

# S O L ' ,

Edition One | 2024

S O L ' | STYLE FROM WITHIN

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



03

## EDITOR'S CORNER

Same God, Growing You:  
Navigating 2024 with Faith and Resilience

---

05

## LINDA SIFUMBA

Private Confidence Precedes  
Public Confirmation: Navigating  
Identity and Self-Discovery

---

13

## FAITHFUL FITNESS

Honoring God Through Health  
and Wellness Goals

---

15

## SKIN TRENDS THAT NEED TO BE CANCELLED

Navigating the Minefield of What  
to Cancel

---

19

## PAIN

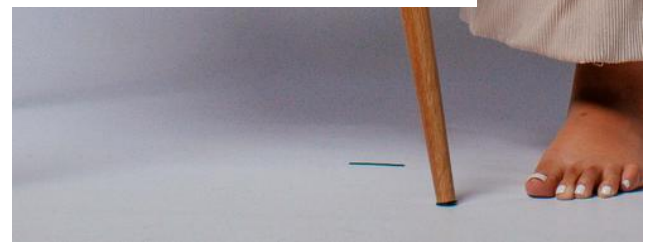
Understanding Pain, Sacrifice,  
and Redemption: A Reflection on  
the Crucifixion

---

23

## NAVIGATING MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

*"Divorce doesn't define me"*  
Navigating Sacred Bonds and  
Spiritual Intimacy





## FROM THE EDITOR

---

I know we are well into 2024, and saying this might sound tacky, but Happy New Year! We are back at it again, and I am more excited than ever; we have set ourselves higher goals even though this is just the beginning. Since this is our first interaction in 2024, let us catch up and let us chat. How is 2024? We are almost done with the first quarter, besides the rise of prices of just about everything and the "Made for Me by Muni Long" on everyone's TikTok and reels. Yes, even on one of S O L's reels, what has been happening? I always try to be genuine here. Customary to this, I will be real. 2024 has been a lot. It has been challenging and unexpected in many ways; I was not prepared for the challenges the Lord has put me through, and I am just being accurate. It has been challenging, to say the least. It feels as though we all said, "3 2 1, Happy New Year " expecting to change our habits, lose that weight, start the business and ironically, you are the same old you. As I am still faced with the same problems and issues, I wonder, "Does God hear me?" "Lord, you know we are in a new year; why do I have the same problems?" This is why I titled this first edit: Same God, old me.

For those of you who are killing it in 2024, I firmly believe that we should always clap for those around us because our time will come. They will clap for us, but those of you who thought God was going to come through hard, those fireworks and prayers you made at 00:00 in 2023, and nothing is happening, nothing is changing, things are



still the same or better yet, they might be worse. You are over here in March saying, "Lord, do you see me?" Here is some news: you are not alone; you are not alone in feeling that things have not changed, the fasting did not do anything, and the prayers are not working; I am still in a space where God does His work. It is where He starts to bring you closer and allows you to remember that it is His will, plan, and work that will pull you through everything. As much as you are still the same old you, He is the same old God who will never put you in a situation He can not pull you through.

He will always be on the throne, He will always speak in His Word, He will always lead us and guide us, and sometimes it does feel like it is still the old you, but what you should know is as long you are growing in Christ, spending time in His Word reminding yourself who He is, finding yourself and your identity in Him -A piece of advice I got from our cover girl, also how beautiful is she!- You allow God to shape and mold you as He wants to, as such you are not the old you.

This editor's corner for the magazine's first edition reminds you that yes, you will feel like you are not moving. Your life is not like your friend's, like you have been clapping for your circle. You are still going to weddings, wondering if your turn will come because your plan has not worked out. However, I am here to remind you of the strength of God, that He is still the same; He does not care what year or month, the same God that died on the cross for us, He loved us even when we were not meant to be loved. This is the same God that reminds you to keep going, to keep believing, to keep trusting even when it feels like nothing is happening.

Change that to *Same God, growing you.*

## MIGDAL - OZ: MY STRONGHOLD



As I was thinking about the theme, which stemmed from “same God, old me”. I did not know what would be our anchor scripture or Word; I knew what I felt. What the Lord gave to me, and I knew I had to express these emotions. However, I did not know where in the scripture to go to. After some searching, the Word Migdal - Oz came, and I knew the Word my stronghold was relatable. When things have gone upside down or are not leading in the direction you expected, that is when we run to our strong tower, something that is stable and will not change as our situation or circumstances. A pillar that is constantly in our lives. Thus the Word Migdal - Oz comes from the Hebrew name of God meaning “strong tower or stronghold”. This is also a dense structure and a position of strength and safety and I feel that is precisely what God should be when you think the same, when you feel you are not growing, and the unexpected has happened.

When you undergo change, you appreciate consistency. You need a place to run to, a place that will not change, that will be your defence and a place of safety and this is why I said that we all need to change our mindset (myself included) that it is not “Same God, old me” it is *Same God, growing you* and that does not mean you do not need your stronghold. You need it now more than ever but it also means that the growth that is happening is something God is working on and you need to be patient in that growth you need to be kind in that growth, and you need to be good to yourself in that growth and most of all you need to remember that growth allows you to constantly run back to your stronghold and depend on your stronghold so Migdal - Oz.

Proverbs 18:10 (KJV) **“The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe”**. Run to the Lord because your stronghold is there and the understanding and growth of who you are lies there too.

FOUNDER | CHIEF EDITOR  
MWENYA CHITAMBALA



# LINDA SIFUMBA

She is a lady hailing from the Vaal region, having spent her formative years there under the care of her grandmother. Orphaned at the tender age of two, she was lovingly raised and formally adopted by her grandmother. Her journey into the world of fashion commenced at LISOF, where she pursued a degree in Commercial Fashion, igniting her passion for the industry. Beginning as a fashion intern for the Fashion Editor at Sunday Times' Fashion Weekly, she honed her skills and later ventured into visual merchandising with Mango clothing. Additionally, she delved into styling for music videos and advertisements while concurrently engaged in fashion talks in collaboration with various publication

# PRIVATE CONFIDENCE PRECEDES PUBLIC CONFIRMATION: NAVIGATING IDENTITY AND SELF-DISCOVERY

WRITTEN BY: MWENYA CHITAMBALA  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY: MZIIIE MNCUBE



## 1. What would the title of your autobiography be? - In one sentence, how would you capture Linda?

“Private confidence comes before public confirmation”  
Growing up, you might struggle with identity, this is something I also struggled with. Growing up without parents was an internal struggle to find who I am, where I come from, and in essence my identity. I came to an understanding that I need to find my confidence within myself privately before asking the world to confirm me and tell me who I am. This statement reminds me of the practice and discipline in self-discovery, identity, and understanding.

## 2. Can you please give us a little insight into your childhood and early life? - Consider where you were born and raised and your fondest memory.

My childhood was amazing. Being raised by my grandmother was incredible, and there was never a moment where I felt like I needed anything in life. We were not the wealthiest, but she always made sure I never lacked anything. She ensured that I had the best education. I remember when I was younger, she had moved me between 3 nursery schools and about 3 primary schools because she wanted to find the right fit for me and where she knew I could receive the best education, learning the necessary fundamentals for me to succeed in life. She is the person who introduced me to God. To put it simply, my grandmother was my childhood.

## 3. Who or what are some of your greatest style influences, and why? How have you implemented these influences in your style today?

Sofia Richie. I enjoy her style. She is straightforward and sophisticated in her approach to fashion and does not try too hard. She is very unassuming, and I love her simplicity and relatability, her causal approach to her style of dressing, in a classy and elegant way I enjoy simplicity, and I do not try too hard. I wear what works for me, and that is longevity; when I buy a piece, I want something that will last me a few years, not something that fades quickly.

## 4. Would you mind telling us what sparked your interest in fashion and the moment you knew you had to be in the fashion industry?

I grew up being such a tomboy, and I had a lot of guy friends. I would be the girl playing cars and soccer with my friends and always coming back with scars. The older I got, the more I became intrigued with femininity and the concept of being a woman, that concept has always been intriguing to me.

Fashion communicates taking care of yourself and how people perceive you. Unfortunately, people do not see your personality and character at first glance, they see what you look like and how you are dressed. It subconsciously relates to them who you are and what to expect from you, and that has been an exciting

concept for me. The psychology behind it you know. Clothes are excellent in how they fall on your skin, how people are creative in how they make clothes fall on their skin and how people wear each item. How one item can look different on another person and how different body types can communicate different things

**5. Please share, what were some of your biggest fears going into the fashion industry and how you overcame those fears.**

That I would not be accepted, my creativity would not be accepted and who I am would not be accepted. I was always afraid that I might be too much or too out of the box or that my ideas were not valid.

When it comes to overcoming these fears, it is the statement that I said earlier, "private confidence comes before private confirmation". It is understanding and having that confidence within myself that whatever concept I come up with, many people may have different opinions about it. Still, I need to stand on it because it is different, and when things change or when you are exposed to something new as an individual, it is always scary or challenging; this is why art is what it is, and that is why music is what it is. When it is new to the ear, it is a surprise, the different genres you hear; when you heard Amapaino before, you thought, "I do not like it", but now you have taken a liking to it. The concept of newness and understanding that newness comes from an individual, and so allowing yourself to be that individual sometimes. To be the voice that is unique to you, sacred to you and different. Embracing that and having the confidence to express that and not fear it, because whatever you express might not look like anything you have seen before, or you are the one setting the tone. It is fine. It is a scary thing to do, but it is necessary in every industry and not just in fashion.

**6. Looking back at your career, what are some of the things you wish you embraced more and why?**

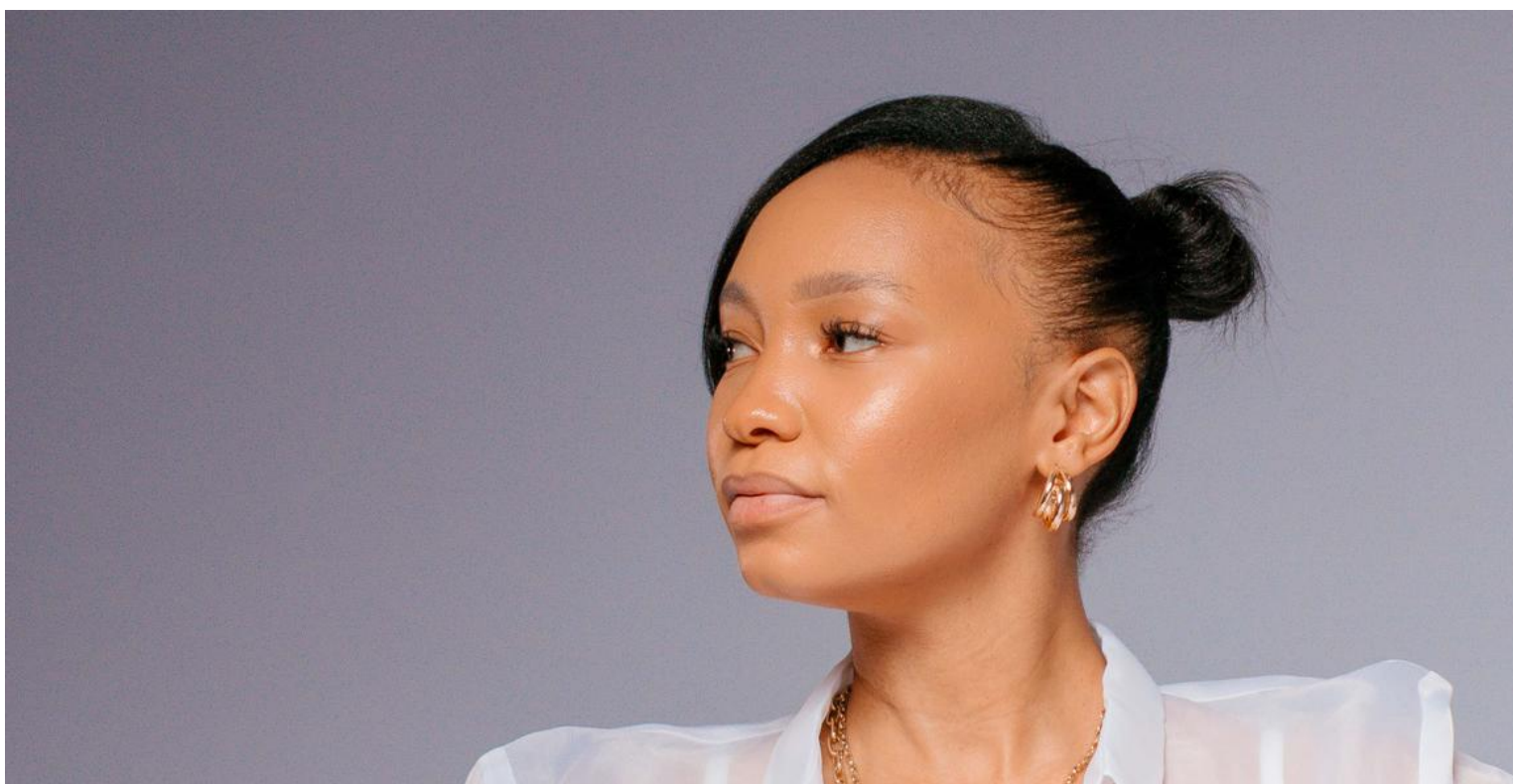
I wish I embraced my quirks more. I live with anxiety, and I have many quirks in the way I talk and act. When I think, I always look up because I see my thoughts, I was once told in high school that when I do that, I look dumb. I love this about myself now. Because I have come to understand that, that is how I communicate I see my thoughts and doing this allows me to avoid any distractions, focus my thoughts and place things into perspective for myself before I articulate my thoughts to the next person.

**7. What is the best business or life advice you have read or received?**

Embracing my confidence, embracing my individuality, embracing my difference, embracing myself because that is a niche market that exists and if it does not, you are creating a niche market that does not exist. When I look at the industry that I am in, I need to identify the gap, what is needed, what I struggle with, and what I think should exist, once identified, I go for it because I am creating something to fulfil a need that exists in the market.

**8. What advice do you have for someone looking to venture into a career in fashion?**

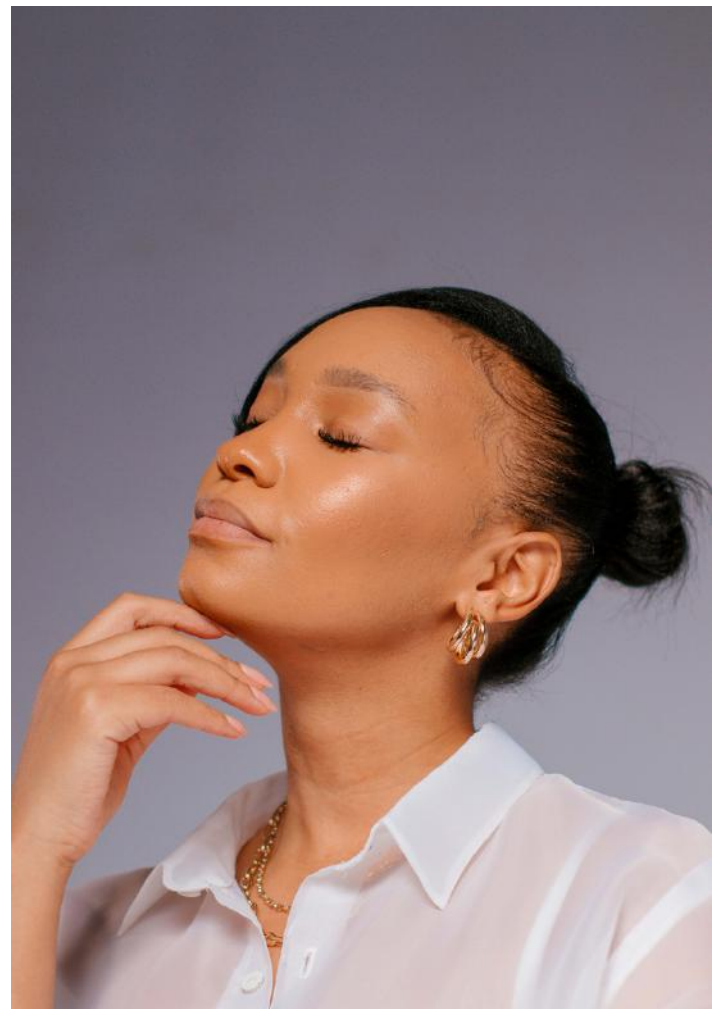
Do you want to go for it or do you not? When you do want to go for it, you need to make that decision and go for it because the fashion industry is complex and so hard. It is a small market with so many facets, you need to know how to approach it. You can go into the commercial fashion business, you can do your fashion buying for retail companies, or you can be a visual merchandiser and work in retail spaces, or you can be a fashion designer, or you can be a fashion stylist, or you can be an editor, it all depends on how you want



to focus your fashion career. If you are young and starting, you need to expose yourself to all facets of the fashion industry. I think you should have at least one retail experience and expose yourself to all aspects of the fashion industry. Approach the fashion industry by exposing yourself to all fashion elements to understand what your fashion love is.

**9. Please describe your first encounter with God and your journey to becoming a Christian.**

There have been many moments; I do not think there is ever one moment where you interact with God. I believe with different aspects of your life, you experience God. My first experience was quite early on. They were doing the alter call at church, generally during this time, as kids we were playing outside, but at that moment, I was inside the church, and they were calling people to come to the front, and there I was, going to the front as a kid - I do not understand what I am doing. Still, something was pulling me to the front, and that was an experience with God. The older I got there were many other isolated encounters with God. The more I understood fasting and praying the more I understood the depth of connecting with God. I used to serve at a mega church and I used to be an usher leader and a youth leader and I was very busy in the church. However, I had felt the furthest away from God although I was at church on Fridays and Sundays every week consistently. I had felt very far from God, I could not hear God's voice and I felt like I was working so much and it was based on, "I am working for God in the house of the Lord" Indeed my relationship with God was excellent but I think the moment I came back to God is when I stopped serving at the church and I left the church, started seeking God for myself and asking God, "who are You, who are You in my life, how does Your voice sound like to me and how do You speak to me, how do You communicate with me, I want to hear You, I do not want to hear someone else tell me who You are to me and I do not want to hear someone else tell me how I should experience You, I want to experience You for myself so let us build and establish our real relationship" and I think that is the first time I genuinely connected with God. From then onwards my love language with God has been fasting and praying when I feel led and called to. Every day talking to God but most importantly- not equally importantly- Listening! Me and my God. I do not possess God, He is not mine in the sense that He belongs to me, He is way too big, unfathomable, beyond existence, beyond my understanding beyond anything that exists and that does not. He is omnipresent. He is my God in the sense that I can feel Him, I experience personal miracles and revelations with Him, and He opens my eyes to so many things. So many possibilities and opportunities that I would never be able to experience without His presence in my life. His Spirit lives inside me in such a powerful way. I can never be able to articulate how I feel and experience His presence, it is so deep and intimate. When I say my God I mean it in the most respectful and personal way possible.





#### **10. What is a relationship with God according to you?**

A relationship with God is intimacy. It is sacred and not something you do in front of everyone. What you do in front of everyone should only be an extension of what you do privately or else it is performative and has ulterior motives. As Matthew 6:3-5 says **“so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray to stand in the synagogues and on the reward”**.

When I read these scriptures, they constantly communicate secrecy, intimacy, and hiddenness. Jesus says, “Go into your room, close the door and pray,” I think there is such importance in the secrecy of what you do with God. People must not know or see what you do with God and for God, and that is why I believe a relationship with God is intimacy and secrecy, a “secret place”, a “hidden place” finding seeking God in a tranquil and sacred place, where you and God meet.

#### **11. Knowing what you know today, what would you say to younger Linda regarding her walk with Christ—something you know she needed to hear?**

It is going to be okay. Also, I do not know if I would go back and try and tell her anything because I think the pain she needed to go through, I think the confusion she needed to go through and the distractions she needed to go through to get closer to God. I feel like without all those things, she would never really know God the way she does today, I feel like if I were to warn her, I would have taken her out of her journey prematurely, that she should be walking to know God, who He is. I would probably smile and nod so that she would feel affirmed that you are okay, it is going to be okay.

#### **12. How does your style and your relationship with Christ blend into your daily life?**

For a long time, I have tried to find my style and identity in clothing to see what works best for the kind of person I am. There have been moments where I have dressed according to trends. I have also dressed revealing before. I have done different facets of styling. Still, with God, the closer I get to God, the more I gravitate towards slight modesty, class, elegance, and a simple approach to fashion and that you do not need to try so hard; you need to be yourself in what you wear. I think about God; I need to be myself in my relationship with Him. I do not have to change, I do not have to try too hard, and I do not need to be a certain way to be accepted by God.

#### **13. How has the transition from being single to married been for you and how has your relationship with God influenced that transition?**

I met my husband through a mutual friend. His best friend is my best friend’s friend’s husband. My friend had always told me about this guy, and I had gone through a hectic break-up, and I took a year where I was not pursuing a relationship. She kept pushing me, and I kept declining. Then one day, I had a post up wishing her a happy birthday, and she reposted it, and then he started asking, still in the period of life where I was not pursuing a man.

I remember praying that "my husband will be the man that will take me back to church", and it had already been three years since I was not plugged into a church. It was me trying to discover God and find God intimately and trying to cultivate that for myself, and one of my prayer items in terms of marriage and a man was "he will take me to church".

Eventually, I decided to give him a chance, and we started chatting on Instagram. We came into the conversation very guarded because he, too, had gone through something that had hurt him. We would not care if we lost each other, we were very straightforward in our conversations regarding this as what we wanted, and there was no compromise.

There was a moment where I was typing to him, "I think we need to pray and fast about what is happening between us", as I wanted to make sure this was something from the Lord, and as I sent that message, he sent me a church flyer that says "fasting and prayer for the week" like literally the same time, but it gets crazier because my gran for a whole two years has been telling me about this church and so when he sent me that flyer it was the church my gran had been telling me to go too. We fasted, prayed, and heard from the Lord, and I think God confirmed a lot for me. On our first date, he took me to church, which was his church celebration, and that is when we eventually exchanged numbers. We started dating and eventually got married.

The transition from being single to married has been challenging because I have always taken care of myself; I have been very independent in the way I look after myself, paying my rent, buying my food and sending money back home for my gran, and to have someone come in and say, "I want to assist you" and "I want to take care of you", "I want to be the man for you" even in my past relationships it has been me protecting myself in my past relationships and I had never had someone to say "I want to take care of you" so it was always a clash. Still, eventually, I got to a place of surrender and understanding that God is our bridegroom. We, the church, are his bride, understanding the idea of submission and that my husband is the head of our home has been such a profound revelation for me to reconcile with it and let it settle in my spirit.

#### **14. When did that submission happen for you?**

It has always been through prayer and the holy spirit working on my heart. I can not tell you a specific moment when it occurred; it has been a gradual change every single day, but also, the man that God has made him to be has allowed me to be more submissive. I am not afraid to submit to him because this knowledge has made me confident enough to submit to him, and I think seeing him and seeing his relationship with God has given me the confidence to trust and submit to him.

Submission for me has always meant I must trust you enough; it is a vulnerability and total surrender. And now it means I trust God enough and have enough faith in God to submit to my husband.

My relationship with God has influenced that transition because it is how we submit to God. After all, we have





faith in Him. It is not easy to do that because we do not know what tomorrow holds. Still, we choose to trust and have faith because faith believes in the unseen, consistent submission in your relationship with God is your consistent submission to your husband. If God sent this man, then you are submitting to the concept, purpose, and will of God. If that ends, then you will continue to submit to God both fundamentally and ultimately to the purpose and will of God. In marriage, it is how you surrender to your marriage, and how you surrender to God is how you do so.

**15. What do you think black women need more of?**

They should hear more, "Relax, calm down, have peace, sleep, you are loved," and reassure themselves that they do not have to overwork themselves.

We have learnt to be strong, and the world treats us this way, and they throw everything at us. Sometimes we need to hear, "Black does crack" and that is okay.

**16. In an ideal world, what does Linda's life look like in the next ten years? How do you hope you would have grown and how do you hope you could stay the same?**

I do not do that.

I am happy with where I am right now, I have learned a lot in my life and have romantic dreams of what I hope to achieve. A lot of the time, it changes. When I look back at my life. I had always expected, that at a certain point, I would be this or have that or would have accomplished this, when I look at it again I do not want that anymore, or it has always been, that I have not achieved that thing, so I have failed, and mostly have realised it was never what God wanted for me in the first place. I do not like entertaining that. I enjoy being where I am and where God has me today.

Idealistically, I just want to be where God has me and where God wants me to be.

**17. What is your fashion guilty pleasure and why?**

Everything related to fashion. Every single fashion item has a different genre. I can not choose a guilty pleasure.

**18. What excites you about the current fashion landscape in South Africa?**

I love that we are taking back our identity in terms of prints. We are not allowing international brands to steal from us anymore; we are taking it back and defining ourselves with it now. I love that we are taking all of our traditional prints, our cultures, and who we are as Africans, and I love the transition of taking it back so that it can be reintroduced from its source; I love that in terms of our South African fashion or African fashion is how we embrace our Africanism which is something that we have celebrated for years. I enjoy how we can communicate who we are as an African country through dress, how we make it global, and how the public enjoys it.

**19. Share up to five fun facts about you - hidden talents, big accomplishments, or other things you do that people may not know about!**

1. I can sing
2. I won a show called She's The One on SABC 3. The grand prize was money and a car.
3. I am Xhosa
4. I love to cook
5. I can prophesy, and I am a Dreamer.

*When I read these scriptures, they constantly communicate secrecy, intimacy, and hiddenness. Jesus says, "Go into your room, close the door and pray," I think there is such importance in the secrecy of what you do with God.*

*- Linda Sifumba*





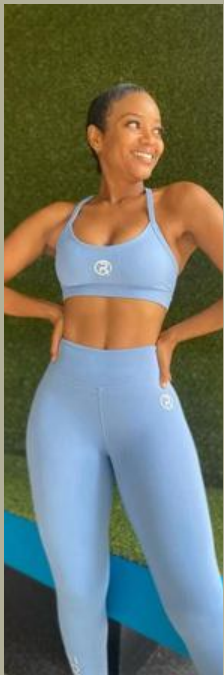
# FAITHFUL FITNESS

## HONOURING GOD THROUGH HEALTH AND WELLNESS GOALS

WRITTEN BY AMO KGORI

The first quarter of every year is when most people set their New Year's resolutions and work towards their goals in all areas of their lives. Research indicates that 77% of resolutioners kept their pledge for one week, but only 19% maintained their goal to the 1-2 years mark.

One particular area where most people make New Year's resolutions, but do not follow through is fitness and wellness. This is caused by various factors including setting unrealistic goals, and becoming too obsessive which is hard to sustain over time or depending solely on their strength to accomplish those goals. Our spiritual strength impacts our physical wellness, enabling us to live out our faith fully. Embracing a healthy lifestyle is not only for personal benefit, it means living out our faith. By taking care of our bodies, we honour God and equip ourselves to better serve His Purpose. The Bible warns against being a slave to anything including fitness wellness and even food in 1 Corinthians 6:12 **"I have the right to do anything," but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything"**. Scripture also addresses our motives warning against vanity in 1 Samuel 16:7 **"But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"**.



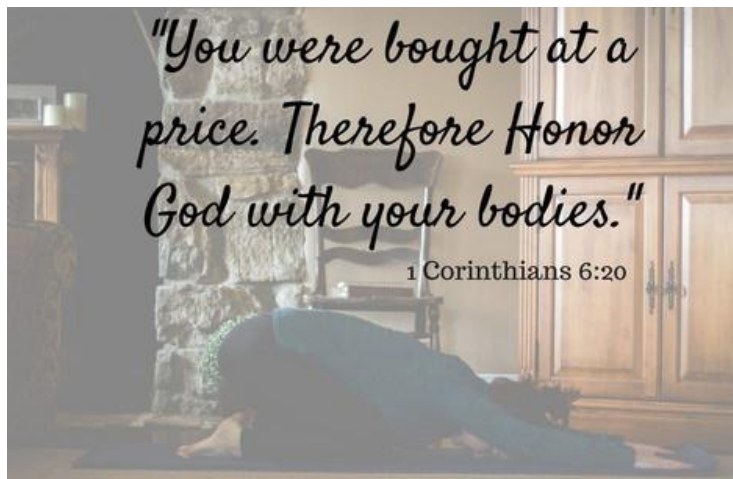
### GET TO KNOW THE AUTHOR AMO KGORI

In 2017, Amo Kgori embarked on a transformative journey, overcoming weight issues, depression, and unemployment. As a wellness coach, she has guided over 100 clients toward holistic wellness, emphasizing healthy habits and spirituality. Motivated by South Africa's unhealthy lifestyle rankings, Amo aims to inspire positive change, envisioning a future where self-love and wellness are integral parts of society.

The main purpose of being healthy and fit, body, mind and soul is to serve God better, it is not merely for others to notice and admire us. There is nothing wrong with being a motivation to others, but our God is jealous and He wants us to glorify Him above all and in everything that we do. Our bodies were made by God, for God And He cares about our bodies. Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. The Bible affirms in 1 Timothy 4:8 that **“physical training is good, but training for Godliness is much better and promises benefits in this life and in the life to come”**. Being holistically healthy, body, mind and soul will help us better fulfil our God-given purpose in so many ways. Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health, it can improve your brain health, help manage your weight, reduce the risk of disease, strengthen bones, build muscles, improve energy levels, provide emotional highs that come from the release of Endorphins and improve your ability to do everyday activities with ease. The discipline and consistency that comes with daily training,

overflow into other areas of our lives. If we continue to pursue our fitness and wellness goals as well as focusing on looking after our bodies for the sake of our soul, it is only in partnership with God and it is also in inviting Him in every physical activity, in exercising to serve others.

Although I tried many different things related to fitness and overall wellness, now it all boils down to the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, self-control, faithfulness and lastly, gentleness. Whether I am carving out 30 minutes each day or an hour a few days each week, I have made a habit of fighting for glory in Christ through the habit of daily exercise. Fitness is worth so much more than a sexy body, a small waist, solid abs, and bigger glutes. It is a gateway towards deeper love and faith in God and in self. For me getting my soul happy in Christ means that I start my day with prayer, devotion and exercise to better focus on the truths of God’s Word and the purpose of my life. I affirm the Word of God throughout my most challenging sets and reps, I exercise even when I am in a period of fasting and prayer, I eat to nourish my body, I am mindful of my self-talk, I serve others by coaching free online boot camps and I thank God for the gift of movement daily.



Sometimes, we are so focused on our daily lives and problems that we miss opportunities to glorify God in our daily activities. If we ask God to keep us alert to these opportunities, He will help us to see them. Your desire itself to serve God is a way to glorify Him.

As we take on the rest of 2024 either setting new or continuing with our old resolutions, I challenge you to focus on God and your goals. Take it one day at a time and remember, the *Same God, growing you.*



# SKIN TRENDS THAT NEED TO BE CANCELLED

WRITTEN BY HAJIE



## GET TO KNOW THE AUTHOR

### HAJIE

Hajie, a born-and-raised Pretorian writer and content producer. She was born on December 15th, she is deeply passionate about self-care, film, and television. However, music holds a special place as her foremost love. Her overarching aim is to glorify God through navigating the complexities of life with purpose and intention.

We have all wandered down the 'skin care' rabbit hole a few times in search of the greatest remedies for achieving our skin goals. Even though a weekly consultation with Miss Google about what is new can prove to be harmless and sometimes beneficial, some trends will do you more damage than good. With that in mind, here are a few trends and some old remedies that deserve to be #cancelled.

# 1. Slugging

**Problem: It is kind of complicated.**

Slugging is a trend that has been doing the rounds on social media and involves slathering your face with a petrolatum-based occlusive moisturizer right before bed. The whole idea of slugging is to create a physical barrier on the skin using products like Vaseline to keep the skin moist and hydrated. In theory, this sounds like a simple and inexpensive way to have soft, supple, and hydrated skin. Unfortunately, it is a lot more complicated than that.

Slugging is normally the last step in your skincare routine. The occlusive moisturizer is applied after all your nighttime creams and serums to allow the creams and serums to penetrate deeper into the skin for them to do a better job. The problem with this is that if your regular serums and creams contain active ingredients like retinoids and/or Vitamin C, the strength of these actives goes beyond the recommended dosage which could lead to inflammation and irritation.

Other complications brought on by slugging include acne and blackhead breakouts, especially for oilier skin types, and irritation associated with using occlusives that contain additives and perfumes. Our advice with this trend is to do it once in a while or to heal your face from sun damage or an eczema breakout. Avoid the actives and opt for humectants instead on slugging days.



# 2. DIY Micro-needling

**Problem: Girl, you are not a dermatologist.**

Micro-needling is a procedure whereby tiny needles are inserted into the upper layer of the skin to stimulate your skin's healing process, so it produces more collagen and elastin giving you a more youthful look. This procedure is normally used to remedy scars, fine lines, wrinkles, discolouration, and stretch marks.

However, unless you are qualified to perform procedures as serious as micro-needling, it is highly advisable to leave this practice to the professionals. Not only could you contract an infection from not cleaning your skin or the tool efficiently before the procedure, but you could also cause permanent scarring or damage to your skin.

# 3. Pore strips and vacuums

**Problem: Beauty should not be this painful.**

As a result of the war on pimples and blackheads, beloved scientists invented the pore vacuum. Even though the idea of a magical wand that removes debris from your face leaving it bump-free is a fantastic one, no noble prizes will be awarded for the pore vacuum anytime soon.

The pore vacuum is a hand-held battery-operated device that applies suction to remove grime and dirt from pores to help prevent pimples and blackheads. However, the almost definite misuse of this device has horrible and even irreparable consequences.

The biggest risk associated with pore vacuums is permanent broken capillaries. In an article in Refinery29, Dr Ukeleghe, founder of SKNDOCTOR expands on the risks of pore vacuuming by explaining that a device like this is extremely traumatizing to the skin and may cause hyperpigmentation, scarring, and significant redness or bruising.

Another trend inspired by blackhead hate is the pore strip. Although less complicated than the pore vacuum device, they are still quite a menace to your skin if not used responsibly.

For those who do not know what a pore strip is, it is an adhesive band-aid-like patch that is normally pressed onto the nose and peeled off to remove blackheads. Pore strips are generally safe to use. However, if left on the skin for too long or ripped off the skin, irritation and micro-tears to the skin can occur which can lead to inflammation, redness, and hyperpigmentation.

P.S. A peel-off mask (the type that clings to your skin) is just a giant pore strip!

The safest way to rid yourself of blackheads is to invest in a fabulous exfoliator, get a quality retinoid, and wash your face twice a day. Sure it may take a little longer to achieve the desired results, but nothing worth having is ever achieved in a hurry.





A blurred portrait of a woman with long dark hair, looking down, with the word "PAIN" overlaid in large white letters.

**PAIN**

# Understanding Pain, Sacrifice, and Redemption: A Reflection on the Crucifixion

WRITTEN BY S O L'

Do any of us know pain? Okay, we have all felt pain in its many forms. From having your hair braided for 2 days which can be seriously painful, to being left behind in a place you are unfamiliar with- okay this might not be serious pain- but it is still sore and not cool. Which equals what? Pain.

How about death? Imagine, (I dislike using this word because it is quite insensitive, but stay with me) imagine that someone came to you and said, "Do not worry I will die for you" You can stay right here and continue living, I will die in your place.

I know some of you are thinking, I wish that person could have come sooner, well they kind of did. Seriously, they came a long time ago. The Lord says that Jesus came into the world to save His people from sin and He did just that. Before you all start writing tons of comments which I am very excited and nervous to read, I was simply paraphrasing, stay with me I will give you an except verse soon.

He went through being beaten and whipped and had to carry this extremely heavy cross. I am pretty sure not even The Rock or The Terminator. To bring it closer to current times, not even Captain America or Iron Man would be able to carry this cross (Well, maybe Iron Man, I am saying this because I think Tony Stark is pretty cool if you ask me) I am just playing, no one would have been able to carry the cross Jesus carried and when He reached there, they nailed H to this cross, where He died and was buried.

I would like you to grasp the pain that Jesus Christ felt when He hung on that cross for you. How He was human like any other and died so brutally. You might be familiar with the infamous John 3:16, but most people never read it. It says in John 3:16-17;

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him"**

God did not enjoy the pain of being hung on a cross. He knew it was coming and He knew what He had to do. Just like burning your foot with boiling water, even being cheated on or experiencing a defeat or loss, it is

never fun. You never enjoy the pain of those situations and many other occurrences in life but God did it. He died, and He sacrificed His life so that you could, enjoy free WIFI, Instagram, Facebook and all the other pleasures of the world, but most importantly so that you could have a relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit and just like verse 17 says He did not come into the world to condemn it but to save it through HIm.

This means that you have to build a relationship with God, you need to know Him on a personal level and allow Him to work through you with the guidance of the Holy Spirit because if you have peace on the inside, it will reflect on the outside. Unlike most things today, God works from the inside out. Am I saying that if you do this you will not experience pain? No, you will 100% still experience pain in all its forms but the difference between walking alone and walking with God is that life allows us to sample many experiences and challenges but what makes it easier is that you have someone right beside you. When you are weak, He is strong (A cliché I know but beyond true). Sometimes when we sample something that has not turned out great or we do not know what to do, we allow Him to work because God is not about A or B, He does not just help those who believe in Him. He is everywhere experiencing everyone's pain. From those who love Him and worship Him and do His work, to those who have never heard the words "Jesus Christ the saviour of the world"

Here is the catch, if you deny the Lord, you know all about His Word and you say, "I do not need you, God there is only one life and I will live it the way I please so bye" then do not be surprised when God denies you too. Eventually, you will go through pain, headaches, struggles, loss and death, then what? What will happen to you when you die? When no one can say to you, "I died a thousand years ago for you on a cross, I was hung to die and rose again on the 3rd day it is cool I have got you." What will happen then?

Have you sampled pain? I am sure that is a resounding yes. Do you enjoy it? Undoubtedly no. Do you have someone right by your side that knows your pain? Someone who can take it on and says, "Rest my child, I have got you and your pain"?



# Divorce Does Not Define Me

WRITTEN BY MMATJEMA PHUKUBYE

They say to be a great storyteller you must have led a great life or you just have a great imagination. For me, it is the former. Ironically, as much as I was a great storyteller as my friends and classmates in Mokopane would tell me, my life was far from great. The stories that I told came from my own family experiences and some of the ideal experiences I wished to have as a child being raised by parents who were constantly fighting. In the inevitable, my parents finally divorced, and both made it out of the marriage alive. Thank You, Lord.

From then onwards, this had an impact on my view of marriage and relationships. But life as we know it, continues. Fast forward to my final year in varsity, I met my ex-husband and he looked like a walking and breathing answered prayer. We met at a church in my hometown, and I remember thinking “Lord, You are so good for sending me someone who shows up on time for prayer meetings”.

Soon after we met, he would buy me flowers, and chocolates and set up our own monthly prayer and fasting week. “What a blessing”, I thought. “What an awesome husband he would make”. Marriage is not only a commitment between two people with God as their centre, it is also the process of bridging two families into one. Both our families were happy for us and I remember how our moms would call each other and sing hymns just before closing the call with a prayer. It was all going well.

Our wedding day was beautiful, and I remember how “Bo Mme” (the older women from church and the families) piled “wisdom” onto my shoulders because according to them the wife “must keep the marriage together”. It was on that very same evening of the wedding day that I was transported to his home as “Makoti” and I remember how traumatic it felt because no one spoke to me about how I felt about everything, if I had eaten or if I had wanted to rest a bit? We left the wedding venue and I was immediately told to pack my bags and change quickly. It was go-time.

When we arrived at his home, there was another group of Bo-Mme but this group sat in a circle all facing each other. The circle opened as I approached and I was directed to sit in the middle. Yes, you guessed right – the piling of “wisdom” on my shoulders again as the wife. When I asked my then-husband if he had the same circle moment of men he said “No”. I was taken aback by this but decided to ignore it. There are other red flags that I chose to ignore even before the wedding. At the last family meeting before the wedding, his mom, Mama, told my family that she did not understand Sepedi and that my family should now switch to Tshivenda, I thought this was inconsiderate of her because this was a language my family did not know and I only knew the basics and not enough to carry a conversation.

Instead of addressing the issue, I decided it was a sign for me to buy red coffee mugs for when my in-laws visit my ex-husband and me at our marital home. What Mama was doing at that moment was establishing the Head Office for our marriage. She was welcoming me not just as a child but also as a direct report to her.

We then went on our honeymoon, which was not as pleasant as I hoped it would be because we, or rather, I were not comfortable being intimate with him as we had kept ourselves for marriage. My mind took long to release the body and I felt bad for him as he was very excited. Our very first big misunderstanding came when we had to collect our wedding gifts from his home to our home and Mama was not willing to let go of our gifts. Even after I had promised her that I would buy her gifts that were similar to the ones on our wedding registry, she was having none of it. We drove off and left the wedding gifts behind. I felt unprotected and unprioritized, while more rules came our way from what felt like the Head office.

The most painful rule and one I believe broke the marriage was the fact that my family could not visit us, and I could not visit them. It was painful to pass my

home as we made our way to his home every second weekend and over Christmas time. Two years into the marriage, we fell pregnant and after giving birth, I asked my husband if I could go home for some time so I could heal physically and get help with the baby as he was my first child. His answer was “No” and that if I proceeded to go, it would be grounds for divorce. I went home with our child and I still remember how good it felt to have someone helping me with the baby while I caught up with my sleep. I feared for my marriage but I was also tired.

This happiness was short-lived. After a couple of days, we drove back to my marital home only to find that the marriage was no more. Just like that, the union that was designed to reflect the divine love between Christ and His church had come to an end. All the promises made were forgotten because of this one rule that I broke and when I decided to put myself first. It felt like a sudden death that I was informed of. My family, especially my mother, was very supportive and loving when I was going through the divorce. I remember sitting with my mom and starting to cry. I told her that I was in pain but I could not locate it in my body and that was the day that I physically felt the marriage break into pieces. I prayed and asked God to help me accept the divorce and to navigate it. It was during the same period when I got called for an interview for my dream job. One of the panellists asked me a question that triggered me and I broke down and cried for a good three minutes in front of the panel. I am grateful that I still made it to the second round with Senior Leadership and got the job.

After my divorce, God carried me daily and He made sure I knew of His unfailing love for me. A friend of mine once comforted me by saying “Maybe God does hate divorce but He loves you more than He hates it.

You come first” and these words reminded me of my identity in God. I was entering a new season of singleness and I also felt rejected but I was the same child of God who is worthy of love - God’s love

One day as I was scrolling through Instagram I saw a post from Every Nation Sunninghill that spoke about Divorce Care and there were a couple of testimonies as well so I decided to sign up because of my situation. As I reflected as part of the course homework each week, I realized that I had put my self-worth in my marriage and career, forgetting as each day passed whom I belonged to. The course also drew me to a point where I acknowledged my wrongs in the marriage like giving him the silent treatment, being sarcastic and going to bed angry. I prayed that the Lord may help me not to be revengeful or angry and God responded by asking me to start praying for him and Mama. Praying for them helped to forgive them even without a spoken apology. I began seeing them as children of God and realized how God loves them. I still see my ex-husband as a child of God and a great father to our son.

I learned during the course that divorce is not my identity and does not define my worth. It is something that happened to me but does not dictate how I see myself or the future. God has carried me so well since then and my relationship with Him has become even stronger. I have learned a lot of things about myself and have fallen in love with the person I am. A lot has happened in and around me but I remain God’s beloved daughter and there is nothing that can change that.

*- And that, dear readers, is my testimony as a divorced woman, sharing my journey with you.*



## GET TO KNOW THE AUTHOR

# MMATJEMA PHUKUBYE

Mmatjema Phukubye hails from Mokopane in Limpopo and belongs to a small family of four. As the youngest of two siblings, she has a profound fondness for outdoor activities, with hiking being her cherished pastime. Armed with a Finance Honours degree, she currently serves as a Liquidity Risk Manager in the banking sector. Beyond her professional endeavors, she finds immense joy in nurturing her role as a mother to a delightful 5-year-old boy. A fervent passion for storytelling runs deep within her, alongside her unwavering love for Jesus.



# Navigating Sexuality In Marriage

WRITTEN BY ANONYMOUS

“I now pronounce you husband and wife” With these simple words begins a journey, of not only self-discovery but a journey of understanding and constantly having to choose to love and care for another human who is of no blood relation to you all in the name of love. An individual who possesses their own thoughts and perspective of how to approach life. By making your first step as husband and wife, you step into a new world where it is no longer solely about you, with every step you take from there onwards, you have to be considerate of the partner that you have chosen.

As ordained by God, marriage is a union designed to reflect the divine love between Christ and His church. Sex takes on a profound significance, serving as a space for intimacy, love, and unity. “Sex before marriage is a sin”, yes. Now the question is, how does a Christian navigate sex within marriage? Christianity advocates for sexual abstinence before marriage. Understandably so as these teachings often emphasise the importance of marital fidelity and the sanctity of marriage. As we embark on this journey, it is essential to recognise that our sexuality is a gift from God, intended to be cherished and nurtured within the sanctity of marriage.

Scripture provides us with timeless wisdom regarding the significance of marital intimacy. In Genesis 2:24, we are reminded, **“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”** This verse underscores the sacred nature of the marital bond, emphasising the profound unity forged through physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy. Marriage also symbolises love and God is love. It is also a personification of God’s love as love is about two individuals who choose to

love each other and commit to each other irregardless of the unfavourable conditions. This love is similar but never greater than the love God has shown to us, **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”** John 3:16.



Sexuality can also be seen as a gift that God gave the world to procreate. However, with such an amazing gift comes an even greater responsibility.

Furthermore, the apostle Paul offers invaluable guidance in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, stating, **"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife has no authority over her body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband has no authority over his body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer, but then come together again so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."**

We have established by now that sex is about more than just physical contact. Abstinence from sexual acts before marriage is a way of protecting oneself from the spiritual realms that are connected with sexual acts. The bible in 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 reads as follows: **Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don't you realise that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one." But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.**

These verses highlight the importance of mutual love, respect, and fulfilment within the marital relationship. It is a reminder that our sexuality is not to be exploited or demeaned but instead celebrated and honoured as a sacred expression of love and unity within the bounds of marriage.

As you grow and explore your sexuality within the sacred depths of marriage, remember that He is still the same God. Ironically, it is within the demarcation of marriage where God gives you the free will to explore your sexuality not only to become one with your spouse. But to also procreate and fill His congregation. Therefore be free, let God lead your union. Create a safe space to grow and have pleasure under the holy matrimony. Remember that as you continue to grow, God is still the same God he was before your union. Grow with Him and allow Him to lead your marriage because *Same God, growing you.*



# SUBSCRIBE TO SOL'



**FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**



S O L' Blog



@express\_sol



S O L' Vlog  
Series

*"The closer I get to God, the more I gravitate towards slight modesty, class, elegance, and a simple approach to fashion and that you do not need to try so hard; you need to be yourself in what you wear."*

*- Linda Sifumba*

