



**THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK**

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*Discuss  
Discuss*

*Think  
Think*

*Engage  
Engage*



**Young Writers' Block**  
**E-Publication :**  
*A Collection of Popular Reflections,  
Essays, Poems, and Articles (April 2010)*

## About

This global community is a way to follow issues that matter to young professionals, and to discuss and think about the issues raised through the weekly writings in this group. We cover:

- Health, Beauty & Fashion:***
- Activism & Causes***
- Business Sense & Entrepreneurship***
- Inspiration's Corner: A collection of poetry & short stories***
- Politics, News & Society***
- Sports***
- Music***
- Technology***

The beauty of this project is not that the articles you will read are bland analyses – they are passionate stories from skilled writers with their own personality and character, to be shared with you.

The Young Writer's Block will inspire action through dialogue. The 21st century and especially the recent U.S. presidential campaign has shown what the power of an informed young, professional cadre can have on shaping the future of this nation. Maybe in someone's blog post of inspiration, or someone's coverage of today's trends in music, or through the discussion of what technology has the ability to change our lives, you can be inspired to discuss, agree, disagree, and take advantage of opportunities to be involved or informed in our communities, spreading an understanding of those areas you are particularly passionate about.

Because this is a project to inspire action and dialogue, we encourage you to read these articles, think about them for your own understanding, and comment back with your assent or dissent. There will also be opportunities for you to get active or help spread awareness about certain issues, campaigns, or community efforts, and opportunities to contribute, so think, discuss, and engage yourself in this project.

This writing is not meant to be a substitute for thought or action, but, hopefully, the Young Writer's Block will be a place that will inspire you to go and do both.

## The Blogging Team

This project would not be possible without the passionate and creative bloggers that signed on to be a part of this project. Check out the authors information here and I encourage you to also check out their websites for good reading!

### **Sincere (Editor)**

*Topics: Jack-of-all Trades*

Originally from Washington DC but now resides in Atlanta. His objective with his site is to show that every young black man isn't just about sagging pants and selling drugs. He's trying to make a difference and change how black men are viewed by mainstream America.

### **JordanCarmon**

*Topics: Politics, News, & Society*

...has been passionate about politics and all things surrounding it. His website, [CarmonReport.com](http://CarmonReport.com) was created as a result of his insatiable need to express his views and opinions after people got tired of listening to him talk about politics (He is very happy to accept any guest-posts, as there are already several posts written by other young people). He was a fervent long-time supporter of then-candidate Barack Obama (since August 2006), and is generally liberal in his political views, though he is very open minded to new ideas. He currently is in High School, and is excited for his, and our collective future.

### **Brandelyn**

*Topics: Inspiration's Corner (Poetry & Artistry), Music*

...is the author of *Everybody Plays the Fool*, a novel, *Spoken Silence*, a volume of poetry and *U.G.L.Y.* a novel. Brandelyn's writings cover topics about self-love, laughter, inner peace, reflections and appreciating the simple things in life.

### **El Profesor**

*Topics: Activism and Causes*

... is a graduate of Vanderbilt University with a BA in Political Science and Latin American Studies. During his undergraduate studies at Vanderbilt University, Mr. Figueroa focused primarily on the setbacks experienced by newly arrived Latino immigrants. He's interested on issues concerning schooling in underprivileged areas, Latino politics, and programs geared towards poverty alleviation. Currently, he's Master's student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education concentrating on community revitalization, education policy, and the achievement gap.

### **Justmythoughts (Tech)**

*Topics: Sports, Technology*

...attended his undergraduate years at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN and will be beginning medical school in the fall.

### **Prexygilbert**

*Topics: Activism*

...is a college student majoring in political science with a specialization in Public Policy. "As the world turns so do we but it is the direction in which we turn that determines the path the world goes. Words of peace keeps peace as a concept but it is our Actions of peace that make it a reality."- himself

### **TheMoralMuse**

*Topics: Inspiration's Corner(Poetry, Religion)*

...attended Vanderbilt University and graduated in 2006 with a BS in Electrical Engineering, also attended Colorado State University for the Master's program in Robotics. She enjoys writing poems and inspirational epithets based off of true life experiences. If she can help someone through a tough time, or just offer encouragement or empathy, she feels that she is making a difference to the world.

### **Mizmo**

*Topics: Music*

...first enrolled in college at Norfolk State University in Norfolk, VA, but finished her BS in Computer Science & Applied Mathematics in 2008 at Georgia Tech University in Atlanta, GA, where she still resides. Her blog is dedicated to music lovers. She writes reviews and POV articles on a wide selection of artists that range anywhere from Taylor Swift to UGK. By visiting her blog you will open your mind to new types of music, no longer being a fan of just a certain genre, but a fan of good music period.

### **Nicky Hazel**

*Topics: Love, Life, and Culture*

... is a graduate of Vanderbilt University with a BA in Communication Studies. She double-minored in Managerial Studies in order to prepare her for her dream of becoming an entrepreneur. Under the pseudonym "Nicky Hazel", she uses Plaid Patterns as a forum to express her artistic side through writing and photography (coming soon). She chooses to focus on all things random, but her main goal is to inspire, enlighten, and perhaps push readers to crack a smile every once in a while. She believes in the interconnectivity of the human experience, and hopes the journey she reveals on her blog captures the essence of that belief.

### **Ashleyrhaexoxo**

*Topics: Poetry, Reflections*

...is a senior at Vanderbilt University, majoring in Political Science with aspirations to go to law school in the fall of 2010. She is constantly perspiring due to the aforementioned aspiring. Meanwhile, she is the president of Vanderbilt Spoken Word and thoroughly enjoys the art of poetry in its multifaceted forms.

### **SpkTruth2Pwr (Editor)**

*Topics: Politics, News & Society*

...is a graduate of Vanderbilt University & soon to be graduate of Berkeley' Public Policy Master's program. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to understanding the situations that need to be improved in this world, and as a policy analyst and blogger, he hopes to inspire us all to be more aware.

### **Ladyactivist (Editor)**

*Topics: Reflections*

...is a freelance writer and blogger. The quote that best represents her is from Fahrenheit 451. "I'm antisocial, they say. I don't mix. It's so strange. I'm very social indeed. It all depends on what you mean by social, doesn't it? Social to me means talking to you about things like this...Or talking about how strange the world is."

### **Blank.Bare.Clean**

*Topics: Art, Design, Music & Culture*

...is an aspiring art administrator and has a huge affinity for all things creative, thought-provoking, and innovative. She received a B.S. in International Business Administration, cum laude from Fisk University and concluded an internship in London, UK to pursue her career and education in Arts Administration. She is seeking an MBA/MA in Arts Admin in Fall 2010.

**QueenTahj**

*Topics: Fashion Trends, Beauty and Health & Wellness*

...is a 2007 graduate from Fisk University holding a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in accounting. She is currently a personal assistant to Medispa owner and aspiring medical student. She believes everyone should be FIERCE, FEARLESS & FABULOUS in their own unique way.

**LakeshaWomack**

*Topics: Lifestyle, Relationships, Business, Entrepreneurship*

Graduated from Vanderbilt in '99 with a degree in Political Science. Since then, she has attained management, consulting and training experience in a variety of fields including real estate, publishing, retail, financial services and local politics. Some people consider her a busy body because I am involved in a bit of everything.

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## Contact Us

### General Inquiries

Have questions about the site, or want to ask a question that does not concern a particular blogger's article? Are you interested in writing for YWB? Have suggestions on things you would like to see on the website? Then contact [admin@youngwritersblock.org](mailto:admin@youngwritersblock.org) and we will get back to you.

### Page Editors

If you have content that you would like to suggest for our pages, or would like to get in touch with the editors involved with finding and controlling content, then feel free to contact them with any suggestions.

Also, if you would like further questions on any of the content provided on the particular pages, then definitely contact them for information on additional details.

**Inspiration to Act-** [inspiration@youngwritersblock.org](mailto:inspiration@youngwritersblock.org)

**Recommended Links-** [resources@youngwritersblock.org](mailto:resources@youngwritersblock.org)

**Art & Culture-** [creativity@youngwritersblock.org](mailto:creativity@youngwritersblock.org)

### Tech?

Any problems, with page functionality? Questions about features that would enhance the user-friendliness of the site? Then contact [tech@youngwritersblock.org](mailto:tech@youngwritersblock.org).

The following pieces have been compiled based on their popularity on the Young Writers Block website. They have been organized by their author in random order.

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## Brandelyn

*Topics:* Inspiration's Corner (Poetry & Artistry), Music

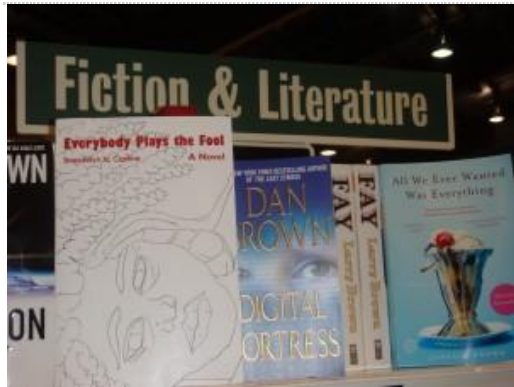
...is the author of Everybody Plays the Fool, a novel, Spoken Silence, a volume of poetry and U.G.L.Y. a novel. Brandelyn's writings cover topics about self-love, laughter, inner peace, reflections and appreciating the simple things in life.

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## The Beautiful U.G.L.Y. Project Volume 8



I am sooooo happy I waited to write this post. Last night I went into Barnes and Noble with a friend who is in town and we were walking around, looking at books. I have gotten into a habit of going to the fiction section and imagining where my books will live on the shelf and I always try to figure out what it will feel like to see my books there one day. So, just for a little background, my books are on sale through BarnesandNoble.com and when I sell 500 copies of the book through the website, the store will carry my book in their stores nationally. I have been working very hard, having book signings and interviews, giving talks and carrying around my now infamous little postcards with information, trying to do whatever I can to spread the word. But last night, I walked over to do my usual routine and was literally stopped in my tracks when I looked on the shelf and saw my novel 'Everybody Plays the Fool' on the bookshelf. I grabbed the copy and ran over to my friend who immediately snatched it up and put it in his basket.

It took me a moment to get it together and when I did, I looked up and saw my book of poetry on the poetry shelf. I literally lost it. I'm talking about flushed cheeks, asthma problems, the whole nine.

It's crazy because every time I get a little down, a little discouraged, my job is too much, everything is stressing me out, I get reminders that God is on my team. I was not aware that I had met the sales goal, or why all three books were on the shelf, but that moment was one that I have dreamed about ever since I first put my pen to the page. To walk into a major book store and see my work right there next to all of the other writers that I admire so much. It was truly a surreal moment but once I regulated my breathing, I realized that it was a message from God. Be patient, hold on and remember that I am working everything out for you. I could not be more humbled by this moment and I am supremely motivated to keep pressing toward my goal. Everything that I dreamed about will come to pass and when it does, I'll make sure that I'm ready. God is so good and I am so thankful for that moment! Keep striving, keep believing and keep pressing toward your goal. Someday it will all make sense!

## Growing Pains

Every so often I feel like I go through this time of extreme change and growth. Every time I get comfortable in my life, everything is flowing along fine, I don't really need much, God will literally step in and shake my entire world up. Recently all of my crutches were snatched from underneath me. Its not until the crutch is gone that you truly realize that it is a crutch, but suddenly, all of the people I spent most of my time with were scattered, the relationships that I depended on were suddenly placed out of my reach and before I could stand there with my hands in the air, asking what the heck happened, I felt a soft tap on my shoulder and a voice whisper, 'Hi B, remember me?'

There is always more I can do to improve on my relationship with God. I can never pray enough, read enough, study enough, there is no way I can learn everything there is to know about God, He will always find a way to surprise me. I love that about Him. Yet, there are times, when I forget that. When I get comfortable singing on the praise team, thinking that's enough, or doing my morning devotional, but making sure I have enough time to check my email or facebook and throwing a quick moment in to pray instead of really getting on my face. I am slowly realizing that God wants all of me. ALL of me. All of my time, my thoughts, my hopes, my passion, everything. So when I am not in a place where I am giving Him everything, He will put me in a place where I have no choice but to focus in and actually listen to His instructions.

It's interesting because during this time I find that I am at my most vulnerable. I find myself in desperate need of a hug, fighting tears, super sensitive because I am searching for something and I can often only shake that feeling by praying and honestly giving everything over to God. I find myself getting frustrated with "religion" and find myself blocking out all of the rules, all of the protocol, especially when I go to church and find myself simply searching for Jesus, desperate to get everything I can from him.

Growing up and maturing can hurt sometimes. Coming to face to face with things in your life that need to change, hurts, but ultimately it's for our own good. With all of my people now scattered off and branching off into their new lives, I realize that now this time to grow and stretch is a blessing. There are so many ideas spinning around inside of me that I have not taken the time to pay attention to and cultivate. This time of solitude is for a purpose. I can't write a book with 50 million things to do because I won't be able to get into the zone and really spend time with the characters. My morning Bible studies for the last few weeks have been fantastic because my mind has been clear and I have perfect quiet and peace to really hear the

instructions God is giving me.

I guess for the first time I can say that I'm not afraid of growing up. A lot of character flaws that God wants to mold out of me and finally, for once, I am quiet, in my secret place listening. I know that the relationships that bear fruit will continue to prosper and grow. I no longer mourn the relationships that had to end because now I have more room for more fruit. Yes, there will be some tears, and yes it will hurt sometimes, but I have to keep my eyes focused on the lessons and who I will become as I am tried in the fire.

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## LakeshaWomack

Topics: Lifestyle, Relationships, Business, Entrepreneurship

Graduated from Vanderbilt in '99 with a degree in Political Science. Since then, she has attained management, consulting and training experience in a variety of fields including real estate, publishing, retail, financial services and local politics. Some people consider her a busy body because I am involved in a bit of everything.

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## [5 Tips to Live Young and Fabulous](#)

Many people think that living young and fabulous is directly related to your age, having lots of money and doing lots of things. I am here to set the record straight. Living a young and fabulous life is all about your mindset. It is about the freedom that you feel when you are not bound to the expectations of others or any that are self imposed. I am going to share my five tips to achieve a young and fabulous life.

1. **Be your own guide.** Don't look to others for a road map to living your life. I heard a woman say the other day that she felt that she was too old to wear patterned tights with tall boots. At what age should you be too old for patterned tights unless they are fishnet or mesh? Last Sunday, I saw a lady in her 80s with a skirt suit, stockings and short boots. She looked fabulous and didn't care what anyone else thought. Although the first lady was younger in age, the older lady was living young and fabulous because she wasn't concerned with the opinions of others and rocked her outfit.
2. **Realize that it isn't about you.** I think we have covered this in one of the [success secrets](#), but as soon as you stop thinking the world revolves around you and that everyone is out to get you, the better your life will be. Sometimes I think I take this tip a little too far because I don't ever assume that other people's actions have anything to do with me. If they do, it's not my problem. I don't have haters because people who may be working against me aren't even on my radar. I focus on doing what I need to do to be my best self.
3. **Give back.** We have all heard the old adage that it is better to give than to receive. When you find yourself being a blessing in the lives of others, you will start to receive blessings. So many times we do things looking for a reward or a payment. Have you ever lost something and couldn't find it but as soon as you stopped looking, you found it. The same is true with blessings. When you are looking for them, you can't see them but as soon as you stop focusing on them, good things start to happen. Not because the fairy dust waits for you to turn your head to anoint you but because when you set an expectation for a blessing you have an idea of what it should or should not look like. When you stop expecting, it is able to take on any shape in your life and you will be grateful for existence.
4. **Look the part.** I hope you all read my blog, [I don't look like what I've been through](#). It is somewhat of a testimony but it essentially says that you don't have to wear your troubles for all the world to see. Being young and fabulous is about focusing more on the 80% of things in life that you have rather than complaining about the 20% that you don't. If you take a serious inventory of your life, you have much more than you lack. I remind people to take a look at the victims of Haiti and even some people still struggling after Hurricane Katrina. Even on your worst day, you are still more blessed and have lost much less than some of these people.
5. **As you think it, you will become it.** Our thoughts manifest into our reality. If you think positive things will happen in your life, they will. Not because you have these magical abilities but because you start to see the goodness in your situation. Every situation that you find yourself in can be viewed positively or negatively. It is up to you to decide what you will take away from it.

Living young and fabulous isn't about material gain but spiritual fulfillment. When you focus your life on THINGS, you will never find happiness because you will never have enough. However, when you focus is on being a good person and having a joyful spirit, I can't even begin to describe how things will change in your life.

## Christina Rice



*Christina Rice, CEO, LuxeLife Media Inc.*

I knew this lady when she was a Jazzy Belle and now she is living the LuxeLife. I always heard the term “Publicist” but wasn’t really sure what they do except for book engagements and send out press releases. Following her tweets has helped me to see all of the behind scenes work that it required to make an event, personality or product get the attention that it deserves.

I wish I could say that I am surprised to see her doing such big things but every since I met Christina Rice I knew she was going to do big things. She is not one of those people that wants to settle for doing things the way everyone else is doing them. She is always looking for a way to take it to the next level. However, the key to this drive is that she is also willing to put in the work behind it.

If you follow her tweets, you would think that her life was surreal but she works hard and plays even harder. Show some love for a longtime friend. She has the master VIP list and you would be lucky to get on it...

- Follow Christina on [Twitter](#) to see what a real party is all about. Her SuperBowl week tweets almost made me want to head to Miami but to top it all off... she was jetsetting to Paris the very next week.
  - Christina is the CEO of [LuxeLife Media Inc.](#) The website is under construction but the construction page is so hot that you know something good is coming. She is not the type of person to settle for second best in anything so I wish her site developers the best of luck
  - Find Christina on [FaceBook](#)... although this sassy diva is all about business, you will also get to know how down to earth, funny and friendly the lady behind the success is
- Thanks for taking some time to show some love for my friend and a Jazzy Belle, Christina Rice.

## The time value of life...

I often wonder at what point our society lost its value of time. It seems that we have found a way to place a value on every material possession, on people and even on our pets, yet we don't seem to understand the value of time. Many business classes teach about the time value of money, how to value the costs of business opportunities yet these theories are not often applied to our everyday lives.

I love to tell this story because it signifies an epiphany in my life. A friend once asked me to do something and I simply responded, "I don't have time." He quickly corrected me and said, "It's not that you don't have time, it's just not that important to you." This statement stopped me dead in my tracks because I realized that he was right. I had become so comfortable saying that I didn't have time for certain things because it was easier than saying that it wasn't important to me.

I spent some time reflecting on this realization and how I spent my time. I began to understand that time is a more valuable commodity than money and especially more than material possessions. It seems that somewhere in our society we lost the ability to value our time and began to spend it frivolously. We waste it like leftovers in a refrigerator pushed to the back for weeks. We constantly put off for tomorrow what can be done today which leads to regret. We have friends that we promise to call when we get a chance or family members that we should visit but think they can wait until the next holiday. We see our children growing before our eyes but think there will be plenty of time to recapture moments lost.

The value of our time, unlike most things in our life, is invaluable. Although we allow employers and contractors to place value on hours in our day, there is much more time that has no value. I work with many of clients on creating and having successful businesses. What I often find is that their discontentment is not rooted in their ability to achieve professional success but their misalignment of their personal lives. So many of us spend our hours trying to fulfill the dreams and passions that are grounded in the expectation that others have for our lives rather than gaining a true understanding of how we should live to achieve personal satisfaction.

How do you reach this satisfaction? I have a simple three-step process:

Make a list of your priorities. Think for a moment, if you could focus all of your time doing one thing, what would it be? If you could add one more thing...then add one more thing...and continue until you have about five items on your list.

Schedule your time. Looking at your priorities begin to reevaluate your daily and weekly schedule to see if you are spending your time according to your priorities. Do you say God is your number priority but you don't make time for church or bible study? Do you value time with your family but can't find time to sit down for dinner each night?

Live your priorities. Time, unlike money and material possessions, cannot be replaced. Most of us will be able to make more money, we will be able to buy new stuff but we once a loved one has passed away; we won't be able to say I love you to their smiling face. Once they are gone; we won't smell grandma's sweet potato pie and we won't have martinis with our best girlfriend.

By understanding and living your priorities, you may sacrifice some of the money or the material possessions but your biggest sacrifice will be a life filled with regret.

## Ten Wardrobe Essentials for Women



Money is tight right now but I have spoken with a lot of young, professional women who are trying to build their career wardrobe but can't afford to "just put it in the bag." As a professional and former retail manager, I am going to share my top ten items that every woman should have in her closet. The #1 thing that you need to be mindful of is not becoming a slave to labels. The designer is not nearly as important as the fit.

1. **A business suit that makes you feel like a million dollars.** It should be a dark color and can be a skirt/jacket or pant/jacket combination depending on what feels most comfortable. This is going to be a staple of your wardrobe so you should plan to spend a little more on it than some of your other suits. If necessary, spend the extra money to have tailored so that it fits perfectly.
2. **A solid color skirt that goes with everything.** I have a flowy black skirt that I pair with tee shirts and flats but it also looks perfect with a nice top and heels. It is one of my go to pieces when I travel because it is so versatile. Make sure this skirt is ideal for your body type (i.e. pencil, a-line, biased).
3. **A pair of well-fitting dress pants.** These will be very similar to the skirt mentioned in #2. You need to decide if you will wear them primarily with heels or flats or if you want to invest in two pairs. It is important to make this consideration because you want them to fall perfectly with your shoes. There is nothing more tragic than seeing a woman whose pants are too short or too long 😞
4. **A little black dress.** We all hear about this dress and she is worthy of the rumors. You need her because she can be dressed up for an evening dinner or dressed down for Sunday brunch. This number should be so versatile until the accessories create her identity. I have a black sheath that I pair with a belt and pearls for church, a dinner jacket and cocktail ring for a banquet and even a shawl and leopard flats for a dinner meeting.
5. **Comfortable underwear.** I know we all want to feel sexy but sometimes sexy is not comfortable. You need to make sure you have a stock of underwear that will get you through the day without feeling like murdering anyone or without your boob falling out. Panty lines can be a distraction for some men so consider underwear that are designed to not create a line if you don't feel comfortable in thongs.

6. **Dark colored heels that are at least 1 1/2 inches high.** I know some women hate wearing heels but they are somewhat of a necessary evil. A nice comfortable pair of heels will help to elongate your body, improve your posture and give you a sense of confidence like nothing else in the world. Some women prefer higher heels, which I think is great, as long as you can walk in them. Second to ill-fitting pants is seeing a woman unable to make it to the door because her heels are too high. It isn't that serious. Always think comfort over looks because if you feel good, you will look good.
7. **Basic tees in black, white and your favorite color.** I buy new staple tees in these colors every season. Long sleeves for fall and winter and short sleeves for spring and summer. I do so because the necklines (vneck, crew, etc) change and I like for the color to look fresh. These tees are great with your business suit (in a business casual environment) and will look great with your other staples. Refer back to #5 and make sure your bra works well under the tees. Bad bra + cute tee = disaster!
8. **The perfect jeans.** I am not ashamed to admit that I have no problem spending upwards of \$100 on a pair of jeans. Crazy you may think but the perfect jeans will make your booty look so delicious they will be worth the splurge. Jeans can go from day to night, be dressed up or down, travel with you and even see more girls' nights out than any other piece in your wardrobe. I have a pair that has earned the money I spent through the free drinks they have earned.
9. **Comfortable flats.** I have reached the age where I think comfort first when getting dressed in the morning. I recently invested in a cute pair of leopard Sam & Libby flats. They make me smile on those days when I look at heels and just shake my head no. They are also great for those days that require a lot of walking. Being in business around a lot of men required that I keep up. Some days a pair of heels just won't do but I refuse to sacrifice being cute (lol).
10. **A fun jacket/blazer.** I have invested in several lately but recommend you find one that will work with the bottoms described above as well as your tees. This jacket can be trendy, casual, and dressy or whatever will work for your work environment. Paired with different bottoms, shoes and accessories; you can change its look a million times.  
I hope this helps you build a professional yet personal and practical wardrobe without breaking the bank. Next week, I will provide "Wardrobe Essentials for Men."

## Wardrobe Essentials for Men

Planning a wardrobe for men is a little different than for women. Some men have a thing, or should I say don't have a thing about wearing the same outfit repetitively. Other men are what we call modern-day metrosexuals. They put almost as much time and effort into their hygiene and grooming as women. I am not here to pass judgement so I am going to present some tips that will help the man in the middle – the guys who wants to look professional without going over board.

1. **A solid, dark color business suit** that has been tailored for your body. You want to be sure the jacket and pants are a perfect fit because this piece will be staple in your closet. You should choose a dark gray, navy or black suit as your base and venture out from this point. Depending on your working environment, you should stay away from “interesting” colored suits. *Please don't make me define “interesting”.*



2. **One dress shirt for each business day** of the week (4 if your office observes casual Friday, 5 if not). Have a tailor or department store salesperson measure you to ensure the correct fit. To take your look up a notch, purchase at least one shirt with french cuffs. You can consider this your power shirt and pair it with cuff links on those big days that require an extra boost of confidence.
3. **Five ties.** The key to having five dress shirts and five ties is being able to mix and match to create different color combinations which will multiply the number of looks in your wardrobe. Men are fortunate because people will rarely notice if you have on the same suit because you can spice it up with a nice shirt/tie combo. To successfully pull off this plan, don't go out into left field and purchase pieces that will draw too much attention because you won't be able to recycle them as often. I don't want you to be the guy who everyone knows is wearing the same shirts every week.
4. Nice **dress shoes** with hard bottoms. I am sure the shoes with the soft bottoms are very comfortable but there is something special about a man in a nice pair of lace up or pull on dress shoes. You should choose black or brown based on the dominate color of suits in your closet. The goal will be to have a black and brown pair but the color that you will

wear most.

5. **Good fitting jeans without any design.** Of course the designs are great for hanging with your boys but casual Friday isn't really supposed to be that casual nor is a night out with your boss. You want to show off your personal style but always opt for classy over stylish.
6. **A pair of dress slacks.** Ideally, these will not be in the same color as your suit but should complement your shirt/tie collection. There are just some days that you don't want or need to wear a jacket to the office. Make sure these pants are the right length and offer a nice break against your shoes. I don't want you looking like you are wearing your daddy's pants or your son's. That is a major turn off in business and professional relationships. It shows a lack of attention to detail.
7. A couple of **polo shirts.** Over the years, you have probably amassed a nice collection of tee shirts. Now is the time to kiss those shirts and politely inform them that they may never see the light of day. Purchase a white and black polo and then one or two in your favorite colors. Paired with your jeans or slacks this is a professional yet classy look that can take you from work to the sports bar to the night club while not missing a beat.
8. **A reversible belt.** It should be brown on one side and black on the other. How do you decide which side, look down at your shoes and go from there. If you are reading this post, you should be past the stage of saggin (*please be past the stage of saggin*). There aren't many words to describe why you need a belt except pants below your waist is not cute at this stage of the game.
9. A pair of **comfortable dress shoes.** Now you can go and buy the soft bottom shoes. I know there are days that require all your energy to just get out of bed and head to work. We all have those days. You may also have days that require a lot of walking. To look stylish you have to feel stylish. Comfortable shoes are a major contributor. Just make sure you do the grandfather test. If they look like a pair of shoes your grandfather would wear, keep looking (*there are very few exceptions to this test*).
10. A two week (minimum) **supply of basics.** This includes socks, underwear and tee shirts. You should not rely on your family members for your stock of basics. At least twice per year, you should stock up on fresh undies. We will not even go into how important this is on so many levels.

11. **A nice blazer.** Wearing your suit jacket with jeans is unacceptable. It doesn't look stylish. It looks like you have on your suit jacket with jeans. Find a blazer that isn't over the top but shows a little personality. It should work with your dress slacks and jeans to create a business casual look.
  
12. Round out your collection with **a couple of sweaters.** Argyle sweaters and sweater vests are really hot right now. They look great with your suit, a dress shirt and tie as well as with slacks/jeans and a dress shirt – you can add a tie and/or the blazer depending on where you are going. When choosing your sweaters, pay attention to the colors and make sure they will work with the rest of your wardrobe.

I hope this post will be helpful in helping you create a professional wardrobe. Remember: you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

## Reputation = Pass... Integrity = Fail

I didn't get involved in the whole Tiger Woods thing because I didn't consider it any of my business. I don't put celebrities/athletes on a pedestal because they are human and make mistakes. I don't want to contribute to the elevation of their status as role models because they are destined to struggle, stumble and fail just like each of us.

However, while attending a conference last month, a minister brought up a great point that applied to the Tiger Woods situation as well as to many of our lives. He surmised that if we were to grade Tiger on his Reputation he would receive an A+. In the eyes of his sponsors, endorsers, competitors and fans, he was doing all of the right things. He played beautiful rounds of golf. He smiled handsomely for the camera. He had a beautiful family and never said or did anything to cause us to question his character.

His Integrity, on the hand, would have failed in our school of life. You see your integrity is based on your honor, honesty and ability to be truthful. Tiger's problem is much like ours. We have become so good at looking the part and acting the part for others but when we come home and take off our masks, we are also failing Integrity. We often lie to get what we want, some are cheating on our mates while others committing acts that I dare not describe.



I would be remiss to let any of you think that I am an honor student in life but Integrity is one class that I desperately plan to pass. Your integrity should not be judged in the eyes of man because it is no one else's business. Your integrity is what should help you sleep well at night, be able to look others squarely in eyes when you speak and to walk with your head held high. If you ever find that your grades in Reputation and Integrity are disproportionate; get a tutor because if you fail in life, you are not guaranteed to be able to retake the class.

## The failure of trickle down economics

It amazes me how many people are content to blame our current economic failures on those who have no ability to directly affect such. They claim that we are in such a situation because of the collapse of the housing market which is attributed to low and middle income citizens purchasing houses that they could not afford. However, I argue that the problem began long before the sub prime housing market was even created, in fact it created the sub prime market for housing and other luxury goods that Americans could not afford and purchased on credit.

Our economy was headed for a down slide when we began to embrace the theory of trickle down economics. For all of you non-economists Wikipedia provides the following explanation:

“Trickle-down economics” is a term of political rhetoric that refers to the policy of providing tax cuts or other benefits to businesses in the belief that this will indirectly benefit the broad population. Proponents of these policies claim that if the top income earners invest more into the business infrastructure and equity markets, it will in turn lead to more goods at lower prices, and create more jobs for middle and lower class individuals. Proponents argue economic growth flows down from the top to the bottom, indirectly benefiting those who do not directly benefit from the policy changes. Today “trickle-down economics” is most closely identified with the economic policies known as Reaganomics or supply-side economics. Originally, there was a great deal of support for tax *reform*; there was a dual problem that loopholes and tax shelters create a bureaucracy (private sector and public sector) and that relevant taxes are thus evaded. A major feature of these policies was the reduction of tax rates on capital gains, corporate income, and higher individual incomes, along with the reduction or elimination of various excise taxes.

Based on this definition alone, you see how the majority of our society stood to benefit in theory but not in reality from this policy. One of the hardest lessons that I have had to learn in life is that people operate in their own self interest and business people are not immune from this.

Trickle down economics implies that we should give tax breaks and tax cuts to the wealthiest members of our society in hopes that they will pass along the savings through their business ventures which will make stuff cheaper and allow them to hire more workers. I don't know about you but something just doesn't seem quite right about this.

In my opinion, and I think the state of our economy in the past few years will support this, as the wealthy received these breaks and cuts, they did not pass them along. Instead they used the money to create a greater divide between the haves and have nots. They created a luxury market

that then used their profits to market and advertise their products/services to entice the rest of America to use credit and try to attain such affluence. They also hired more workers in positions with that could not be supported for the long term. As we've seen in the past year, many of these positions were the first to be cut from major corporations when those profits began to dwindle.

These savvy business people were put in charge of using those funds to plan for the future of our economy and they were supposed to act as visionaries however they did what most of us would do; live in the present and enjoy the spoils. The rest of us were lead to believe that we were sharing in this wealth creation, however, our wealth was artificial or based on credit. Most people failed to understand that credit is not the equivalent of wealth because it is a debt.

This artificial wealth lead people to buy houses, cars and other items that they could not truly afford to keep up with the Jones. The Jones, contrary to popular opinion, are not your neighbors who are also heavily leveraged but the ones you see effortlessly spending money using their American Express instead of Visa or MasterCard. They were the ones with a savings account and retirement account versus just having a checking account that barely covers your expenses.

Although we may bemoan our current economic condition, it is the result of trickle down economics failure in our society. The position we are in is the result of the artificial wealth that this system created. I believe everyone should take personal accountability for their situation but we also must realize that there are economic policies at work behind the scenes that impact our perception of money and spending.

## Women, we were set up...

I told one of my girl friends the other day that I thought women were set up. I am sure you are probably just as curious as she was to find out what I am talking about. As I explained my theory, it really made sense to her.



Living happily ever after

As little girls, we watched these fairy tales that told us Prince Charming was on his way, on his white horse to rescue us from the drudgery of real life, to whisk us off to a palace and to live happily ever after. Some of you may not have fallen for that but there are others still waiting for the dream to be realized. Even if it wasn't manifested as a result of a fairy tale, some of you did envision having a perfect body; a wonderful husband; cute and obedient children; an immaculate house; a luxury car; a successful career; involvement in a few social organizations and I am sure the list continues with responsibilities to your friends, family members and possibly co-workers.

Are you starting to see the set up? How is it possible for any of us to attain all of that? If you have checked off even half of those items on your list, you should consider yourself blessed because most of us are struggling to nail down two or three. Part of my young and fabulous lifestyle is realizing that some of those things on that list are expectations that society has for me but they are not that important to me.

As I approached my 30's, I didn't see any knights in shining armour rushing my way so I decided to make some tough decisions about how I would take charge of my life and move forward. That is not to say, that I don't still have the fantasy in my head but my reality is that I would rather be great at a few things, like being a mother and having a successful career, than stressing myself out trying to be everything to everyone and chasing the cheese.

This really should be a success secret but I am going to go ahead and spill it. Having it all doesn't mean having everything on that list. It means figuring out what is important to you,

what are your priorities, and going for it. If you will notice, the happiest people that you know don't have all of those things but they have a few and choose to focus on what is good in their life instead of searching for what may be missing.

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

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## The lost art of dating

I envy people from past generations that enjoyed going out on dates. It seems that dating has become a lost art. The whole courting process seems so romantic yet in our society it seems like the process has become rushed.



I may be idealizing the process but compared to what is available today, I think I would have liked it. I imagine meeting a guy, him coming up to me and introducing himself to me by saying something like, "Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. What is your name?" I can really do without the "Hey, shawty! What yo name is?"

I then imagine us having a brief conversation about something intellectual rather than him visually checking me out from head to toe. Once we establish that there is a basis for further communication, we would make plans to enjoy a meal together and possibly some activity like bowling or a movie. At the end of this event, there would be no sex, no kissing and no trying to get me back to his place. It seems like guys think because we have one conversation and we don't argue or kill each other, then we are a match – not necessarily made in heaven but suitable for the evening. Thanks, but no thanks!

I envision this dating process happening over the course of some months before we begin a discussion about taking it to the next level. This next level could involve any number of things but the point is for us to be able to enjoy the process of getting to know one another before we go there.

My minister asked a question in bible study that involved a circumstance where the husband

and wife disagreed on something very fundamental and what they should do it. The hypothetical disagreement reminded me of the importance of dating. It seems that some guys view dating as a woman trying to spend all his money while some women see it as an opportunity to try out all of the new restaurants. I think dating is a chance for two people who are interested in each other to learn more about each other and establish a foundation for their future.

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

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## Building a woman's jewelry collection

Building a jewelry collection is much like building your clothing wardrobe. We all have those key pieces that we wear season after season and of course, there are those trendy pieces that after one season you wonder why you even bothered. Costume jewelry is much like those trendy pieces – meant to accentuate your staple pieces. Depending on your budget, you can spend a lot or a little on trendy jewelry but those staples that you will wear year after year is where you should spend the bulk of your money. When shopping for jewelry it can become overwhelming especially if you have champagne taste with a diet coke budget or if you are hard to please (like me).

The first thing you should consider is **your style**. Some people can't live without diamonds while others prefer colorful gem stones. In order to spend wisely, you should take some time browsing jewelry websites and visiting jewelry stores to figure out what you like and what will work with your wardrobe. If you are a mom with small children, you probably don't want to invest in many earrings that dangle because little eyes and fingers seem compelled to reach out and grab shiny dangly things.

The next thing you have to consider is **your budget**. Regardless of how much money you have to spend, you should invest in the highest quality pieces that your budget allows. It may take some time to build up your collection but as you find pieces that fit your personality and that you love, you will be glad that you invested the time and money.

I have spent years looking for the perfect watch. I have an idea in my head of what it looks like but I have yet to see it – or at least one that fits my budget. There are plenty of watches for you to choose from and it's okay to have several but you should invest in one timepiece that can be worn day or night, dressed up or down and when you look at it, you feel a sense of pride knowing that you've made a wise investment. Hopefully, it won't take you three years to find it. A good watch is not only used to tell time but it says a lot about your personality. You would be surprised how often people make judgments of others based on the look and quality of their watch.

In our society, the majority of women have pierced ears and some women have multiple piercings. I have two piercings and invested in two sets of diamond studs because I believe 'diamonds are a girl's best friend.' They have screw backs so I don't have to worry about losing them and I only take them off to clean them. I have a four year old son whose little fingers can't resist touching them but I don't have to worry about the pain of them being yanked from my

ears. Some people prefer the classic look of pearls while others change their earrings everyday to match their outfits. No matter where you fit on that spectrum, you should invest in one pair of earrings that will be a signature of your personal style.

There are millions of rings to choose from and they are probably the most reflective of your personal style because they are one of the first pieces that people will notice when they see you. Aside from a bridal set, the finger placement as well as size and style of a ring can indicate your relationship status as well as whether you are trendy or conservative. A few years ago, women started wearing 'right hand rings' as a symbol of their independence. The theory was that a woman should not have to wait until she got engaged to wear an expensive finger piece. Another popular ring is the cocktail ring. Generally, a cocktail ring features a large, colorful gemstone and can be worn on any finger. Traditionally, this ring was reserved for evenings but women are now wearing them during the day. Whatever style you choose – and you may have many – it should be a reflection of who you are.

Finally, necklaces and bracelets should round out your collection. I list them last because it is easiest to find costume necklaces and bracelets yet more difficult and expensive to find quality pieces. Necklaces, especially when worn with a pendant, will also make a significant statement about your personality. There are many styles to choose from – crosses for religious purposes, birthstones to alert people what month you expect a gift, or your initial to help people remember your name. When investing in a quality piece, you must consider what types of tops you wear most often. For instance, if you prefer wearing collared shirts then a short necklace without a pendant will be more fitting while ladies wearing more v neck tops should opt for a longer necklace or one with a unique pendant to enhance their neckline. Since variety is the spice of life, consider investing in a unique chain and build up a collection of pendants.

## [I don't look like what I've been through...](#)

In the third chapter of the book of Daniel, a story is told of three men who refused to worship their king (notice the lowercase of the word "king") and the golden idol that he created because they recognized God as being their true King. They proudly told the king that they did not fear his punishment because they knew their God would deliver them from this circumstance. Because of their stance, their punishment was to be tied up and thrown into a furnace heated seven times more than it would have normally been heated. While in the furnace, the king was told that there were four (notice four, not three) men walking around, inside the blazing furnace, unbound. Upon seeing this, the king called the three (back to three) men to exit the furnace. As the king and his officials gathered around the men, they noticed that the men had been untouched by the blazing furnace, except for the straps that bound them.

I hope you all can see where this is going. Many people look at me and my life and think that I have a great life. I do, but only because of my faith in a God whose grace and mercy ensure I don't look like what I've been through. Some days I feel like I have been through hell and back because of the demands of my clients, the attitudes of random people I encounter and even dealing with my own self-talk. It is at these times, that I have to remember that God walks with me and talks with me when I put my faith in Him. A lot of us look like the hell we are going through because we have little faith. We only want to praise God during the good times and wonder why He forsakes us when things go wrong. God allows us to suffer to test our faith. He wants to know if you truly believe or if you are just a Convenient Christian.

We are bound to a world of sin and misery yet freedom can be ours if we place our faith in God and take comfort knowing that He is with us during our good times and bad. You will never be placed in a situation that won't make you stronger, if you (this is important) decide to walk in the light. It is so easy to get caught up in all of the things that go wrong because let's face it, life is rough. However, walking in the light, finding the good in every situation requires that we change our lens and retune our focus.



I don't look like what I've been through. I still walk around in the furnace (everyday life) but I know that God is going to deliver me from whatever is thrown my way. I

don't feel the scorch of everyday life because I am covered by grace and mercy. Ask yourself today... do you look like what you've been through? Can people look at you and tell you can't afford to pay your bills? Can they see the lust in your eyes for someone that will never be yours? Can they sense the bitterness toward the world in the venom you spew with every word? If so, you might want to examine whether God is in your furnace or if you are allowing yourself to be scorched for no reason. God doesn't want any of His children to suffer but He will allow things to get a little heated in order to strengthen our faith. Do you look like what you've been through?

*Special thanks to Rev. Dwight Guthridge for bringing this passage and perspective to my attending during a worship service in Dallas TX.*

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

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## **Blank.Bare.Clean**

*Topics: Art, Design, Music & Culture*

...is an aspiring art administrator and has a huge affinity for all things creative, thought-provoking, and innovative. She received a B.S. in International Business Administration, cum laude from Fisk University and concluded an internship in London, UK to pursue her career and education in Arts Administration. She is seeking an MBA/MA in Arts Admin in Fall 2010.

**THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK**

Think.  
Discuss.  
Engage

Young Writers' Block, E-Publication, April 2010

[Itaysha Jordan | Captures the Rapture between Art+Fashion](#)



WRITERSBLOCK

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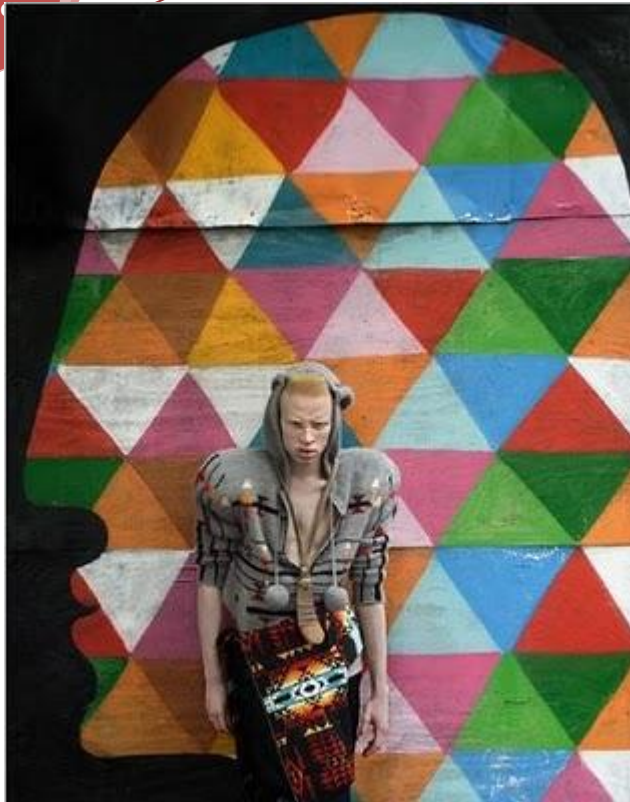


THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

[Itaysha Jordan](#) is a fashion photography extraordinaire. I love the way she boldly challenges the sensibilities of the fashion world. Even though fashion thrives on being ahead of the curve, Jordan's work swiftly reminds them of how far they have to reach. Though Jordan's photography covers beauty, fashion, and editorial, I chose to display her works that strikes me as fine art.

[Itaysha Jordan](#) remains to be a force to be reckoned with in the fashion/beauty world. I look forward to every round of film she dares to capture in the face of the fashion world's pigeon-held standard of beauty. You may have unknowingly encountered Jordan's work for the likes of Carol's Daughter, DJ Rashida, Trace Mag, Atlantic Records and many more.

Think.  
Discuss.  
Engage.



Follow Itaysha Jordan's Movement via:

[Website](#)

[Twitter](#)

[ModelMayhem](#)

[Images courtesy of ItayshaJordan.com](#)

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

Think.  
Discuss.  
Engage

Young Writers' Block, E-Publication, April 2010

[Ruud van Empel | Wonder as You Wander](#)



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[Artwork courtesy of Ruud van Empel](#)

Dutch photographer, [Ruud Van Empel](#) ...What this photographer does with photoshop and collage techniques is leaving the art world awe-struck.

Many of Van Empel's most notable photography series' have subjects of African descent. -No matter how you slice it, there is something very other-wordly about these particular series that are undeniably luminescent and magical.

Ever seeking to reunite with that spirit of wonder and innocent curiosity?... Rud Van Empel's photography will propel you into a wandering spree of creativity.

Check out more from Ruud Van Empel [here!](#)

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

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[Susan Justice | Freedom w/in + Freedom w/out](#)



[Image courtesy of GQ Lewis Photography](#)

“I write about my struggle for truth and freedom, not freedom in a grandiose, global sense, but the internal freedom to be myself. -Susan Justice

[Video courtesy of SusanJustice @Myspace](#)



[Susan Justice](#), formerly known as Susan Cagle,

rose to fame via a requested performance on Oprah. Her impromptu NYC subway jams became legendary street art and soon catapulted her notoriety into the music world.

Even through a tumultuous period in the industry thereafter, she remains true to her “heART.” -

Gotta respect that. Her self-recorded 2003 release, "[The Subway Recordings](#)" yet remains to be a gem. -Dare I say, she was the industry's litmus test for the "present-day, black indie chick w/ an instrument" motif? (Yep- went there.) [Inset image courtesy of Amazon](#)

I'm hearing she is in the lab doing what the scientists do. – It does a music lover's heart good to know that there are artists who take their time to ensure their art remains organic and true. The freedom that Justice seeks within definitely shines without... Among other things, I'd call it grandiose. 😊

Check out one of her back in the day NYC subway blowouts...

[Video courtesy of SusanCagleFan Channel @Youtube](#)

Experience the Susan Justice movement via:

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Myspace](#)

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## Ladyactivist (Editor)

*Topics: Reflections*

...is a freelance writer and blogger. The quote that best represents her is from Fahrenheit 451. "I'm antisocial, they say. I don't mix. It's so strange. I'm very social indeed. It all depends on what you mean by social, doesn't it? Social to me means talking to you about things like this...Or talking about how strange the world is."

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

## Code-switching: Professional & Mature or Denial of Identity?

### I beg your pardon?

**Standard English**

I'm going into town today

**Geordie**

I'm ganen doon the toon the day

**Yorkshire**

Ah'm nicely off out t'taan

**South London**

Am gahn dahn tahn todiey

**Glasgow**

Am gun uptoon todee

**Afro-Bristolian**

Ahs goin ter bristle today!

**Serbo-Bradfordian**

I go ter towen terdaay

"i kno u not comin at meh! u shud kno better den dat"

"ain tryna splurge on no real \*\*\*\* so it is wat it is...dey say da cheap \*\*\*\* getchu rt"

"The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me..."

"Yo' ole father doan' know yit what he's a-gwyne to do. Sometimes he spec he'll go 'way, en den agin he spec he'll stay..."

There is a difference of 125 years between the statements offered above. The first group of examples is from users on the social networking site: Twitter. The second is from the characters Huckleberry Finn and Jim in Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn. Published in 1885, this dialect was used to add authenticity to the story. During the time when its use was prevalent there were not many opportunities for black people to educate themselves. Each dialect was also used as a method of geographic identification. As the saying goes, "You can tell by the way I talk I'm not from 'round here." In the story, however, mostly everyone spoke in a form of broken English because, regardless of race, education was out of reach. In contemporary society this is not the case, as education is more widely available. This begs the question: Why do so many people who have had the benefit of education still choose to speak in this manner?

Whether in a professional or casual setting people are judged based on how they communicate with others. Occasional slips into colloquialisms are, generally, acceptable. Repeated use, however, is seen as an indication of lack of a developed vocabulary. In a professional setting an underdeveloped vocabulary can be detrimental to future success. As we move into an increasingly digital age where everything we say can be stored and indexed, regardless of the

medium used to deliver the message, the necessity for professional branding is evident, but people don't like to be critiqued based on what they say in nonprofessional settings. They often feel misjudged by someone who does not know them, their character, or their potential for intellectual, professional discourse. Who is to blame, though? Is it the fault of the person judged for misrepresenting themselves? Or, is it the fault of the other person for passing judgment based on snippets of conversation?

When former President George W. Bush, Jr. left office upon the election of Barack Obama many exclaimed in relief for multiple reasons, one being that we would have a well-spoken head of state representing the United States. It is no secret that "Dubya", as he was dubbed, was infamous for his many linguistic missteps.

**"One of the very difficult parts of the decision I made on the financial crisis was to use hardworking people's money to help prevent there to be a crisis." –George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., Jan. 12, 2009**

**"Amigo! Amigo!" –George W. Bush, calling out to Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in Spanish at the G-8 Summit, Rusutsu, Japan, July 10, 2008**

**"We got plenty of money in Washington. What we need is more priority." –George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., June 2, 2008**

**"The United States and Russia are in the midst of transformationed relationship that will yield peace and progress." -George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., Nov, 13, 2001**

The fact is that he was judged for not meeting the professional expectations of his position. When he was a senator running for office, President Barack Obama was branded an articulate and eloquent speaker, which became a benefit and a detriment concurrently. The following video is from an episode of The Game, which highlights the difficulty of holding a dual identity in the professional realm. The relevant portion ends at 1:50.

[The Game – The Truth Hurts Part I](#)

He's not white enough for White people and not black enough for Black people. Barack Obama represents the dilemma many people face in regards to assimilation, multilingualism, and race representation. He may be part Caucasian but his skin color reflects a need to represent his

varied racial heritage. In every community there are people who choose not to speak proper English because to suggest that there is a "proper" form of English is to rob each culture of the individual idiosyncrasies of their dialect that make Americans unique. Why should we all speak the same? Can't we just talk the way we want? No. Unfortunately, we cannot. If you have ever worked in a customer service environment and tried to help someone who does not speak the same language as you, you know how difficult it is to communicate in such a situation. We don't have to speak in exactly the same fashion, but we can agree on what will make everyone come across as the intelligent, capable person they know themselves to be in order to avoid the negative character judgments that are often made too quickly.

Have you ever walked up to a cashier and judged them as incompetent based on one interaction with them, lacking knowledge of their entire portfolio of competency? Is this not the same thing? In social networking especially, we are judged in a vacuum where we have a few moments to leave a lasting impression. Do you really want the last thing a person remembers you by to be, "iFeel ya on dat . iAm tryin tew Get ready fuh dhs...?" I doubt it.

For more Bushisms see:

<http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/blbushisms.htm>

<http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/blbushisms2001.htm>

## [Actually, Teens are on Twitter](#)

They're just not following you; and, you're not following them.

There is a lesson to be learned by paying close attention to Twitter users – all of them. We can learn from the power users, the not-so-power users, the celebrities, the teens, the spammers, and, even the ones who just don't get it. We can learn how to be social, how to network, and how NOT to think of Twitter as just a tool.

I spend quite a bit of time on Twitter, the social networking site that has recently been touted as devoid of teenagers and home to professionals who share boring, nerdy information all day. Well, the people who analyze these statistics are forgetting to track one very important source of conversation on Twitter: the trending topics. If these statistics are correct, then there are a great deal of professional, nerdy people wondering #wheredeydodatat, wanting to define when #youknowyouajumpoff, and watching #miley, #jordin, or the #jonasbrothers talk live on Ustream.

Forgive me if this is stereotypical, but I don't think the Gen-X and baby boomer crowd are driving these trends. To continuously place headlines on articles emphasizing the dearth of teenagers on Twitter is sensationalistic and misleading. Not only are teens using Twitter, but they are also driving what is "trendy" via the list of the ten most popular word phrases being tweeted. Many people are wont to say that young people are not using Twitter because they don't come up on their stream; they aren't participating in the hashchats, and the majority of link sharing is led by the professional crowd. It would be more accurate, however, to say that the teens who are using Twitter are not using it as strategically as are Gen-X'ers and baby boomers.

Twitter is a social networking tool with heavy emphasis on each word. However, the experience is different for every user. Whereas the professional crowd would like to see a greater emphasis on "networking" for the teenage users, the teen users would like a greater emphasis on the social for the Gen-X'ers and baby boomers. The people who constantly use Twitter as a marketing tool, though, need to learn both. There may not be one correct way to use Twitter, but there is definitely a wrong way. We can learn this lesson from each category of users.

### **Be Social**

If someone who is replying to you is following you, as well, then it is likely that they enjoy what you are tweeting. Every re-tweet from them helps you build your brand. If they are replying directly to you and not being abusive or spammy, then reply back to them. If you find that you

are getting multiple replies throughout the day and don't have the time to reply to everyone, then at least respond to one or two new people. It's just the considerate thing to do.

### **Network**

Young people need to learn that networking doesn't mean talking to people and having conversations all day. That is being social. Networking is what you do when you want to build your career. When networking you meet new people and exchange contact information for future discussions of how each party can help one another. Networking involves building strategic partnerships that allow people to further professional goals. Not only do you need to network, but you need to do it so as not to cause people to regret that they helped you. When someone recommends you and/or helps you, professionally speaking, they are putting their reputation on the line. This is why it is crucial to represent yourself in the best possible light that still allows you to remain true to yourself while using Twitter. New contacts (followers) will check your tweets.

### **Twitter is not just a tool**

Some companies and individuals on a personal branding mission will do nothing but send automatic tweets to their feed all day. Some people find value in these types of accounts. Others feel that it is spammy behavior and will likely not follow, block, or report these accounts for spamming. What these people are missing is the personal part of personal branding. You don't have to tell us that you're sitting on the patio, but it would be nice to see that you're a human being every once in a while.

## I'm Ashamed of My Job – Stuck in The Middle

My high school reunion is coming up soon. I'm kinda nervous. I haven't graduated from college yet, and I'm afraid they're gonna look at me funny. Some of them will be married. Some will have plenty of money to take trips and vacations, buying expensive things. I'm still here, hoping this dream grows wings. And, I wonder what they'll say behind my back but not to my face because that's how most of them were. I'll stop there because I don't believe in talking bad about people with negative souls. I prefer to keep mine pure.

Some days I wake up sad and pretty mad with myself for not doing what was expected. All I had to do was graduate in four years and my destiny wouldn't have been subjected to all the twists and turns that it has taken thus far. I stay awake some nights and can't even work because the thoughts overtake my mind. I'll be honest and tell you that it does make me cry. To hear other people tell it, I have it pretty good. Things could be much worse. At least I didn't grow up in the 'hood.

Is that what it takes, though, to be allowed to stumble? Is that where you have to come from to feel like everything around you could crumble at any moment? Nothing in this life is guaranteed. You have to work for everything no matter where you were brought up. From welfare to rich and food stamps to trust funds, everyone has to put a little work in to get some. True. Some people have to put in a lot more work than others, but does that make their struggle any less worthy of support? What about the kid in the middle?

Growing up between older sister Wealthy and younger brother Broke, Middle is just making it, surviving on Ramen and Coke. Yea, Middle can eat and has a house over her head. Middle even has a job, but it doesn't cover her rent. It doesn't pay all her bills with money to spare, but she doesn't qualify for the benefits of welfare. Middle makes too much money to get government support, but she doesn't wanna sit at home and not work. Stressed out on a daily basis, Middle learns to hide her pain because no one wants to hear the same sob story. Over and over again the tales of public transportation woes, the irony of working in a place where she can't afford to buy the clothes. Her troubles weigh heavy on her shoulders, but if she goes to her family all they'll say is, "I told ya. You should have just studied harder. You had nothing to worry about but your books. Other people can graduate in three years, what's wrong with you?"

What's wrong with me is that I'm not everyone else. I'm just me. Your misguided attempts at encouragement fail. Yes I'm sensitive. Yes I needed you to just listen to me and not judge, but I learned quickly that you couldn't be that for me. I had to follow myself and be my own diary.

Wealthy and Broke couldn't understand me because neither had been where I am. One thinks I'm a whiner and I should be happy where I am. The other laughs and walks ten paces ahead. My high school reunion is coming up, and I wish I could say I had a story to tell, but no one wants to hear a sob story again.

THE YOUNG WRITERS BLOCK

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## [Eureka! I Found My Motivation!](#)



Now that I knew my problem was a lack of motivation, I set forth trying to determine what would motivate me. Some people are motivated by “haters”; others are motivated by family. The one thing most of these forces have in common is that they are external forces. Well, I am not motivated by external forces. I didn't grow up feeling the need to be successful in order to prove something to someone who didn't believe in me. Nor did I feel pressure to be the future caretaker of the family. Consequently, I developed a highly independent nature, relying on research, deductive reasoning, and some common sense to influence my mindset.

The benefits of being highly independent are clear when it comes to problem solving. You learn how to become resourceful when in need of answers to puzzling questions. I began by asking my friends on social networks and in real life what motivates them. Popular responses included faith, a desire to succeed and bills. In Socratic fashion, I pursued further, unsatisfied with the responses. Every self help book, article, and quote about motivation gives those responses and still people get stuck in the mire of mediocrity. I needed to know what it was about having faith, a desire to succeed, or bills that spurred these people into action; and, not just action, but progression towards goals that they found intrinsically connected them to their inner being.

Far too many people are on paths defined *for* them. Maybe my Generation Y status gives me a proclivity for idealism, but I believe it necessary to a happy life. Essential to it is defining your own path that connects you to your own spirit. This is not about religion. Connecting to your spirit is about finding who you really are, what you really want to be, and developing a

conviction to hurdle over any obstacle that enters your lane. Some people know this, though, and still can't make the connection. Some people need to start at the beginning by analyzing themselves. **If you don't know what road you should be on, do the following:**

1. **Ask yourself what brings a smile to your face**
2. **Write it down**
3. **Ask yourself what you find yourself talking about all the time**
4. **Write it down**

After you've done these things, you will see a pattern emerge. Somewhere in this list is your career. If you already know what you would do with the rest of your life but can't get yourself motivated to do it, then you are in the position I was in not too long ago. After talking to people about their motivation and reading through multiple articles and quotations, I realized the secret to finding your motivation has nothing to do with you. Everyone who appears to have a special gift to succeed is only successful because they are motivated by their desire to be of service to others.

Cosmopolitan magazine, Sean Combs, and John Mayer all list multiple motivators. Cosmo suggests that the emotion of envy is an indicator of lack and desire. We become envious of what others have only when it is something that we desire in our own lives. This desire to have what others have is mistaken as a good motivator because it appears to be a catalyst for action. What if you feel undeserving of what others have but still want it? That feeling of being unworthy will kill any desire. In an interview with Playboy Magazine, John Mayer stated the following:

**PLAYBOY:** So you've lost the motivation of playing music to meet girls.

**MAYER:** If I was playing it so I could meet hot chicks, I've met hot chicks, quote unquote. If I was playing it to make a ton of money, I've made a ton of money. If I was playing it to be well-known, I am well-known. Once you put aside girls and money, it forces you to realign your motivation for being a musician. Now I'm not a have-not but a have. Which is interesting, because music has to come from a have-not sort of place. And there are many places where I have-not.

**PLAYBOY:** What motivates you now?

**MAYER:** My motivation is to prove people wrong, to confuse them. I enjoy the challenge—I

must be addicted to the challenge. I've gone from being a musician to being a celebrity. And when people do that, their work usually suffers. There are tunes on *Battle Studies* that are more applicable to other people's lives than anything I've ever written before. This whole time I've stayed vulnerable, stayed frustrated, stayed confused. This record is the trade-off to having sort of brutalized myself for a few years. So if people see that over the past couple of years I actually got a firmer grip on writing songs about the ups and downs of life, they might go, "How did he have the time to make a record? Was he writing 'War of My Life' in the middle of me thinking he was a douche bag? Did I ever actually know him? Maybe he's a pretty solid guy."

John Mayer started his career motivated by women and fame, but he has those now. Without those to serve as motivators, what keeps him interested in playing music? Somewhere in there is a desire for people to be less judgmental. I suggest John Mayer lose the motivation to prove people wrong and write music that allows him to reconnect with his true self – the good guy with the best intentions. Sean Combs has said that his mother served as his main inspiration to become the media mogul that he is today. I'd like to ask him what keeps him motivated now that he can provide everything for her.

I've come to realize where my motivation comes from, how I obtained it, and how I will keep it. My hope is that by reading this, you will develop your own realization. My goal is to help you get *there from here*.

## [I Don't Have A Degree, But I'm Still An Asset To Your Company](#)



*Bill Gates: Billionaire College Dropout*

“The college dropout”. Unless you’re Kanye West or Bill Gates, having this label attributed to you garners only negative attention. To be a college dropout is to be a wasted resource. “It’s a shame to see all that potential go to waste” is what most people say (behind the backs of the people to which they are referring). We hear you, though. You don’t have to say it to our faces because it shows in your eyes. Your body language expresses your contempt for us. It’s a good thing some of us don’t pay attention to your misguided attempts at encouragement, or else we may never get past the pain and onto success.

What follows is an interview conducted with Sue Anne Reed. Ms. Reed currently works for a non-profit agency in California as a Communications Manager, with a focus on online marketing. She has been working in marketing communications for the past 15 years for a wide range of industries – biotechnology, high technology and financial services. She can be found online at [http://twitter.com/Sue\\_Anne](http://twitter.com/Sue_Anne).

- Did you feel expectations from family, friends or society to succeed in college? If so, what impact did this pressure have on you?

My family didn’t pressure me to attend college. My mom, step-dad and father all attended less than a year of college and none had degrees. My mom’s brother has a college degree, but that was really the only family member I knew growing up that had successfully completed a degree.

I was always known as one of the “smart kids” even though I didn’t get the best grades (can’t take a test to save my life), so it was always my plan to go to college. I didn’t feel any pressure to attend a certain college or pursue a specific degree.

- How do friends and family treat you because you don’t have a college degree?

My friends and family don’t treat me any differently because I don’t have a degree. My grandfather felt it was really important to complete my degree, but he never treated me any differently because I left school early. For my friends, it’s mostly that they know that it could really help me with my career and would like to see me succeed.

- How do you feel about yourself?

I do often feel that I’m a step below other people that do have degrees – especially advanced degrees. It’s not that I feel inferior to them and more that I feel like “that could be me.” I look at people with less work experience and see how they’ve moved up the management ladder, when I’m being told that the only thing holding me back is lack of a degree. It is definitely more pronounced amongst male managers. The female managers I’ve had in the past are more willing to look at my work experience/skill set and overlook the lack of a degree. I try not to beat myself up too much about it. I know that I’m good at my job, and that I’m a valuable asset to any company who hires me.

- Why did you leave school without a degree?

Prior to my junior year in college, I was in a bike accident and hurt my knee. During my junior year, my medical bills piled up along with money I owed to the school. Additionally, my plan was to go to graduate school after I received a Bachelor’s degree in English Literature. However, all my friends in my major that were a year ahead of me were having a very hard time getting in to graduate schools due to the lack of professors with PhDs teaching the English Literature courses and the quality of our coursework. Other things that happened during my junior year included me almost falling through a plate glass window.

By the end of my junior year, I was completely burnt out – financially, physically, emotionally. I couldn’t fathom paying the school for a degree that wasn’t going to get me on to my next goal. I also needed to come up with a payment to stay at the school, and it was money I didn’t have. The school I attended was also in northern Wisconsin, and my knee problems were probably going to cause me to be in and out of a wheelchair. It all just piled on.

- Do you plan to return to get a degree? If so, what is preventing you from returning in the immediate future?

I have planned to get a degree since I left school. There are three things preventing me from completing my degree: a) working a full-time job; b) health issues; c) finances and some combination of all three. I still owe significant student loan debt to the college I attended for three years. In addition, since I've left school I've had repeated battles with my health that have also cost a lot of money to take care of. I can't afford to leave work to go to school full-time, and I don't have the energy to take care of both a full-time job and go to school full-time.

- What is the biggest myth equated with dropouts that you would like to dispel?

Those that drop out of college are not less intelligent than other people. Also, that because we didn't finish our degree/we don't have that piece of paper, that it says something about our "character". It is a myth that we can't start what we finish.

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Many people have had to leave school for reasons other than the stereotypical "college just isn't for me" attitude; and, many would like to return to get their degree, but existing roadblocks make it difficult. [Support education reform](#) to enable the passionate people to more efficiently achieve their dreams.

## TheMoralMuse

*Topics: Inspiration's Corner(Poetry, Religion)*

...attended Vanderbilt University and graduated in 2006 with a BS in Electrical Engineering, also attended Colorado State University for the Master's program in Robotics. She enjoys writing poems and inspirational epithets based off of true life experiences. If she can help someone through a tough time, or just offer encouragement or empathy, she feels that she is making a difference to the world.

## The REAL Deal about "Swagg"

We've all heard it by now...we've all heard others saying or singing about it...we may have even caught ourselves adding it to our own vernacular. The new "it" word in the urban, contemporary world has hit the scenes like a tsunami: SWAGG.

Personally, I do believe that swagg is a viable word with a proper definition. I define swagg as having a certain confidence which exudes oneself in the way he or she carries him or herself, handles business, and conducts daily life. We've all seen it too! Ladies, we know when a young man has bonefied, official swagg! The way he walks, talks, dresses...even the most mundane things he does spell c-o-n-f-i-d-e-n-c-e. Fellas, yall have seen it in women as well. That woman walking by with her head held high, smelling good, looking nice, and handling her business....Miss Independent, if you will.

However, let us stop and think about how the word swagg is being thrown around as an adjective instead of a verb. I have now seen and heard, in the past few weeks, so many young people referring to themselves as having a certain insurmountable amount of swagg predicated by: 1.) how much money they make, 2.) how cute/fine they (think they) are, 3.) the car they drive, 4.) the house or apartment they live in, and/or 5.) other temporal THINGS that shall fade away.

But you know...I am starting to wonder about how much thought this widely coined phrase evokes when being constantly over-used. Do the people always keeping this word in the forefront of their everyday diction really even have the swagg they claim to have? For me, I struggle to believe this so-called level of swaggerdom you've achieved if you are always speaking on it, making mention of it, or drawing attention to it. Do you really have swagg if you have to TELL everyone that you have swagg? Does your standard of what swagg truly is even classify you as having swagg? For me, having stacks of benjamins, driving a nice car, and looking nice is not a major proponent of the formula that yields swagg.

I'd like to think someone who has arrived at a level of achievement in life that allows them to live comfortably and confidently while maintaining a quiet humility about themselves is the true characteristic of REAL swagg. Someone who oozes confidence, professionalism, intelligence, and wisdom without saying one word. Someone who makes you feel an extra iota of security all because their presence is near....REAL swagg is not an adjective, it is a verb...it is a state of mind and being. Not something to describe yourself, but a way in which you carry and govern yourself. It is someone who never ever thinks of himself (or herself) more highly than he ought (Romans 12:2-3: 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing

of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.)....

Think about it....real Swagg doesnt need accolades, compliments, or statements about how much swagg he or she has..it just is. It is a state of mind and being that exists without being boisterous. Gentleman (and ladies) take note...humble yourselves, stop thinking more highly of yourself than you ought...just let your swagg do its own talking.

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## Sincere (Editor)

*Topics: Jack-of-all Trades*

Originally from Washington DC but now resides in Atlanta. His objective with his site is to show that every young black man isn't just about sagging pants and selling drugs. He's trying to make a difference and change how black men are viewed by mainstream America.

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## [Sincere's Thought – Don't Quit Your Day Job](#)

My mom always told me that I should never put all my eggs in one basket. You have to diversify. Do a little here and a little there. The problem is, don't quit a sure thing for a maybe. While, yes, it would be easier to focus all of your attention on one thing, make sure that one thing is something that you can actually do well or better than your sure thing.

You have to at some point realize when a dream is just that and focus on reality. I'm not saying to give up on your dreams, but if it's not working you might want to do something that you're actually good at until that dream comes true. So, don't quit your day job for your once a month hobby. Get me?

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## Sincere's Thought – I Wish I Could Quit You



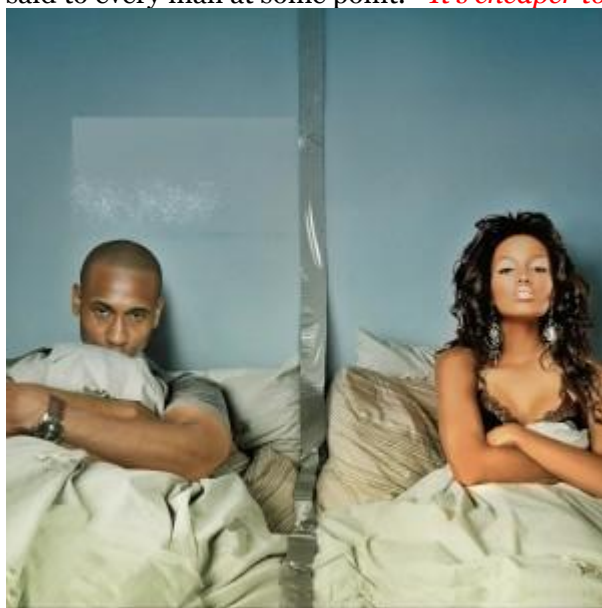
Marriage is hard work. I often wonder how couples, like my grandparents, remained together and seemingly happy for a lifetime. I think the two key words were 'seemingly happy'. Every relationship has it's ups and downs. I'm sure everyone that is married or has been in a serious relationship has thought about getting out at one point or another. It's that commitment to stick and stay that can sometimes make the relationship stronger.



Sometimes relationships just don't work out as planned. Happily ever after turns into happily never after! The real question is; how do you know when to stick and stay and when to cut and run? I don't think there is one definitive answer for that. I believe it depends on the situation. Some stay for financial reasons, some stay out of convenience or some stay for the sake of the children. There are plenty of reasons, those are just a few. let's explore these examples a bit.



Staying for financial reasons is probably even more common now because of the recession. A divorce can be expensive and depending upon if there are children and/or multiple assets to be divided, it can drag on for months or even years. Another reason may be that they can't survive financially separately. At our engagement party my grandfather gave me a bit of advice that I'm sure has been said to every man at some point. *"It's cheaper to keep her"* © [Johnny Taylor](#)



Staying together for convenience can be similar to the financial decision. Sometimes we become complacent and don't want to start over or we may think that we can't do any better. Why start all over only to end up in the same situation? Right? Wrong! Why settle for the court Jester when you could have had the Prince?



This or That?

If it's not working for you then it's time to bounce regardless of the time invested or whatever other excuses.



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Often parents will stay together until the children leave are grown. I know my aunt and uncle did this and it was worse on my cousins then if they had just divorced and split custody. They grew up in a household where they saw their parents constantly arguing and disrespecting each other. They then grew up to either think this was okay and the way relationships worked or to think that relationships aren't worth anything so why get into them. So one of my cousins is a jerk and the other a male whore. Seriously, it is important for parents, to have that mother and father parental unit present int he household but if it the relationship isn't working then it won't work. You don't have to like your partner to be a good mother or father to your child. Those are two separate things.

Bottom line is, if the relationship isn't working then let it go. everyone involved will be better off in the end. I don't believe in forcing anything. Whatever shall be shall be. Every family can't be TV perfect like the Huxtables or as together as the first family.

Think.  
Discuss.  
Engage.

Young Writers' Block, E-Publication, April 2010



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## Feds Won't Press Charges in Sean Bell Shooting



As the news came over the wire (via [AP News](#)) that the three New York City police officers that shot Sean Bell, and two of his friends, 50 times killing him on the early morning of his wedding would not be prosecuted I felt a deep sinking feeling in my stomach. How could this be? The three officers shot and killed an unarmed man and wounded others in the car. This should have been an easy win for the Bell family right? Wrong. You see, even with the eyewitness accounts, the other individuals that were in the car's testimony, and other fellow officers on the scene attesting to what happened, there was insufficient evidence. You see, in our court system it's not always about what's right or what really happened it's about being able to prove it without a reasonable doubt. The FBI felt as though "After a careful and thorough review, a team of experienced federal prosecutors and FBI agents determined that the evidence was insufficient to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the law enforcement personnel who fired at Bell (and two friends, Joseph Guzman and Trent Benefield) acted willfully... Accordingly, the investigation into this incident has been closed."



*Mrs. Nicole Paultre- Bell and children*

Now his family has to go through the ordeal of grieving all over again. This is not the outcome I

expected at all. I at least thought that this would go to trial and let a jury decide their fate. This is not the first case to begin and end this way and it will not be the last. The question is, how long will we allow this to happen? Whether it be from a trigger happy police officer or a thug on the block, the senseless violence has to stop. When are we going to put our foot down and take a stand for what is right? Whenever things like this happen people tend to wait on the Al Sharpton's or Jesse Jackson's to take the lead and do something but we each have a voice. As evidenced with the Jena 6 protests, day of blogging justice, E – rallies and such, this internet is powerful and if we use it correctly we can bring about the change that we want to see in this world.

Sean Bell is an example of a good young black man cut down in his prime. They have already won by killing him; let's not let them win again by letting his death be in vein. Do something about it.



Think. Discuss. Engage.

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## Music from the Heart

I love music. Music can make you feel a connection to a certain place or person. It can warm your heart when the world has turned it cold. When I hear good music I love to share it with the world. K.TWO music is that good music. Everyone needs some inspiration from time to time, and this is inspirational music.



K.TWO is a Christian rapper that makes you really take notice. His lyrics are witty, thought provoking and you can tell that every word is from the heart. He has used that God given talent to not only make music but as a part of [Music National Service](#) he is teaching and inspiring future generations to do the same. Being involved with music since the age of 5, K.TWO didn't really take a hold of his musically craft until around 13 years old when he became interested in the piano. Adding his talent and his devotion to God and nothing he tried to do was impossible.

As a writer and producer, K.TWO already has two mix tapes (Samtrackz Unplugged Vol I & II - collaborations with other Bay Area artists) and an independent album (Religion or Relationship) already under his belt. Now he is ready to hit us with another highly anticipated masterpiece called [The Farewell Letters](#) on March 21st, 2010.

Music is diverse and inclusive yet at times it can be more about the melody than the message. To find a new artist that is about the message without sacrificing the melody is refreshing. As a gospel artist in this day and age of rap, with the emergence of people like Gucci Mane and the New Boyz, it can be difficult to reach the masses outside of the sanctuary. I feel that this music has the opportunity to do just that. By putting a spin on already gospel or Christian music instead of secular tracks he is able to introduce a different audience to Gospel music that may not have otherwise

listened. Reaching the lost at all costs.

When you hear his music you can tell that it is coming from his heart. Don't just take my word for it. Check him out here:

[www.ktwomusic.com](http://www.ktwomusic.com)

[www.youtube.com/ktwomusic](http://www.youtube.com/ktwomusic)

[www.myspace.com/ktwomusic](http://www.myspace.com/ktwomusic)

[www.myspace.com/innercourtentertainment](http://www.myspace.com/innercourtentertainment)

[www.ilike.com/artist/KTWOMUSIC](http://www.ilike.com/artist/KTWOMUSIC)

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