

# CIRCLE OF BOSS SISTERS C.O.B.S.

## *Kings* COURT

**PASTOR  
MICHAEL (MIKE)  
MCCLEARY JR.**

PASTOR MIKE JR.:  
THE PASTOR,  
THE ARTIST,  
THE INNOVATOR  
OF KINGDOM  
CULTURE

## *Queens* COURT

**PATRICE  
CHAPPELLE &  
SON BRON  
ECHOLS**

FOUNDERS OF  
MELANBRAND  
SKIN, LLC

COVER SPOTLIGHT

# BRANDICE DANIEL

CEO OF HARLEM'S FASHION ROW & ICON360

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## *Women* INNOVATORS

**SHOBAN  
"DAMALIA"  
MAJEED**

FOUNDER OF  
DAMALIA & CO.  
INTERNATIONAL  
HAIR TEAM

## SPOTLIGHT CORNER

**CONITRA  
COWANS**

FOUNDER OF  
BOUJEEZSTEPS

## *Women* WERK

**JASARA  
PONTON**

FOUNDER OF  
THE MELANATED  
BLIND BAKER



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CIRCLE OF BOSS SISTERS  
**C.O.B.S**

# Editor's Note



## FROM TRADITION TO TRANSFORMATION

### THE POWER OF A RENEWED MINDSET

WRITTEN BY: DR. TREVI-BOOKER PERSHAY, EDITOR OF C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE

#### Introduction: When Tradition Becomes Limitation

Tradition has its place. It connects us to our history, grounds us in values, and offers lessons from those who walked before us. But when tradition becomes rigid, it risks holding us back. An “old school mentality” can be comforting, but it may also prevent us from embracing innovation, diversity, and growth. In today’s world, whether in faith, business, or personal development, the power lies in transformation. The renewed mindset is not about discarding tradition but reimagining it to serve a new generation.

#### The Call for Renewal

The concept of renewal is not new. The Apostle Paul urged believers to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2, New International Version). This idea still resonates: transformation begins in our thinking. A renewed mindset challenges assumptions, pushes beyond fear, and creates room for new opportunities.

Psychologists also echo this. Carol Dweck’s (2016) work on the growth mindset demonstrates that people who believe they can improve through effort, learning, and resilience outperform those locked into a fixed mentality. Where tradition says, “This is how it has always been,” transformation asks, “What if we tried something new?”

#### Breaking the “Old School” Barrier

For many of us, “old school” thinking shows up in predictable ways:

- The belief that success must look like stability rather than innovation.
- The expectation that leadership is about hierarchy, not collaboration.
- The fear of questioning authority or systems that no longer serve us.

These habits can create glass ceilings not just in organizations, but in our own lives. Shifting from tradition to transformation requires courage. It means recognizing when loyalty to the past prevents us from stepping into the future.

In business, for example, companies that clung to outdated strategies often lost relevance. Kodak once dominated film photography but hesitated to embrace digital innovation and was left behind (Lucas & Goh, 2009). On the other hand, brands like Netflix thrived by rethinking old models, transforming how we consume entertainment.

## Transformation in Faith and Community

In spiritual life, a renewed mindset is equally powerful. Many people are rediscovering faith not through rigid rituals, but through authentic community, relevant teaching, and personal connection with God. Churches and faith leaders that adapt streaming services online, engage with social media, and address real-world issues reach wider audiences without abandoning core truths.

Transformation does not mean compromise. It means contextualizing tradition so it continues to give life. Just as new wine requires new wineskins (Matthew 9:17), renewal requires fresh frameworks.

## Practical Steps Toward a Renewed Mindset

Transforming tradition into innovation doesn't happen overnight. It requires intentional steps:

1. Reflect and Question – Ask, “Why do we do it this way? Does it still serve the purpose?”
2. Learn Continuously – Engage in reading, mentorship, and training. Growth demands new information.
3. Surround Yourself with Visionaries – Transformation thrives in environments where creativity and diversity of thought are valued.
4. Embrace Failure as Feedback – Every setback is a lesson that fuels renewal.
5. Stay Grounded in Core Values – Transformation builds on tradition, not against it. Holding on to integrity, faith, and purpose ensures that change is meaningful.

## Stories of Renewal

We see transformation at work every day in our communities. Entrepreneurs are reshaping industries by blending heritage with innovation. Black women in business, for instance, are reclaiming traditional skills such as hair styling, fashion design, and cooking, and turning them into global enterprises. Authors are transforming stories of family and faith into platforms of healing. Even within C.O.B.S. Magazine, our tradition of celebrating women's voices has evolved into a multimedia platform connecting visionaries across generations.

Each story is proof: when we renew our mindset, we turn barriers into bridges.

## The Power of Renewal

Tradition honors the past, but transformation prepares us for the future. By renewing our mindset, we create space for God's vision, personal growth, and collective impact. The shift from “old school” to “new possibilities” is not about rejecting where we came from; it's about honoring it by building something greater.

In the end, transformation is not just change; it's elevation. And a renewed mind is the spark that lights the way.

**Dr. Trevi Booker-Pershay**



# Featured Story



**BRANDICE DANIEL**

## **THE WOMAN REDEFINING FASHION'S FUTURE**

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

In an industry long criticized for exclusion, Brandice Daniel has built her career on a single, powerful purpose: to ensure that designers of color are not only seen but celebrated, supported, and sustained. As the founder and CEO of Harlem's Fashion Row (HFR) and the nonprofit ICON360, Daniel is reimagining what fashion can look like when diversity is not an afterthought but the foundation.

### **A Vision Born in Harlem**

When Daniel launched Harlem's Fashion Row in 2007, she did so with an unwavering mission to provide designers of color with opportunities that the mainstream fashion world had too often denied them.

Harlem, with its vibrant history of art, music, and cultural expression, became the heartbeat of her vision. What started as a local runway showcase soon grew into a national and international platform that connected emerging Black and Brown designers with influential brands. For Daniel, this wasn't just business; it was about changing the narrative of who gets to participate in fashion's legacy.

### **Purpose in Business: Building Bridges and Breaking Barriers**

At the core of Daniel's work is a belief that fashion is culture, and culture must be inclusive. Her business serves a dual purpose:

1. Create visibility for underrepresented designers.
2. Build pathways into boardrooms, partnerships, and leadership spaces where power is distributed.

Through HFR, she has collaborated with powerhouse brands such as Nike, Tommy Hilfiger, and LVMH, not only showcasing diverse talent but also reshaping how global companies engage with issues of equity. Her purpose is clear—to use fashion as a tool of empowerment, equity, and legacy-building.

## ICON360: From Emergency Response to Lasting Impact

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, many independent designers of color found themselves on the brink of collapse. Daniel refused to watch an entire generation of talent disappear. In response, she founded ICON360, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to supporting designers of color and strengthening fashion programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

- Mission: ICON360 exists to dismantle systemic barriers by providing financial support and professional development opportunities.
  - Impact: Since 2020, the nonprofit has distributed over \$2 million in grants to Black designers and HBCUs, keeping businesses alive and students inspired.
  - Purpose: ICON360 represents Daniel's commitment to not just showcasing talent but sustaining it. It ensures that designers have the resources to thrive, innovate, and claim their rightful place in the industry.
- Her quick action during a global crisis revealed what drives all her work: when doors are closed, she builds new ones—and makes sure others can walk through them too.

## Beyond Fashion: A Cultural Movement

Daniel's work is bigger than runways and collections. It is a cultural movement rooted in equity, visibility, and community. She has positioned fashion not just as an industry of aesthetics, but as a reflection of society's values.

By mentoring, funding, and advocating for designers of color, she proves that purpose-led business can transform both industries and communities. For her, success is not about personal accolades but about collective advancement.

## Recognition and Legacy

Brandice Daniel's leadership has been recognized by the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA), Vogue, and the New York Times. But her greatest accomplishment is the community she has built—the designers, students, and entrepreneurs who now see a future for themselves in an industry once closed to them.

## Why Brandice Daniel Matters

For COBS Magazine, Daniel's story is one of resilience, innovation, and intentional purpose. She is a living example of how Black women in business are shaping industries and empowering communities simultaneously.

Her journey reminds us that when vision is anchored in purpose, business becomes more than profit—it becomes a legacy.



# Kings Court



## THE KING'S CORNER SPOTLIGHT

### PASTOR MIKE JR. PREACHING WITH PURPOSE AND POWER

WRITTEN BY: DR. TREVI BOOKER-PERSHAY

Michael DeWayne McClure Jr., better known as Pastor Mike Jr. or "PMJ," is much more than a gospel singer; he's a pastor, leader, and cultural voice reaching far beyond the pulpit. Born on August 15, 1983, in Birmingham, Alabama, he has built a ministry and music career rooted in authenticity, service, and bold creativity.

#### Early Life & Roots

- Pastor Mike Jr. comes from a family with strong church leadership and a civil rights heritage. His father, Bishop Michael McClure Sr., pastors Revelation Church in Irondale; his mother is Angela Woods McClure. His maternal grandfather, Bishop Calvin Woods, was deeply involved with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Birmingham.
- He grew up singing, traveling with his father, and being involved in church. Though he briefly pursued college and was on track to play football at the University of West Alabama, he decided to follow his calling in ministry.

#### Ministry & Church Leadership

- Pastor Mike Jr. founded Rock City Church (originally Rock Church) in 2009 from a youth ministry at Miles College. The name Rock City stuck as the congregation grew and expanded.
- The church has multiple campuses and has become known as one of the fastest-growing ministries in the South.

#### Music & Breakthrough

- Although he had sung from a young age, his professional music journey began in 2019 with the release of his debut album Live Free. The album's lead single, "Big", was a breakthrough hit.
- Subsequent albums like I Got It: Singles Ministry, Vol. 1 (2021) and Impossible (2023) further established him in the gospel scene.



## Recent Accomplishments & Impact

- In 2025, Pastor Mike Jr. had what many are calling a historic Stellar Awards performance, being nominated in nine categories and winning them all. These included major honors like Artist of the Year, Album of the Year, and Song of the Year. That win made him the artist with the most "Artist of the Year" Stellar Awards a record previously shared with names like Marvin Sapp and Kirk Franklin.
- His single "Amen", released January 10, 2025, further underscores his staying power. It topped the Gospel Airplay chart and resonated widely.

## Values & Message

What sets Pastor Mike Jr. apart is how he blends pastoral authenticity with musical creativity. His lyrics often come from spontaneous moments worship, study, personal reflection and are aimed at people who feel marginalized, lonely, or disconnected. He frequently says that influence matters more than fame or money because it can change lives.

He emphasizes vulnerability in leadership, using both church and music to address real-life issues not just spiritual platitudes. His success, he often acknowledges, is deeply tied to his home base in Birmingham, showing that you don't have to move to a major city to make an impact.

## A Personal Reflection

I recently started following this young, powerful, and inspiring man of God by accident, and since then, I have been biblically satisfied and spiritually well-fed. His style of preaching, his approach to teaching, and his heart for God's people quickly won me over. I thought, what better way to give tribute than to honor a man who so clearly loves his family, his church, his music, and most importantly, God.

Although I have not yet become an online member of Rock City Church, I will say that his Bible class is unlike anything I have experienced in a long time. It has deepened my connection with God not man and continues to enrich my walk with Christ.

## What's Next

With Amen and the EP God Showing Out already released, Pastor Mike Jr. continues to press into new territory, both musically and in ministry. His goals include expanding his reach, creating more platforms for emerging voices, and using his influence to bring healing and connection. He often shares that his mission is not just about personal success, but about empowering others.

## Why He's a King's Corner Spotlight

Pastor Mike Jr. exemplifies what it means to walk in purpose: grounded in heritage, committed to service, and unafraid to break molds. His journey reminds us that authentic leadership is cultivated in small beginnings, patience, faith, and a willingness to show up even when the world isn't watching. For Kings Corner readers, his story is a testament that impact is not defined by geography but by authenticity and courage.



# Queens Court



## THE MOTHER-SON DUO

### REDEFINING SKINCARE AND BUILDING GENERATIONAL WEALTH

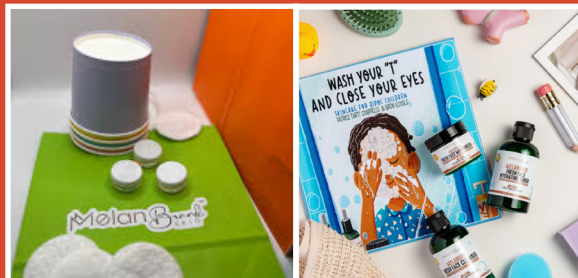
WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

Patrice Chappelle never set out to launch just another skincare company. What she intended through late nights of research, trial, and vision casting was to solve a problem that no one else seemed to address. Her son, Bron Echols, was struggling with sensitive skin, and the products available weren't built for him. Out of that need, MelanBrand Skin was born, a natural, vegan, gluten-free skincare brand created by a mother and son determined to make melanated youth feel seen, celebrated, and protected.

### A Gift That Sparked a Movement

In 2023, Patrice gave Bron a gift that would change both their lives. Instead of a traditional birthday party, she handed him \$1,200 to start a business. That seed money wasn't just capital; it was an investment in confidence, education, and generational wealth. With Patrice's guidance, Bron stepped into the role of co-founder and Co-CEO, learning firsthand how a brand is built from the ground up.

What began as a solution for Bron's dry, irritated skin quickly transformed into a business with national recognition. From day one, the mission was clear: to create products that honor Black and Brown children while instilling in them the value of self-care and ownership. Patrice wanted to teach Bron that entrepreneurship wasn't something to wait for in adulthood; it was something he could grow into now.



MelanBrand<sup>™</sup>  
skin



## Building More Than Products

MelanBrand Skin isn't simply about selling creams, cleansers, or oils; it's about empowerment and representation. Every formula is vegan, gluten-free, cruelty-free, and non-toxic. Each product line is designed with the specific needs of melanated youth in mind, especially those managing eczema, psoriasis, or other skin sensitivities.

But the impact goes deeper than skin. Through her leadership, Patrice has centered the brand's values around self-love, inclusivity, and education. Families who buy from MelanBrand aren't just receiving skincare, they're participating in a movement that normalizes healthy routines and affirms beauty in all shades.

"When our children see brands made for them, by people who look like them, it sends a powerful message: you matter, your beauty matters, your story matters," Patrice explained in a feature with TheGrio. That philosophy sits at the very heart of everything MelanBrand Skin does.

## Recognition and Resilience

Like many startups, MelanBrand Skin faced challenges with limited funding, long hours, and the balancing act of growing a business while nurturing a family. Patrice and Bron pushed forward with grit and resilience. Their determination paid off: in December 2024, MelanBrand Skin was awarded the prestigious Amber Grant, garnering national recognition for their work.

In July 2025, MelanBrand Skin celebrated another milestone by receiving its very first grant—\$20,000 from CHASM. More than just financial support, the grant represented validation of Patrice and Bron's vision, their persistence, and the impact of creating safe, inclusive skincare for melanated youth. For the mother-son team, the CHASM award was a breakthrough moment—proof that their work is not only touching families but also gaining recognition as a model of purpose-driven entrepreneurship.

Their determination paid off again in December 2024, when MelanBrand Skin was awarded the prestigious Amber Grant, shining a national spotlight on their work.

## Legacy in Action

For Patrice, this venture has never been just about skincare. It's about Bron. She wants her son to understand ownership, decision-making, and the power of creating something lasting. By placing him at the center of the business, she's teaching him that his voice matters, his ideas carry weight, and his legacy can start now.

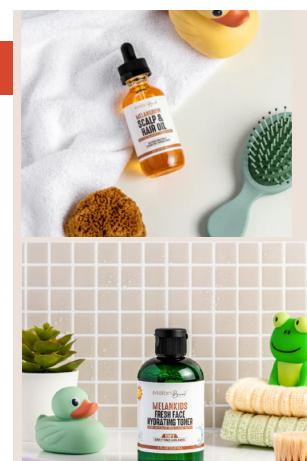
Together, they are showing families everywhere that entrepreneurship isn't reserved for adults, corporations, or the privileged few. It can begin at the kitchen table with vision, sacrifice, and faith.

Patrice often reminds her community that "wealth is not just money, it's knowledge, it's confidence, it's the ability to hand down opportunities." By modeling this in real time with her son, she is giving Bron the tools to continue the work long after childhood.

## A Message Beyond Skin

At its heart, MelanBrand Skin is more than a company; it's a statement of self-worth and generational resilience. Patrice Chappelle and Bron Echols remind us all that representation isn't optional; it's necessary. Their story proves that when passion meets purpose, even the smallest gift can grow into a movement that redefines beauty, family, and wealth.

As Patrice often says, this is about more than skincare: it's about leaving a legacy, one product and one family at a time.



# Women Werk



## JOI'S VISION BEYOND SIGHT

### HOW A BLIND ENTREPRENEUR TURNED LOVE, LEGACY, AND RESILIENCE INTO TWO THRIVING BUSINESSES

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

As a writer, I've had the privilege of sharing the stories of many women breaking barriers in business, fashion, and community leadership. Each one has inspired me with their courage and innovation. Yet, when I came across Joi's Instagram page, something felt different. Her journey resonated deeply not because of her loss of sight, but because of the remarkable way she has chosen to live beyond it. Rather than allowing her blindness to define her, Joi has redefined what is possible. Through perseverance, creativity, and love, she has built not one, but two thriving businesses that radiate resilience and purpose.

When you meet Jasara, known to most as "Joi," you immediately feel her warmth, determination, and unshakable spirit. Her story is not only about entrepreneurship but also about transforming challenges into triumphs and carrying forward her mother's legacy of strength and faith. Joi is the founder of The Melanated Blind Baker.

#### Cake by The Pound **SALE**

You'll be entered to win a poundcake with every purchase until 11/21! Text 267-226-0703 to order!

**10/13 thru 11/25!**

Vanilla, sour cream, buttermilk, cream cheese, heavy, whipping cream, pound cakes are \$23

Lemon, 7-Up, pineapple, chocolate & chocolate chip are \$28

Sweet potato, peach, pumpkin, blueberry, lemon, and butterscotch pound cakes are \$33



#### From Service to Setback

Joi's journey began with service to her country. She was on active duty in the U.S. Army when a life-changing event altered her path and ultimately led to her medical retirement in 2002. Adjusting to life without sight was no small challenge, but Joi never allowed it to eclipse her dreams. Instead, she leaned on the lessons instilled by her mother, her greatest supporter.

"My mother always taught me consistency and persistence," Joi recalls. Those principles became anchors in the years that followed, guiding her through uncertainty and loss toward a new purpose.

## Honoring Her Mother Through Legacy

In 2016, Joi took her first leap into entrepreneurship by hosting a Mother's Day event. It was a bold step and a huge success, proving to her that she could create experiences that uplifted others. Yet the joy of that moment was tempered by heartbreak; her mother passed away on May 1, 2016, and the event was on May 8. Though she could not attend, the celebration became an enduring tribute to her memory.

Joi is excited to announce her upcoming Cake by the Pound Sale, running from October 13 through November 25! Don't miss this sweet opportunity to enjoy her delicious creations. Place your orders early and be sure to check out the attached flyer for complete details."

## Creating Hands of Joi

In 2020, Joi found her next calling close to home. Two of her nieces were struggling with eczema, and the prescribed creams offered little relief. Determined to help, Joi began researching natural remedies and experimenting with ingredients. She created a soothing blend of butters and scrubs that finally brought her nieces comfort.

Encouraged by family, Joi launched Hands of Joi, a skincare business that quickly grew by word of mouth. Its signature product, Soft-Lee, was named in honor of her late mother. Today, Soft-Lee remains her best-selling item, a powerful reminder that love and legacy can be bottled and shared.

## The Melanated Blind Baker

Never one to stop dreaming, Joi expanded her entrepreneurial path again in 2022, this time into baking. Drawing on recipes passed down by her mother and committed to memory, she launched The Melanated Blind Baker.

Her baked goods, from decadent cakes to irresistible pastries, are infused with tradition and heart. Customers rave not only about the taste but also about the story behind each creation. Running a bakery without sight presents daily challenges, yet Joi approaches her work with skill, determination, and grace. Every dessert she makes is a testament to her resilience.

## Priceless Success

For Joi, success is not only measured in profits or recognition, but it is found in living authentically and proving that nothing is impossible. Her blindness, while undeniably a challenge, has never defined her limits. Instead, it has sharpened her creativity, deepened her faith, and inspired those around her to believe in themselves.

"I know my success is truly priceless," Joi says. Each scrub, each Cake, each event she creates carries with it the lessons of persistence her mother instilled and the unshakable belief that dreams are worth pursuing.

## An Inspiring Example

Joi's journey from Army veteran to entrepreneur, from personal setback to community inspiration, is proof that resilience is more powerful than circumstance. Through Hands of Joi and The Melanated Blind Baker, she has built more than businesses; she has built a legacy of love, courage, and determination.

Her story challenges us all to look beyond limitations, to honor the people who shaped us, and to pursue dreams with relentless passion. Among the many women breaking barriers, Joi's voice rises with an exceptional clarity: success isn't about what we've lost, but about how boldly we choose to live with what remains.



# Women Innovators

## BREAKING BARRIERS IN BEAUTY

### DAMALIA MAJEED'S MISSION TO ELEVATE TEXTURED HAIR ON THE WORLD STAGE

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

For more than 30 years, Sioban "Damalia" Majeed has been shaping more than hair; she's been shaping the way people see themselves. As a master stylist, educator, and advocate, her career spans salon chairs, fashion week runways, and global beauty platforms. Today, as the founder of Damalia & Co International Hair Team and Bespoke by Damalia Hair Studio in Texas, she is redefining what it means to lead in an industry that has historically overlooked texture and coily hair. Her mission is clear: elevate textured hair to its rightful place on the world stage while empowering the next generation of stylists to do the same.



#### From Salon Chair to Global Runways

Damalia's story began in Camden, New Jersey, where she discovered the transformative power of hairstyling early in life. What started as a love for creating styles that boosted confidence soon became a calling. Over three decades, she honed her skills and earned recognition not only as a stylist but as a trusted educator.

Her career expanded from serving clients one-on-one to leading teams behind the scenes at some of fashion's biggest spectacles. From New York Fashion Week to Paris and Milan, Damalia and her team have styled models for top designers, creating looks that merge artistry with cultural authenticity. Her work has been featured in Forbes Colombia, Marie Claire Colombia, Bazaar Qatar, Rolling Stone Colombia, and Paper Magazine. Each appearance is more than an accolade; it's proof that textured and coily hair belongs everywhere, including the most exclusive global runways. Damalia extends her heartfelt gratitude to The Lab Show Production Company for the incredible opportunities they have provided her.

#### Creating Spaces of Excellence

In Texas, Damalia founded Bespoke by Damalia Hair Studio, a luxury salon that embodies her vision. Here, clients don't just receive a hairstyle, they experience a celebration of natural beauty. Bespoke by Damalia offers an elevated, personalized service that helps clients embrace their curls, coils, and texture with confidence.

For Damalia, the studio is both a sanctuary and a statement. It reflects her belief that textured hair deserves the same high-end experience often reserved for straight styles. By creating a space where luxury and authenticity meet, she challenges the industry's outdated beauty standards while uplifting the communities she serves.



## Advocacy and Education

Beyond artistry, Damalia is an outspoken advocate for education and inclusivity in hairstyling. She has collaborated with organizations such as Texture vs. Race and The Strand Network to train stylists on working with all hair types. She also partners with global beauty brands to develop curriculum and workshops that promote inclusivity and excellence in textured hair care.

Her approach is grounded in both science and sensitivity. She emphasizes that textured hair care is not just about mastering technique; it's about understanding the culture, heritage, and identity tied to natural hair. Through training sessions and summits, she equips stylists with the tools and mindset to serve diverse clients with skill and respect.

## Building Teams and Mentorship

With the launch of Damalia & Co International Hair Team, she extended her mission even further. This collective brings together talented hairstylists from across the United States to collaborate backstage with designers worldwide. It is not only a professional platform but also a mentorship pipeline, providing emerging stylists with the chance to gain visibility and experience in elite fashion environments.

By opening these doors, Damalia ensures that the next generation of hairstylists sees themselves not only as service providers but as artists, leaders, and changemakers. She embodies the professionalism, creativity, and discipline necessary to thrive, while also encouraging them to remain grounded in purpose and community.

## Challenges and Triumphs

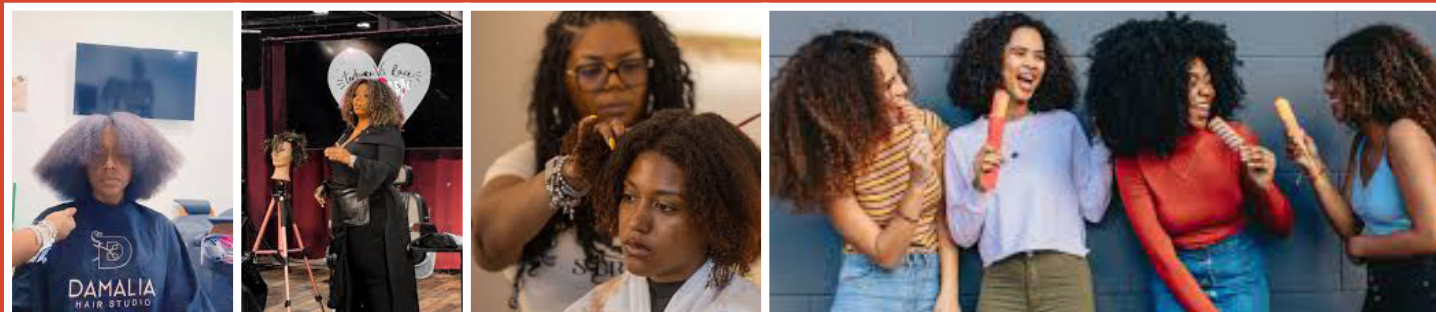
Damalia's journey has not been without obstacles. For decades, textured hair was marginalized in mainstream cosmetology education, leaving many stylists undertrained and many clients underserved. Breaking into elite fashion circuits meant constantly proving that textured hair could be styled with the same innovation, precision, and beauty as any other hair type.

Yet, with persistence and artistry, Damalia has turned challenges into triumphs. Her presence at global fashion weeks, her features in international publications, and her growing reputation as a thought leader all reinforce her impact. Each runway, editorial spread, and client transformation is a testament to her commitment: textured hair is not an afterthought; it is an art form.

## Redefining Beauty, One Stage at a Time

At the heart of Damalia's work is a deep commitment to representation and empowerment. She understands that when models walk the runway with their natural curls styled beautifully, or when a client leaves her studio feeling radiant, it sends a powerful message: beauty is diverse, and textured hair deserves to be celebrated.

Her mission is more than styling; it's about rewriting narratives. By breaking barriers in beauty, Damalia Ma-jeed is ensuring that textured hair is no longer marginalized but honored. Her legacy is already evident: she has elevated an entire community onto the global stage, and in doing so, she has inspired countless stylists and clients to see themselves differently.



# The Queen Chat

**QUEEN, LET'S TALK...**

**ABOUT SITUATIONSHIP AND WHY WE NEED TO PROMOTE SELF-LOVE**

**FROM THE AUTHOR OF QUEEN, LET'S TALK**



I say NO to situationships!

Queens, let's be real for a moment. Too many of us are out here settling for situationships, those in between, undefined "almost relationships" that leave us giving our all while receiving crumbs. We accept the bare minimum because it feels better than being alone, but ladies, let's call it what it is: settling. And settling will never serve in the long run.

A situationship might be cute at first, with late-night texts, a little attention here and there, and just enough affection to keep you holding on. It gives the illusion of closeness, without the substance of commitment. However, over time, that "almost" love starts to weigh heavily. It chips away at your confidence, your peace, and your worth. Before you know it, you're questioning yourself instead of asking why you are allowing someone to give you less than what you deserve.

The danger of a situationship is not just the lack of commitment- it's the silent message you send yourself when you stay. You are telling your spirit, "This is all I deserve." But Queen, you know better. You deserve a love that shows up in the daylight, not one that hides in the shadows. You deserve consistency, not confusion, and you deserve clarity, not "we'll see where this goes".

Here's the truth: You don't need a situationship to feel validated. What you need is self-love. Let's be clear, self-love is more than cute affirmations in the mirror or spa days. It's about standards. It's about boundaries. It's also about the courage to walk away from anyone or anything that makes you shrink instead of shine.

Queens, loving yourself means saying, "I've had enough, and I deserve more." It means realizing that loneliness is not a punishment, it's an invitation. Leading to a space where you get to pour into yourself, rediscover your passion, and reconnect with your own voice. When you fill your own cup, you stop being thirsty for half-hearted attention. You will stop mistaking convenience for care, and you will also stop giving permanent places in your heart to people who only wanted something temporary.

Ladies, let's flip the script. Instead of asking, "Why doesn't he want to commit to me?" Start asking, "Why am I accepting this treatment when I know I'm a Queen?" The shift happens the moment you recognize your value doesn't depend on who chooses you, but who you choose for yourself.

Let's stop accepting situationship, and serve as your permission slip to:

- Walk away from the "What are we?" text because you already know the answer.
- Choose peace over mixed signals. Confusion does not care.
- Pour into yourself, your goals, your healing, and your joy until your cup is overflowing.
- Stop mistaking attention for affection. Love shows up with consistency.
- Remember, your standards are not too high. They are the measure of your worth.

Queen, here's the beautiful thing: when you choose yourself, everything changes, your energy shifts, your standards rise, and the kind of love you attract becomes different, because you are no longer settling for crumbs-you are demanding the whole meal. The right love will see your worth, match your energy, and respect your boundaries. However, this will come when you stop entertaining anything less.

Queen, please remember situationships will fade, but your relationship with yourself is forever. Choose you! Love you! Protect your peace, guard your heart, and trust that real love, healthy, committed love, will find you when you no longer accept "almost" as enough. Brandy says it best, "almost does not count."

Queen, let's do less talking and more action!

NEW UPCOMING

*Author*



**ARIELLE  
PERSHAY**



BOOK RELEASE WINTER 2025

# Arts & Entertainment

## TREVI PERSHAY PRODUCTIONS

### ANNOUNCES AUDITIONS FOR TWO GROUNDBREAKING PROJECTS

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

#### A Bold Voice in Film and Theater

Trevi Pershay Productions is turning the page on a new chapter of Black storytelling. Known for crafting narratives that dig beneath the surface and uncover truths often left unspoken, founder, writer, and director Trevi Booker-Pershay is now preparing to cast for her second feature film and an upcoming Broadway-style stage play.

With auditions open now, Pershay is extending an invitation to actors, performers, and visionaries ready to take part in stories that unapologetically explore Black love, family, faith, betrayal, and redemption.



#### FEATURE FILM: TIL DEATH DO US PART – BURIED SECRETS & SILENT SCREAMS

SCHEDULED TO FILM IN APRIL 2026 IN ATLANTA, GA



#### Synopsis:

In this haunting drama, Souléan and Tyrek's marriage unravels after the devastating loss of their child. Behind closed doors lie generational pain, addiction, and unspoken truths that threaten to silence their love forever. As grief and neglect build walls between them, they must decide whether to battle their demons together or be consumed by them.

Pershay explains her motivation behind the script:

"I wanted to show that Black love isn't what Disney represents. Our love is built on struggle, hardship, forgiveness, and resilience. That's what makes it powerful."

This feature promises to be raw, heartbreaking, and unforgettable—a cinematic exploration of survival and the fierce hope to heal together.

**Audition Deadline:** Submissions are being accepted now and will close on November 1, 2025.

#### BROADWAY PRODUCTION: A SINNER'S PRAYER – ALL LIES ON ME

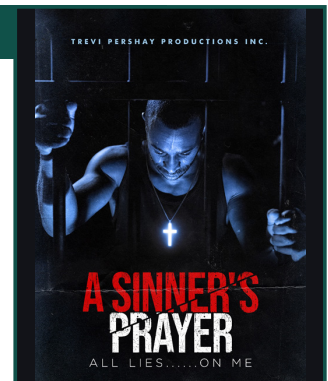
SCHEDULED TO PREMIERE IN JUNE 2026 IN NEW YORK CITY

#### Synopsis:

Desmond Walker, a preacher's son fresh out of prison, inherits his late father's church. What should be a calling becomes a battle as he faces betrayal, shame, and a corrupt clergy committee bent on his downfall. With the unshakable support of his sister Katrina, Desmond discovers that leadership is not about titles or power—it is about forgiveness, redemption, and restoring hope to those who have lost it.

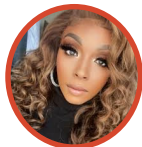
This bold stage production shines a spotlight on the tension between faith and humanity, exposing what happens when the church becomes a battleground for power instead of a sanctuary for healing.

**Audition Start Date:** November 1, 2025



## A Movement Behind the Camera

What sets these projects apart is not only the storytelling but also the commitment behind the scenes. Trevi Booker-Pershay is not just the writer—she is also stepping into the director's chair. And in a powerful move for representation, she has chosen to hire Black female directors to bring these visions to life alongside her. Among them are:



### Arielle Pershay

A rising director with a fresh perspective rooted in authenticity and emotional depth.



### Kimberly Raven

Is known for her commanding vision and ability to create bold, layered performances on stage and screen.



### Trevi Booker-Pershay

Executive Director, Executive Producer, and Writer for both projects

Together, this team represents a new wave of Black women filmmakers shaping the industry with voices that are both strong and vulnerable, yet transformative.

## On Tyler Perry and Trusting God's Plan

When asked if she would like to work with Tyler Perry and have him support her work, Trevi Booker-Pershay gave a response that reflects her grounded faith and independence:

"If that is what God intended, then that is what it will be. I'm not relying on one person to finish the sentence for me."

Her words are a reminder that while collaboration is powerful, her vision stands firmly on faith, self-determination, and the strength of her own creative voice.

## How to Audition

Actors and performers eager to audition for either project should submit their materials via email:

[trevipershayproductions@gmail.com](mailto:trevipershayproductions@gmail.com)

- Film Auditions (Til Death Do Us Part): Submissions accepted now through November 1, 2025.
- Broadway Production (A Sinner's Prayer): Auditions begin November 1, 2025.

Both projects will offer opportunities for talent to bring deeply layered, complex Black characters to life—roles that challenge and inspire.

## A Season of Storytelling

For Trevi Pershay Productions, these two projects are more than just entertainment. They are a mirror reflecting the resilience, struggles, and beauty of Black communities. By placing truth, vulnerability, and faith at the center, Pershay and her team are shaping narratives that will not only move audiences but also spark important conversations.

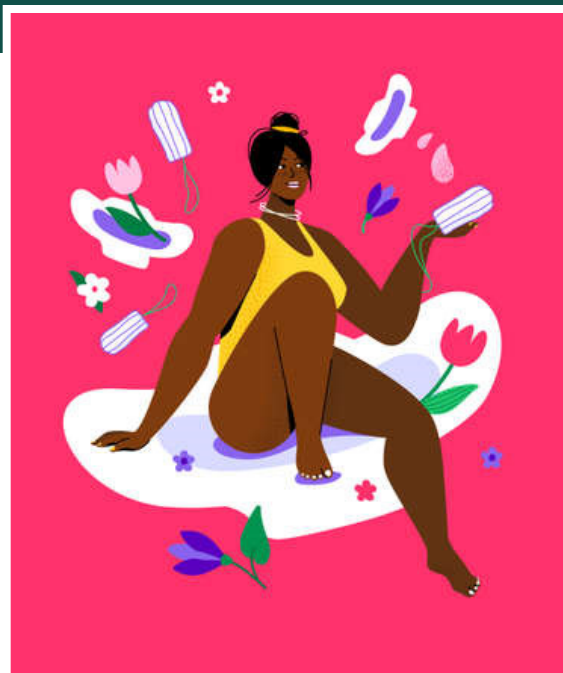
As the industry searches for authentic stories, these productions stand as proof that when Black women take the pen, the director's chair, and the stage, the results are transformative.

## Closing Note

Til Death Do Us Part – Buried Secrets & Silent Screams and A Sinner's Prayer – All Lies On Me are more than productions—they are cultural statements. They remind us that Black love, Black faith, and Black resilience are powerful stories worth telling.

So, to every actor, dreamer, and storyteller ready for the spotlight: your time is now. Submit, audition, and take your place in history with Trevi Pershay Productions.

# Beauty Spotlight



## RADIANCE & RESILIENCE SKINCARE ESSENTIALS FOR BLACK WOMEN

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE BEAUTY EDITOR

### Introduction: Skin That Tells a Story

For Black women, skin is more than a canvas—it's a reflection of heritage, beauty, and resilience. Our melanin offers natural protection from the sun, but it also requires intentional care. Issues like hyperpigmentation, uneven tone, and dryness are common concerns, yet with the proper routine and products, our skin can glow with health and confidence.

Here are must-have skincare steps—and the products that genuinely work for melanin-rich skin.

### 1. Gentle Cleansing: The First Step to Glow

Cleansing should remove impurities without stripping natural oils. Black women often battle dryness or sensitivity so that harsh cleansers can irritate.

- **Product Pick:** CeraVe Hydrating Facial Cleanser – With ceramides and hyaluronic acid, this cleanser gently removes dirt and makeup while hydrating the skin.
- **Why it works:** It respects the skin barrier, which is vital for preventing irritation and dryness in melanin-rich skin.



### 2. Targeting Hyperpigmentation: Evening Out the Tone

Hyperpigmentation, dark spots from acne, hormones, or sun exposure, is one of the most common skin concerns for Black women. Effective products focus on brightening without bleaching.

- **Product Pick:** Urban Skin Rx Even Tone Cleansing Bar – Explicitly designed for melanin-rich skin, it tackles dark spots and promotes a more even complexion.
- **Product Pick:** The Ordinary Niacinamide 10% + Zinc 1% – A budget-friendly serum that helps minimize dark marks and control oil.
- **Why it works:** Ingredients like niacinamide, vitamin C, and kojic acid gently fade discoloration while keeping skin balanced.

### 3. Hydration is Key: Lock in the Moisture

Melanin-rich skin can appear dull if not hydrated properly. Moisture keeps the skin supple and enhances its natural glow.

- **Product Pick:** SheaMoisture African Black Soap Balancing Moisturizer – Lightweight yet nourishing, especially good for combination or acne-prone skin.
- **Product Pick:** Kiehl's Ultra Facial Cream – A cult classic that provides long-lasting hydration without greasiness.
- **Why it works:** Hydrated skin heals faster, reflects light better, and reduces the appearance of fine lines and dullness.



### 4. Sun Protection: A Must for Melanin

Contrary to myth, melanin does not make us immune to sun damage. Black women can still experience hyperpigmentation, premature aging, and skin cancer without protection.

- **Product Pick:** Black Girl Sunscreen SPF 30 – Lightweight, moisturizing, and specifically formulated for darker skin tones without leaving a white cast.
- **Why it works:** This sunscreen doubles as a moisturizer, ensuring that melanin-rich skin receives the protection it deserves.

### 5. Nighttime Repair: Rejuvenate While You Rest

A nighttime routine allows skin to heal from daily stressors. Incorporating serums or treatments can enhance renewal.

- **Product Pick:** Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair Serum – Works overnight to improve texture, tone, and overall radiance.
- **Product Pick:** Youth to the People Superberry Hydrate + Glow Dream Mask – Packed with vitamin C and antioxidants to brighten and replenish.
- **Why it works:** Overnight treatments maximize the skin's natural repair process, so you wake up with refreshed, glowing skin.



### Final Thoughts: Embracing the Glow Within

Skincare for Black women is about more than beauty; it's about honoring our skin's unique needs and celebrating its resilience. With the right products, we can protect our glow, heal imperfections, and step confidently into every season.

Remember: consistency is the key. A routine tailored to your skin type and concerns will unlock the radiance you deserve.

### PRODUCT ROUND-UP

1. CeraVe Hydrating Facial Cleanser
2. Urban Skin Rx Even Tone Cleansing Bar
3. The Ordinary Niacinamide 10% + Zinc 1%
4. SheaMoisture African Black Soap Balancing Moisturizer

5. Kiehl's Ultra Facial Cream
6. Black Girl Sunscreen SPF 30
7. Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair Serum
8. Youth to the People Superberry Hydrate + Glow Dream Mask

# The Crown Room

## CROWN CARE: 3 MUST-HAVE HAIR PRODUCTS

### EVERY BLACK WOMAN SHOULD OWN

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE BEAUTY EDITOR



#### Introduction: Loving the Crown You Wear

For Black women, hair is more than beauty—it's identity, culture, and power. Whether you wear your hair naturally, relaxed, braided, or in protective styles, maintaining healthy strands requires products that respect your unique texture. The proper haircare doesn't just style—it strengthens, nourishes, and protects. As your stylist, I'm highlighting three standout products that should have a permanent spot in your hair care routine.

#### 1. Mielle Organics Rosemary Mint Scalp & Hair Strengthening Oil

Why it's a must-have: This oil has become a cult favorite—and for good reason. Infused with rosemary, mint, and biotin, it stimulates the scalp, promotes growth, and strengthens strands from root to tip.

- **Perfect for:** Women dealing with thinning edges, dryness, or breakage.
- **How to use:** Massage a few drops into the scalp 3–4 times per week, focusing on areas where you want to see growth. It can also be used to seal moisture after washing or as a hot oil treatment.
- **Editor's note:** This product is especially powerful during protective styling, keeping your scalp nourished under braids, wigs, or weaves.



#### 2. SheaMoisture Raw Shea Butter Deep Moisturizing Masque

Why it's a must-have: Natural and textured hair thrives on moisture, and this deep conditioner is a lifesaver for dry or damaged strands. Enriched with raw shea butter, argan oil, and sea kelp, it restores softness and elasticity while reducing breakage.

- **Perfect for:** 4C curls, heat-damaged hair, or anyone experiencing dryness during colder months.
- **How to use:** Apply generously after shampooing, cover with a cap, and let it sit for 20–30 minutes for maximum hydration. Add heat for even deeper penetration.
- **Editor's note:** Consistency is key. Deep conditioning once a week can completely transform the health of your hair over time.

#### 3. Camille Rose Curl Maker

Why it's a must-have: For the curly girls who love definition without the crunch, this gel is a game-changer. Infused with marshmallow and agave leaf extract, it provides lightweight hold while enhancing natural curl patterns.

- **Perfect for:** Wash-and-go styles, twist-outs, or braid-outs that need hold without stiffness.
- **How to use:** Apply to soaking wet hair, rake through with fingers, and allow to air-dry or diffuse. Pair with a leave-in conditioner for best results.
- **Editor's note:** Unlike many gels, Curl Maker won't flake, making it ideal for achieving soft, touchable curls.



#### Final Thoughts: Invest in Your Hair Health

Our crowns deserve care, patience, and the best products available. These three essentials—Mielle's growth oil, SheaMoisture's deep masque, and Camille Rose's Curl Maker—address the core needs of Black women's hair: growth, hydration, and definition. Remember, haircare isn't just vanity; it's a form of self-love.

So, whether you're nurturing your coils, rocking braids, or experimenting with new styles, these products will help you wear your crown with confidence, strength, and beauty.

TREVI PERSHAY PRODUCTIONS INC. PRESENTS

# CASTING CALL NOW SEEKING TALENT

## ROLES AVAILABLE

**Souléan James**

**Female, 35-45**

Black Elegant fashion designer;  
fierce + vulnerable.

**Tyrek James**

**Male, 35-45**

Black Charming, insecure;  
conflicted husband/father.

**Meka**

**Female, 30-40,**

Black Best friend/assistant;  
loyal yet flawed.

**Mia James**

**Female, 18-22,**

Black Daughter;  
vulnerable, addiction arc.

**Brice**

**Male, 30-40,**

Open Witty fashion manager  
(LGBTQ+).

**Oliver**

**Male, 35-45,**

European Mentor/partner;  
protective, refined.

**Emma**

**Female, 55-65,**

Black Mother; cold exterior,  
deep wounds.

**Max Duval**

**Male, 40-50,**

European Investor;  
charismatic predator.

**The Brothers**

**Male, 35-45,**

Black Marcus, Jamal, Tony,  
Deshawn, Dave; plus Vee.

## AUDITIONS OPEN

Auditions:

**Oct 25 - Nov 30, 2025**

**Atlanta Only**

Submission Deadline:

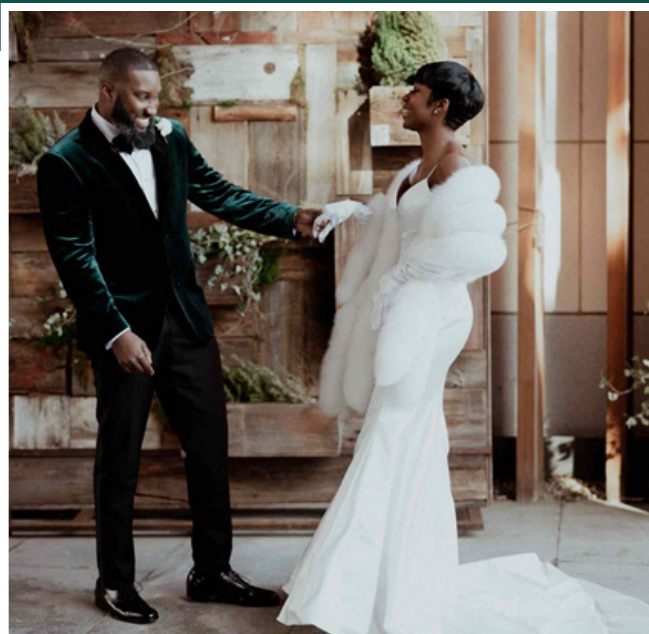
**Oct 20, 2025**

Submit headshot + resume to:  
**[trevipershayproductions@gmail.com](mailto:trevipershayproductions@gmail.com)**

# TIL DEATH DO US PART

BURIED SECRETS & SILENT SCREAMS

# Fashion Corner



## WINTER ROMANCE

### WHY MORE COUPLES ARE SAYING 'I DO' IN THE COLDEST SEASON

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

For generations, the most popular wedding seasons have been spring and summer, with couples flocking to warm days, blooming gardens, and golden sunsets. But in recent years, a quiet revolution has been taking place: more and more couples are saying “I do” in the crisp, romantic chill of winter. What was once considered an “off-season” is now becoming one of the most stylish and memorable times to celebrate love. So, why are winter weddings on the rise? Let’s dive into the unique magic of this growing trend.

#### A Romantic Atmosphere Like No Other

Winter brings with it a natural sense of intimacy and warmth. The soft glow of candlelight, roaring fireplaces, and the sparkle of snow create an atmosphere that can’t be replicated in other seasons. Couples are drawn to this cozy, romantic setting, where guests feel as though they’ve stepped into a storybook. The chilly weather encourages togetherness; guests naturally gather closer, creating a feeling of unity and connection.

Beyond the cozy indoors, winter landscapes are breathtaking. Imagine wedding portraits taken against a snow-dusted backdrop, or a bride’s gown shimmering beneath twinkling holiday lights. The season itself becomes a built-in décor theme, blending elegance with the beauty of nature.

#### Budget-Friendly Benefits

One of the most practical reasons couples consider winter weddings is the cost savings. Since winter has traditionally been an off-peak season, many venues, photographers, and vendors offer reduced rates. Couples can book their dream location, think ballrooms, vineyards, or historic estates for a fraction of the price they’d pay in June or September.

Additionally, there’s less competition. In peak months, couples often have to fight for prime dates and compromise on vendor choices. A winter wedding opens up opportunities to work with top professionals who may be booked solid during summer but are available (and sometimes even more flexible) in the colder months.

## Unique Fashion Choices

Winter weddings allow for a level of creativity in fashion that warm-weather ceremonies don't always support. Brides can opt for luxurious fabrics like velvet, satin, or brocade, and accessorize with faux-fur wraps, elegant capes, or long-sleeved gowns. Grooms can lean into tailored suits with rich textures, layered looks, or jewel-toned accents.

The season also opens up a fresh color palette. Instead of pastels or beachy hues, winter couples often embrace deep burgundies, emerald greens, midnight blues, and metallics like silver or gold. These shades create a regal and festive atmosphere perfect for the season.

## Seasonal Décor That Wows

Holiday lights, evergreen garlands, and sparkling décor naturally enhance winter weddings. Couples are discovering that the season's charm requires less effort to make a space feel magical. A December or January wedding can incorporate festive touches—like a hot cocoa bar, hanging mistletoe, or twinkling fairy lights—that bring cheer without feeling overdone.

Winter florals also make a striking statement. White roses, amaryllis, anemones, and pine greenery create chic arrangements that feel both seasonal and timeless. Paired with candles and crystal accents, winter weddings often look like something straight out of a luxury editorial spread.

## Elevated Guest Experience

Couples are increasingly focused on guest experiences, and winter weddings offer opportunities to surprise and delight. Instead of sweating through outdoor ceremonies, guests are treated to warm drinks, hearty comfort foods, and cozy lounges. Picture guests sipping mulled wine, savoring seasonal desserts like gingerbread or bread pudding, and dancing beneath a canopy of twinkling lights.

Because winter weddings tend to be smaller and more intimate, guests often walk away feeling like they honestly shared in the couple's special day. The setting fosters closeness and conversation, making the celebration memorable for everyone.

## Symbolism of a Winter Union

Winter carries a symbolic meaning that resonates with many couples. The season represents endurance, resilience, and the promise of new beginnings. In a time when nature rests and the world slows down, couples find beauty in starting their marriage during a season of reflection and renewal.

For some, there's also joy in tying their personal story to the holidays. A wedding near Christmas or New Year's adds another layer of meaning, celebrating love while family and friends are already gathered together.



## Why the Trend Is Here to Stay

As couples continue to seek unique and personal ways to celebrate their love, winter weddings are carving out their place as a desirable option. They offer romance, affordability, and a chance to stand out in a sea of summer celebrations. With social media showcasing stunning winter wedding aesthetics from snow-kissed first looks to candlelit receptions, it's no wonder this trend is gaining momentum.

Winter weddings are no longer a compromise; they're becoming the main attraction. For couples who crave magic, intimacy, and elegance, winter may be the perfect season to begin forever.

## FASHION CORNER - POPULAR PLACES TO HAVE A WINTER WEDDING

### 1. Mountain Lodges & Ski Resorts

- **Examples:** Aspen, Colorado • Lake Tahoe, California/Nevada • Park City, Utah
- **Why:** Snow-covered peaks, cozy fireplaces, and luxury ski lodges create a glamorous alpine atmosphere.
- **Picture Idea:** A couple outside with snow-dusted mountains in the background.

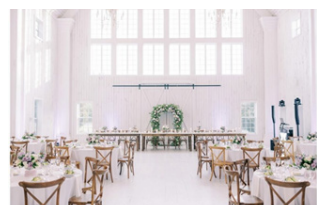


### 2. Historic Castles & Estates

- **Examples:** Oheka Castle (New York) • Mountains (North Carolina) • Castle Hill (Newport, Rhode Island)
- **Why:** Grandeur and old-world charm pair beautifully with winter elegance, especially when lit by chandeliers and candles.
- **Picture Idea:** A grand ballroom reception with evergreen décor and golden lighting.

### 3. Luxury City Hotels

- **Examples:** Georgian Hotel (New York City) • The Peninsula (Chicago) • The Fairmont (San Francisco)
- **Why:** Winter weddings in iconic hotels bring sophistication, warmth, and easy comfort for guests.
- **Picture Idea:** A ballroom with frosted-white floral arrangements and crystal chandeliers.



### 4. Countryside Barns & Farmhouses

- **Examples:** The White Sparrow Barn (Texas) • Riverside Farm (Vermont) • Blackberry Farm (Tennessee)
- **Why:** Rustic barns dressed up with fairy lights, candles, and greenery provide cozy and intimate winter vibes.
- **Picture Idea:** A barn interior filled with string lights and long farmhouse tables.

### 5. National Parks & Scenic Outdoor Destinations

- **Examples:** Yosemite National Park (California) • Glacier National Park (Montana) • Rocky Mountain National Park (Colorado)
- **Why:** For adventurous couples, snowy landscapes and natural beauty make stunning backdrops.
- **Picture Idea:** The bride and groom holding hands in front of a frozen lake or a snowy forest.



### 6. Vineyards & Wineries

- **Examples:** Napa Valley (California) • Finger Lakes (New York) • Willamette Valley (Oregon)
- **Why:** Vineyards in winter are serene, romantic, and perfect for candlelit receptions paired with local wines.
- **Picture Idea:** A cozy reception room lined with wine barrels and twinkle lights.

### 7. Destination Winter Wonderlands

- **Examples:** Banff (Canada) • Reykjavik (Iceland) • Zermatt (Switzerland)
- **Why:** Couples seeking something extraordinary can exchange vows surrounded by glaciers, hot springs, or European alpine villages.
- **Picture Idea:** A wedding arch overlooking snowy mountains or the Northern Lights.



### Final Thought:

Winter marriages are on the rise because they reflect what couples want most today—intimacy, beauty, affordability, and meaning. In the coldest season, they're finding the warmest way to begin forever.

OCTOBER

# BREAST CANCER

AWARENESS MONTH



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 CIRCLE OF BOSS SISTERS  
**C.O.B.S.**

# Spotlight Corner



## UNAPOLOGETIC STEPS

### THE JOURNEY OF BOUJEEZSTEPS

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

When your passion becomes your purpose, transformation is inevitable. For Conitra Cowans, founder of Boujeezsteps and Boujeezsteps Boutique, what started as a deeply personal commitment to protect her peace has evolved into a movement and a business designed to empower women to walk boldly, unapologetically, and beautifully into the lives they deserve.

#### From Healing to Empowerment

Conitra's journey is rooted in resilience. Determined to heal from her own challenges, she chose to honor her peace, trust her voice, and step fully into purpose. That choice became the seed for Boujeezsteps, a platform where women are encouraged to turn pain into power, obstacles into opportunities, and dreams into reality.

Through writing, workshops, and authentic storytelling, Conitra has created safe spaces where women rediscover their worth and take back ownership of their journeys. She doesn't just inspire from a distance; she walks beside them as a guide, cheerleader, and advocate. Her message is clear: every woman deserves to live unapologetically in her truth.



## Boujeezsteps Boutique: Fashion with a Mission

What makes Boujeezsteps distinctive is its holistic approach. It's not only about emotional and spiritual empowerment, but also about outward expression, too. The Boujeezsteps Boutique brings that vision to life by offering designer-quality shoes and accessories from across the world at prices that don't compromise accessibility.

But the Boutique isn't simply a shopping experience; it's an extension of Conitra's value. Customer care is personal, not transactional. She invites women to share the type of shoe or accessory they're searching for, then follows up with personalized quotes, walking them through every step of the process. Orders are handled with care and conversation, proving that fashion can be intimate, empowering, and rooted in genuine connection.

This approach mirrors Conitra's belief that empowerment should be felt in every area of life. When a woman slips on a pair of Boujeezsteps shoes, she isn't just completing an outfit; she's stepping into confidence, grace, and purpose.

## Turning Pain into Power

At its core, Boujeezsteps is more than a brand. It's philosophy. Conitra's platform insists that the hardest seasons of life do not define the end of your story. Instead, they can become stepping stones toward growth. By openly sharing her story, she empowers women to do the same, finding strength in vulnerability and peace in self-trust.

On Instagram (@boujeez\_steps), Conitra shares reflections, motivational messages, and glimpses of the work behind her mission. Her feed is both inspirational and practical, offering daily encouragement alongside bold calls to action for women to claim their voice and walk in power.

## A Legacy of Transformation

For Conitra, accolades, titles, and social recognition are secondary. The true measure of success is found in transformation:

- the woman who finds her voice after years of silence,
- the woman who rediscovers her strength after heartbreak,
- the woman who embraces peace after turmoil,
- the woman who takes one bold, unapologetic step closer to her dreams.

That is the ripple effect of Boujeezsteps. It's a legacy rooted not just in business, but in impact—an ongoing movement where fashion, faith, and fearlessness meet.

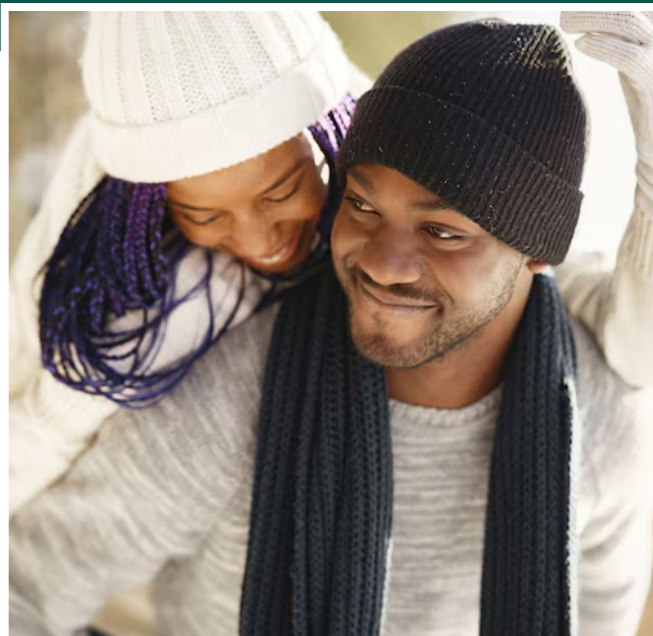
## The Journey Ahead

As Boujeezsteps continues to expand, both as a platform and a boutique, Conitra remains steadfast in her vision: to create spaces where women can heal, dream, and thrive without apology. Every product, every workshop, every post carries the same mission to remind women that they are worthy, powerful, and unstoppable.

With each step, Conitra Cowans proves that walking in purpose is not just about where you're going, but about who you become along the way. And for the women who join her on this journey, Boujeezsteps is more than a brand; it's a movement, a mindset, and a reminder that unapologetic steps are always the most powerful ones to take.



# Travel Corner



## COZY ESCAPES & ROMANTIC GETAWAYS

### THE BEST U.S. WINTER TRAVEL DESTINATIONS FOR COUPLES

WRITTEN BY: C.O.B.S EDITORIAL TEAM

Winter doesn't have to be a season of hibernation. For couples, it can be the perfect time to step away from the ordinary and step into romance. From snowy mountain retreats to warm coastal escapes, the U.S. offers countless destinations that transform cold months into cozy memories. Here are the top winter getaways for couples looking to reconnect and recharge.

#### 1. Aspen, Colorado - A Luxury Winter Wonderland

When it comes to romance in the snow, Aspen sets the standard. Couples can spend their days skiing or snowboarding together on pristine slopes, then retreat to luxury lodges with crackling fireplaces. After dark, Aspen's charming town offers intimate dining, boutique shopping, and strolls through twinkling streets, accompanied by hot chocolate. For ultimate indulgence, couples can unwind at a spa with mountain views.

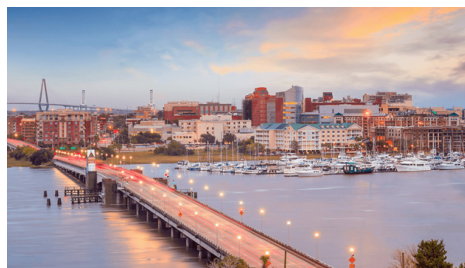
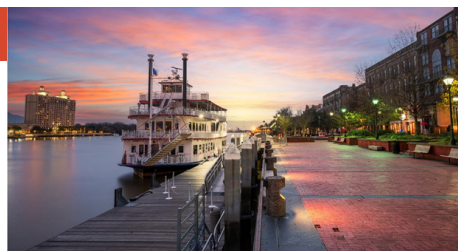


#### 2. Napa Valley, California – Wine by the Fire

Napa in the winter has a different kind of magic: quieter vineyards, intimate wine tastings, and crisp air that makes fireplaces even more inviting. Imagine sharing a glass of Cabernet by a roaring fire, soaking in a spa at a vineyard resort, or taking a romantic hot-air balloon ride over rolling hills. Winter in Napa is harvest-free, which means fewer tourists and more opportunities to enjoy private moments among the vines.

### 3. Savannah, Georgia – Southern Charm in the Winter Glow

For couples who prefer mild winters and romance steeped in history, Savannah is the perfect pick. Its cobblestone streets, oak trees draped in Spanish moss, and horse-drawn carriage rides create a timeless atmosphere. In winter, Savannah is quieter and calmer, making it ideal for hand-in-hand walks through Forsyth Park or sipping cocktails in cozy, candlelit taverns.



### 4. Charleston, South Carolina – Romance by the Coast

Charleston offers a coastal charm that shines year-round. Winter temperatures are mild, perfect for exploring pastel-colored streets, visiting art galleries, and enjoying low-country cuisine together. Couples can book a harbor cruise, take a sunset stroll on Folly Beach, or cozy up in a historic bed-and-breakfast. The city's rich history and vibrant culture make it one of the South's most romantic escapes.

### 5. Lake Tahoe, California & Nevada – Adventure and Serenity

Lake Tahoe is a playground for couples who want the best of both worlds: adventure and relaxation. Winter transforms the lake into a snowy paradise, offering opportunities for skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing. However, it also offers cozy cabins, hot tubs with stunning mountain views, and the perfect setting for snuggling up after a day outdoors. For couples who enjoy balance, Tahoe delivers both heart-racing fun and peaceful romance.



### 6. Key West, Florida – Tropical Romance Without Leaving the U.S.

For those who prefer warm breezes over snowy slopes, Key West is the perfect tropical winter escape. Couples can explore coral reefs, stroll through colorful streets, and watch the sun set at Mallory Square. Romantic bed-and-breakfasts, seafood dinners by the water, and island-style music make this destination a true paradise for two.

### 7. New York City, New York – Lights, Love, and the Big Apple

New York City in the winter is unforgettable. Whether it's skating at Rockefeller Center, walking through Central Park as snow falls, or sharing a carriage ride down Fifth Avenue, the city offers countless romantic moments. Broadway shows, rooftop igloo dining experiences, and cozy hotel lounges add to the magic. For couples who love the buzz of the city, winter in NYC is pure romance.



## Love in Every Climate

The beauty of the U.S. lies in its variety, including snowy mountains, historic cities, sunny coasts, and vibrant metropolises. No matter your couple style, whether you thrive on outdoor adventures, culinary indulgences, or cultural explorations, there's a winter destination waiting to become your love story's backdrop.

So this season, don't just endure the cold. Embrace it or escape it with the one you love, and create memories that warm your hearts long after winter fades.

# Career Corner



## THE IMPORTANCE OF STARTING A BUSINESS IN 2025 OPPORTUNITY AMID UNCERTAINTY

WRITTEN BY: ARIELLE PERSHAY

Starting a business has always been a powerful act of courage, creativity, and independence. For many, entrepreneurship is not only a pathway to financial freedom but also a chance to solve real problems, create opportunities for others, and build legacies. While the idea of launching a venture often comes with risk, the rewards, both personal and societal, can be transformative.

## WHY DOES STARTING A BUSINESS MATTER?

### 1. Ownership and financial freedom

A business allows you to take control of your financial future. Instead of relying solely on income, entrepreneurs can diversify their earnings, scale revenue streams, and build wealth that creates long-term stability for themselves and their families.

### 2. Innovations and problem-solving.

Businesses are the engines of innovation. Every successful company begins with a problem that needs solving, whether it's creating affordable products, offering better customer experience, or introducing new technologies. Entrepreneurs drive change by challenging the status quo and presenting new solutions.



### 3. Job Creation and Community Impact

Small businesses are the backbone of the economy. By starting a company, you're not just creating a job for yourself, but also generating employment for others and contributing to the local economy. These ripple effects strengthen communities and give other opportunities during times when stable work can feel uncertain.

### 4. Personal Growth and Purpose

Beyond money, running a business shapes character. It demands resilience, adaptability, and creativity. Entrepreneurs develop leadership skills, expand their networks, and discover deeper meaning by pursuing passions that align with their values.

## IS 2025 A GOOD TIME TO START A BUSINESS?

### 1. Layoffs Create a Talent Pool

With many professionals between jobs, there is greater access to skilled talent who may be open to new ventures, contract work, or even partnership opportunities. This creates a fertile environment for startups looking to build strong teams.

### 2. Shifting Consumer Needs

Economic downturns and layoffs often shift what people value, creating new demand for affordable services, flexible solutions, and innovative products. Businesses that step in to meet these evolving needs can thrive, even when traditional companies are downsizing.



### 3. Technology Levels the Playing Field

In 2025, entrepreneurs have powerful digital tools, AI, and low-cost platforms that make starting and scaling a business more accessible than ever. What once required large budgets can now be done with creativity and strategic use of technology.

### 4. Resilience Is Valued More Than Ever

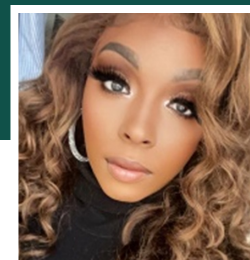
customers, and partners recognize that uncertainty is the “new normal”. A business that can demonstrate adaptability and resilience in challenging times will be even more attractive and sustainable in the long run.

## In Conclusion

Starting a business in 2025 may seem risky against the backdrop of layoffs and market uncertainty. Yet, it's precisely in these moments of disruption that entrepreneurs can identify gaps, innovate, and build something lasting. The courage to start today could mean not only personal freedom tomorrow, but also new opportunities for the people and communities around you.

In short: 2025 is not a time to retreat, it's a time to step forward. Here is the question: whether it's a good time to start a business, but rather, what problem will you solve, and how will you make your mark?

# Fitness Corner



## FALLING IN LOVE WITH EATING AND BEING HEALTHY

WRITTEN BY: ARIELLE PERSHAY



### I love food!

When people hear the words “healthy eating,” the first images that often come to mind are bland salads, steamed vegetables, or giving up every food that brings joy. For many, the idea of “being healthy” feels like punishment instead of empowerment. But authentic healthy living isn’t about restrictions, but about learning to enjoy food in a way that nourishes the body, energizes the mind, and still satisfies cravings.

The goal isn’t perfection. It’s about falling in love with food again, this time with an understanding of how it impacts overall well-being. Eating well is less about discipline and more about creating a relationship with food that feels sustainable and enjoyable.

### Rethinking “Healthy”

One of the most powerful mindset shifts is realizing that healthy eating doesn’t mean deprivation. It means making choices that balance pleasure and nutrition. A balanced lifestyle can absolutely include snacks, treats, and even candy when chosen thoughtfully.



Dark chocolate, for instance, is one of the most underrated “health foods.” Rich in antioxidants, it can improve mood, support heart health, and provide a sweet finish to a meal without spiking blood sugar in the way processed candies do. Similarly, low-sugar alternatives such as SmartSweets gummies allow people to enjoy classic flavors without the excess.

Even beverages can support healthier eating. Licorice root tea, for example, is naturally sweet and can curb sugar cravings while also soothing digestion. Small swaps like these make a big difference without taking away the joy of eating.

## WHY DOES STARTING A BUSINESS MATTER?

Healthy snacks don’t have to be limited to carrot sticks or plain celery. Many everyday foods are both satisfying and surprisingly good for you:

### Popcorn

When air-popped, popcorn is a whole grain high in fiber and antioxidants. A sprinkle of Cinnamon, chili powder, or nutritional yeast can transform it into a flavorful, guilt-free snack.



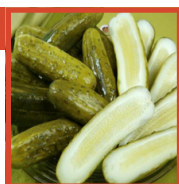
### Dark chocolate-covered almonds

Combining protein, healthy fats, and antioxidants, this snack is both indulgent and nutritious.



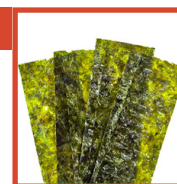
### Pickles

Low in calories and rich in probiotics, they support gut health while providing a satisfying crunch.



### Seaweed snacks

These salty, crunchy sheets are rich in minerals such as iodine, magnesium, and iron.



### Frozen grapes

Often compared to candy in texture and taste, they're refreshing, naturally sweet, and packed with antioxidants.



### Roasted chickpeas

Crunchy, flavorful, and protein-packed, they make a great alternative to chips.



## FOODS THAT NOURISH AND SATISFY

Healthy eating extends beyond snacks. Many nutrient-dense foods are naturally flavorful and can easily be incorporated into daily meals:

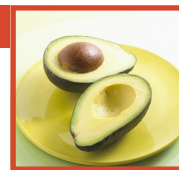
### Sweet potatoes

High in fiber and vitamin A, they can be roasted, mashed, or even turned into dessert-like dishes with Cinnamon.



### Avocados

Packed with healthy fats, they promote heart and brain health while adding creaminess to toast, smoothies, or salads.



### Berries

**(blueberries, blackberries, raspberries)**  
Sweet enough to feel indulgent, but loaded with antioxidants that fight aging and support the immune system.



### Greek yogurt with honey

Creamy, protein-rich, and versatile, it can replace heavy desserts when topped with fruit or granola.



### Oats and chia seeds

These pantry staples balance blood sugar, keep you full longer, and can be transformed into breakfast bowls, overnight oats, or puddings that taste like dessert.



### Spices

like Cinnamon, turmeric, ginger, and cayenne aren't just flavor boosters—they also reduce inflammation, balance blood sugar, and aid digestion.



These foods demonstrate that "healthy" can also mean flavorful, comforting, and deeply satisfying.

## Shifting the Narrative

Healthy eating works best when viewed as an act of self-care rather than restriction. Every food choice either helps or hinders energy, focus, and long-term wellness. By approaching meals as a way to fuel and honor the body, it becomes easier to choose foods that are both enjoyable and nourishing.

Instead of saying, "I can't have this," a more empowering mindset is, "I choose this because I deserve to feel good." This shift takes away the sense of punishment and replaces it with pride and empowerment.

Cravings don't need to be denied—they need to be met differently. Want something sweet? Dark chocolate, berries, or frozen fruit can satisfy. Want something salty? Popcorn, pickles, or roasted chickpeas are excellent choices. With the proper perspective, healthy eating becomes less about restriction and more about abundance.

## Final Thoughts

Falling in love with eating and being healthy is about creating balance, enjoying food, and fueling the body with choices that enhance life rather than limit it. It's about consistency, not perfection. Healthy living does not mean saying goodbye to snacks, sweets, or comfort—it means choosing versions of those foods that serve your body well.

The more people view healthy eating as a joyful, empowering part of life rather than a restrictive diet, the more sustainable it becomes. Food should not just keep us alive—it should make us feel alive.



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## PASTOR MICHAEL (MIKE) MCCLEARY JR.

PASTOR MIKE JR.: THE PASTOR, THE ARTIST, THE INNOVATOR OF KINGDOM CULTURE