilience, and a strong sense of purpose, anything is possible.

As FINO Tequila continues to gain recognition and accolades, it is clear that the future is bright. With their unwavering commitment to quality, authenticity, and empowerment, the women behind FINO Tequila are not just making great tequila – they are making history. ■

Personified

Continued from page 13

consultations and wellness workshops, she provides individuals with a holistic approach to healing that addresses their unique needs and challenges. Through gentle guidance and loving support, Sharon empowers her clients to reclaim their health, restore balance, and unlock their full potential.

She approaches each client with an open heart and a listening ear, creating a safe and nurturing space. Whether someone is struggling with physical pain, emotional distress, or spiritual disconnection, Sharon offers them the guidance and support they need to heal, grow, and thrive.

Beyond her work at Houston Yoga & Ayurveda, Sharon is also a passionate advocate for wellness and community empowerment. She frequently hosts charity events, volunteer initiatives, and outreach programs aimed at making holistic healthcare accessible to all. Through her generosity and kindness, she is not only transforming individual lives but also fostering a culture of healing, compassion, and service.

As we honor Sharon and her extraordinary contributions, let us also celebrate the profound impact she has had on the lives of so many. Through her unwavering dedication to healing, her boundless compassion for others, and her commitment to making the world a better place, Sharon continues to inspire us all to live with greater intention, purpose, and love.

Sharon, the light in me and those whose lives you've touched, honors the Divine light in you. Namaste. ■



Friends

Continued from page 17

own healing process. These answers might help me escape the current emotional turmoil I that I was in.

A week after Sarah had contacted me, we met. I saw her sitting there, looking very uncomfortable and nervous. I felt a surge of power run through me. I had the upper hand here! I was the victim. I was the one who deserved an apology! And I was going to get it. I was going to get some refuge from my pain!

As I approached her, I was suddenly struck by an odd feeling – a cascade of empathy ran through me and I had no idea why.

She was an ordinary girl and not at all as I had imagined her. Her eyes were filled with the same sadness that I had. We shared a beer and she shared her story. Her story was much like mine. She had thought he was separated. She had thought that he was the one for her. She had thought much of the same things I did. And she was hurting. Hurting as I had been. Perhaps not quite in the same way, but suffering nonetheless. Her story was a love story like any other – just like mine.

I forgave her, for in some way she could have been me. I forgave her and in each other we found healing. In each other, we found that although love hurts, love can heal too. We found a common bond that only two women who have been betrayed can have, for he had also betrayed her. Instead of finding an enemy, I had found a friend.

It takes courage: It takes a great deal of maturity and forgiveness to not hate the other woman and realize that it's not her that you're

really angry at. The pain and hurt that comes from a breakup can be the pain from the loss of the dream that you once had. Take a moment to see the blessing in forgiving and listening. Offer her your ear and share your story, your emotions and your courage together. She's a woman just like you, who fell in love. Look at the gifts, rather than the sorrows. This may not work for everyone or in every situation. Each story is unique and even if you can't meet face to face, try to forgive in your own heart. This will also aid your healing and give you release.

Heal together: Take this as a unique opportunity to heal. Having her in your life can answer the questions you've been wanting to ask your ex but never got the answer from. Your friends can give you advice and be there for you, but unless they have gone through it, they cannot walk in your shoes. Here is someone who can completely understand your sense of loss and who has now walked in your shoes. You can actually help each other to move on. So 'go out on the town,' have a girls night and watch sappy movies together until you feel better.

Everything is meant to be: If you can look at this experience from outside your personal box, you may bypass some very heavy karma. By forgiving, not only do you heal, you also close the loop of karma. Or in Christian terms, you can "do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31). Being able to look at someone who has caused you pain and suffering and say, "I forgive you, you are my sister," is following God's law. It takes a certain kind of woman and a maturity on both sides to be

able to do this. For whatever reason, his was meant to be.

Your person is still out there. This may be difficult to accept, but it simply wasn't meant to be for either you or the other woman. Both of you deserve more and someone else is out there for you. This may be hard to believe but it's true. The fact that someone can have an affair, be with another woman for a few months and then go and do the same thing all over again, means that there's nothing wrong with either of you. There is something wrong with him. He is suffering from his own karmic pain. There is also a great healing in forgiving him as well. There are two sides to every story and there is no point in blaming or regretting.

Try not to get caught up in the temptation of ex-bashing: As much as you both want to, this is always a bad idea. Rather than gossip about all the pain this person has put you through and what a terrible person he is, talk about the memories that you created. Focus on the good and when focusing on the painful, share what you can learn from, rather than falling into revenge seeking. Find solace in each other's views and look forward to a future with a man who holds the same principles as you – love, faithfulness, and honesty.

Today, Sarah and I have bonded and are friends. Today, we have turned our anger into empathy towards our ex. We see that he is actually in more pain than we are. We see a person who is in so much pain that he became destructive. We don't wish him ill will. We empathize and hope that he may find happiness again. Forgiveness is powerful and can lead to amazing changes. ■

Brief

Continued from page 11

social media channels, she fearlessly addresses pressing issues such as racial justice, gender equality, and systemic oppression, sparking crucial conversations and inspiring others to take action. With her sharp wit, keen intellect, and unwavering commitment to justice, Lynae has become a formidable force for change in the digital landscape.

Now, with the launch of VANE, Lynae is embarking on a new chapter in her journey towards social transformation.

Vane's self-care brand looks toward the future of black women in America by offering products that promote and elevate their mental health, wellness, and awareness.

According to the company website, "As a brand, VANE looks to provide

products which speak to our struggle and, more importantly, our victories, numerous, comprehensive, and worthy of celebration."

As we honor Lynae Vane and her remarkable contributions to social and political discourse, let us also celebrate the launch of VANE and the positive impact it is poised to make in the world.

Through her tireless advocacy, unwavering commitment to justice, and innovative entrepreneurship, Lynae is not only inspiring others to speak out and take action but also providing them with the tools and resources they need to create lasting change. In a world that often feels divided and uncertain, Lynae and Vane serve as beacons of hope, reminding us all that together, we have the power to build a brighter, more just, and equitable future for generations to come. ■

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www.WhatsTheHookGame.com
Instagram - @WhatsTheHookGame

Dreamer

Continued from page 16

a White doctor.” And the latter response many times came from patients who looked just like her!

Dr. Charity refused to allow this to deter her on her journey. After all, she was a dreamer. When she made the decision to transfer to the white high school to follow her dream, some of her neighbors and teachers said “Why you gonna go there? You think you better than us? They’re gonna send you back!” After excelling in her studies at the white high school and looking for help to apply to college, she was told by her guidance counselor “College! Medical School! A Doctor?! Now you might get into one of those Colored colleges, but no Medical School’s gonna take a Colored girl.

You should work on your typing skills. You can be a typist when you graduate.” Well, she did take the guidance counselor’s advice and honed her typing skills, but ignored the rest. She attended Chatham College for Women and Tufts University School of Medicine. Dr. Charity explains that while watching the TV Medical drama, Ben Casey, “Dr. Casey” looked her in the eye and said, “Lynette, you’re going to be a doctor.” Becoming a doctor became her dream and she accomplished that dream.

Dr. Charity has practiced medicine for 39 years as an Anesthesiology. She has experienced racism, discrimination, sexism, ageism and medical malpractice, which is no fun even if you win. Yet she has remained resilient and grown forward through it all. Dr.

Charity, a sought-after national and international Keynote, speaks to fellow physicians and physicians-in-training on ways to shift their mindsets from burnout to bliss and reconnect with their dream.

Why is her story important? She DARED to dream DESPITE the obstacles. If YOU dare to dream it, you, too, can achieve it. ■

This article first appeared on the This Woman Knows Blog and was submitted by Hesma Stephens.



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Greetings Heart of Hollywood friends and family!

Well, here we are again amid yet another wonderful holiday season! So many varied emotions rise to the surface within each of us during this beautiful, yet for many, emotion-filled time of year.

My message this issue is based on the true meaning of the word GRATITUDE. Being grateful is easier during holidays such as Birthday's, Anniversary's, and Christmas for many of us, I mean after all; who does not enjoy receiving gifts and well wishes? The struggle for most however, is not the art of being grateful during holidays, but the maintaining of that true sense of gratitude during those days that pass between holidays. I personally deprived myself of countless blessings over the years simply due to my not understanding the power that lives within those gifts that we each have the opportunity of giving ourselves. Simply by reminding ourselves daily of all the wonderful things within our lives that bring us joy, that were not always there, but today through hard work and faith, they exist.... they are our true realities. I encourage each of you to renew that covenant with yourself today, that agreement wherein you agree to give thanks daily for not only the big wins, but the small wins as well. In the coming year, let's each find a way to "count it all joy", for joy and happiness are the keys to every door that purpose stands behind. Be encouraged friends, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year! Until next time...

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