

CHIC-TRIBE

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

SOFT STRENGTH

CARE, BOUNDARIES,
RESILIENCE

WWW.CHICTRIBE.CO.ZA

**SARAH O
HAPPY**

ISSUE 31: MAY/JUNE 2026





**HALFWAY THROUGH THE
YEAR, AND THE VISION
HAS NEVER FELT
CLEARER.**

Letter from the Editor

As we arrive at the halfway mark of the year, I can't help but reflect on how much growth, expansion, and evolution this season has brought to Chic-Tribe Digital Magazine. What started as a vision continues to blossom into a platform that not only tells stories, but creates meaningful spaces for women, brands, creatives, and communities to connect.

Our May/June issue, *Soft Strength*, is a celebration of the power found in care, boundaries, resilience, and authenticity. Gracing our cover is the radiant **Sarah O Happy**, whose presence and journey beautifully embody this season's message that softness is not weakness, but a form of strength rooted in self-awareness and intention.

This year has already brought exciting milestones for the brand. From impactful partnerships and collaborations to expanding our editorial and creative direction, we are stepping into rooms and opportunities that continue to affirm the vision behind Chic-Tribe. We're especially excited about the travel collaborations and feature experiences currently in the works, a new chapter that will allow us to tell stories across different spaces, cities, and cultures.

One of our biggest announcements this season is the release of the **Save the Date** for our Women's Month celebration: **The Femme Frontier Fest**, taking place in **Johannesburg on 29 August 2026**. This event is incredibly close to our hearts, and we hope it becomes an annual celebration that travels across different cities and provinces, bringing together women through creativity, empowerment, wellness, conversation, and culture.

There's a beautiful momentum surrounding Chic-Tribe right now, and it's all made possible by the people who continue to believe in this platform—our readers, collaborators, partners, contributors, and community. Thank you for growing with us and for continuing to choose us as a space for inspiration, storytelling, and connection.

The second half of the year is looking brighter, bolder, and even more intentional and we can't wait to share it with you.

Sarah Banda

Chic-Tribe Digital

Editor-in-Chief

Sarah Banda

Design & Production

Sarah Banda & Oratile
Mokgatle

Contributing Writers

Sinesipho Ngcaluza, Thato
Seopa, Oratile Mokgatle

Managing Editor

Oratile Mokgatle

Feature Writer

Portia Dieta

Beauty Partner

Girl Boss Africa
Shonisani Braids

Guest Contributors

Ayanda Siboto

Writer, creative
entrepreneur, and
ecosystem builder.

Location: Johannesburg

Website: www.chictribe.co.za

Email: info@chictribe.co.za

Socials: @chictribe_digital

Chule the Love Activist

Writer, healer, and founder
of Conversations with a
Love Activist

IN THIS ISSUE

6

Cover Story: Soft Strength- Care, Boundaries, Resilience

Featuring Sarah O Happy

12

The Cold-Weather Accessories

Fashion Insert with Oratile Mokgatle

17

Winter Beauty 2026

Night time skincare routines are having a moment

21

Mommy Diaries with Portia Dieta

The quiet power of motherhood

37

Return to Self: Relearning the Language of Mind, Body & Spirit

Exclusive interview with Tasneem Ahmed

31

Learning Boundaries After Motherhood Broke Me

Commentary by Thato Ozora Seopa



SHONISANI BRAID



www.afrotexsa.com

The Strategic Brilliance of Sarah Oluchi Happy

Sarah Oluchi Happy is the founder of SarHap Groups, a growing beauty and lifestyle ecosystem spanning premium hair, skincare, fashion, education, and women-focused entrepreneurship. Since launching SarHap in 2019, she has built a brand recognized for disciplined creativity, structured systems, premium positioning, and resilience. Through SarHap Academy and her personal brand, she continues to mentor women on building profitable businesses while remaining authentic to their identity and values.

You've built SarHap into a multi-brand ecosystem with a strong international footprint. How do you define "soft strength" in leadership, and how has it shaped your journey?

To me, soft strength means leading with grace without losing standards. It is the ability to remain calm, emotionally intelligent, and compassionate while still making difficult decisions when necessary.





A lot of people misunderstand softness as weakness, but I believe true leadership is knowing how to lead with wisdom instead of constant aggression. Throughout my journey, soft strength has helped me build relationships, maintain my identity as a woman in business, and still protect the vision of the company.

There were seasons where I had to restructure, close branches, rebuild systems, and make uncomfortable decisions for the future of the brand. Soft strength allowed me to do that without becoming bitter or losing myself in the process. I have learned that leadership is not about being the loudest person in the room. It is about consistency, clarity, emotional stability, and the courage to keep building even after setbacks

In your experience, how do care and boundaries coexist in leadership, and what practices do you rely on to maintain both?

I believe care without boundaries creates chaos, and boundaries without care create fear. Strong leadership requires both. I genuinely care about the people who work with me, but I have also learned that structure is necessary if you want a business to survive long-term.

One of the biggest lessons I learned as a founder is that good intentions alone are not systems. I now focus heavily on accountability, operational standards, communication structures, and clearly defined expectations within my businesses.

This protects the team, the clients, and the brand itself. I also prioritize emotional discipline. Not every decision can be made emotionally. Sometimes leadership means protecting the long-term vision, even when the decision feels uncomfortable in the moment.

"I believe true leadership is knowing how to lead with wisdom instead of constant aggression."

On the cover



Scaling a brand internationally comes with unique challenges. How do you maintain the soul and vision of your brand across borders without compromising standards?

For me, the soul of SarHap is excellence, transformation, and empowerment. No matter the country, the customer must still feel the same experience, standards, and emotional connection to the brand. As we expand internationally, I focus heavily on systems, branding consistency, customer experience, and product quality. I do not believe in scaling chaos. Expansion only works when your foundation is strong enough to carry the growth. I also stay personally involved in the vision. Even as the company grows, I constantly revisit the core values of the brand to ensure we are building intentionally and not just expanding for appearances.

How do you balance creative intuition with structured business systems, and where have you found the intersection of the two to be most powerful?

Creativity is what gives a brand emotion, but systems are what give it longevity. I believe both are necessary. My intuition helps me understand branding, storytelling, customer behavior, and innovation. Systems help me execute consistently and scale sustainably. The intersection becomes powerful when creativity is supported by structure. For example, content creation, customer service, operations, and product launches all require creativity, but they also need repeatable systems behind them. One of the biggest mistakes entrepreneurs make is relying only on inspiration. Sustainable brands are built through processes, standards, documentation, and disciplined execution.



Leadership can be isolating, especially as a founder. How do you cultivate resilience for yourself and your team in high-pressure moments?

Resilience comes from purpose. There were moments in my journey where I faced immense pressure, setbacks, financial strain, and emotional exhaustion. What kept me going was understanding that leadership is not only about success; it is also about endurance. I cultivate resilience by staying connected to faith, self-awareness, reflection, and vision. I have learned the importance of resetting, restructuring, and protecting my peace so I can lead effectively. For my team, I encourage accountability, communication, and adaptability. I want people around me to understand that difficult seasons are not the end of the story. Businesses evolve, and resilient teams evolve with them.



One of the biggest differentiators for SarHap has been positioning. We intentionally moved away from competing on cheap pricing and focused instead on premium quality, customer experience, and long-term brand trust. Another major shift was understanding that not every customer is your customer. We became more intentional about attracting people who value quality, professionalism, and premium service.

How do you evaluate new opportunities for expansion without losing focus on brand integrity and quality?

I evaluate opportunities based on alignment, sustainability, and operational readiness. Just because an opportunity looks exciting does not mean it is strategically wise. In the past, I expanded very quickly, and while speed created momentum, it also taught me the importance of infrastructure. Today, I focus more on building stronger systems before scaling further. Every expansion must support the long-term vision of the brand instead of distracting from it. I would rather grow slower with quality than grow fast without stability.

What role does identity play in your approach to brand building, and how do you ensure SarHap reflects your values consistently?

Identity plays a huge role in branding because people connect with authenticity before they connect with products. SarHap reflects elegance, resilience, discipline, femininity, growth, and transformation because those values are deeply connected to my personal journey. I ensure consistency by being intentional with every part of the brand experience, from visuals and communication to customer service and education. I believe strong brands are built when the internal culture matches the external image. People should not only buy from a brand; they should feel something when they experience it.

SarHap Academy has trained numerous women entrepreneurs. What is the core principle you want every student to leave with?

The biggest principle I want every student to leave with is that structure creates freedom. Many people want success, but they do not realize that sustainable growth requires discipline, systems, and consistency. I also want women to understand that they do not need to shrink themselves to succeed. They can build profitable brands while still remaining feminine, authentic, and true to their values. My goal is not only to teach women how to sell products but also how to build brands with longevity and impact.

The beauty industry is highly competitive. What strategic choices or structures have differentiated SarHap in the market?



Your journey has inspired other women founders. How do you measure impact beyond

Impact, for me, is measured by transformation. It is seeing women gain confidence, start businesses, rebuild after setbacks, become financially independent, or believe in themselves again. Some of the most meaningful moments in my journey have not been financial milestones. They have been the messages from women saying, “You inspired me to start,” or “Your story gave me courage.” Business metrics matter, but legacy is built through people. I want my work to create opportunities, confidence, and long-term change for other women.

Reflecting on your journey since 2019, what is the hardest lesson you’ve learned about

The hardest lesson I learned is that empathy without discernment can become self-destruction. Earlier in my journey, I believed working harder for people would automatically create loyalty, but leadership taught me that kindness must still be accompanied by standards, structure, and accountability. I have learned that empathy does not mean tolerating dysfunction. Sometimes the most compassionate thing a leader can do is create boundaries that protect the future of the business. That lesson changed how I approach leadership. Today, I lead with compassion, but also with clarity, discipline, and wisdom.

The Cold-Weather Accessories for Women with Soft Strength

By Oratile
Mokgatle

Whether you love winter or not, dressing for the bitter cold isn't always motivating, especially if it means getting out of your comfortable bed. However, the chill offers the ideal chance to use your imagination when it comes to stylishly bundling up. The secret to serving soft strength in your cold-weather attire? To know how to style your accessories.

The options are as stylish as they are practical, from the beret and fur coats that have been seen on every It girl from Aretha Franklin to Moozlie, to the knit hats and sexy tops that dominate our style feeds. See eight trends in winter accessories that are worth putting in your cart and possibly going outside in the cold for.



Image supplied by writer



Credit: Valerakomarov - Instagram

The Beret

It is one of France's emblems, adored by tourists when they visit the capital. Between tradition and fashion, the beret hides a long history in its hat. Don't let the stereotypical ideas of a beret stop you from elevating your everyday outfits, soul sister! There are plenty of ways to style this iconic hat that feel fresh and modern, from rocking it with that monochrome tailored suit for a daytime look at the office, to dressing it down with your jeans, white shirt, and jacket to go down the road to buy from "My friend" – the girls that get it, get it. When tilted just right, you aren't just blocking the wind; you are signaling that your energy is top-tier.





Credit: Lexie Amarandos - Pinterest

FUR COAT

Get this straight: winter fashion isn't about blending in; it's where real fashionista women with strength come out to play. Nothing says main character energy like a long fur coat sweeping the sidewalk. You get the luxury feeling without the guilt. Pair it with leather boots, and the sidewalk turns into your personal runway.

Note this too: not all fur has to be floor-length. The cropped fur coat is blowing up with the ladies who love showing off high-waisted trousers. Throw on a fur trim coat with jeans, a turtleneck, and knee-high boots for a sophisticated look.

SEXY TOPS

Who says staying warm has to mean dressing like a marshmallow for three months? Since we're currently navigating that chaotic South Africa weather where it's a deep freeze at 7:00 a.m. and a tropical heatwave by lunch, your wardrobe needs to be as adaptable as your weekend plans.

Let's talk about the sexy top specifically—the delicate lace or sheer number you usually save for a summer rooftop vibe. Office boss ladies, did you know you could layer a lace bodysuit under a structured blazer or an oversized faux-fur coat to maintain a powerful aesthetic without succumbing to the chill? You're still serving chic but remain appropriate. By layering these delicate pieces under structured silhouettes, you ensure your look remains visually exciting and deeply personal.



Credit - Pinterest





Credit: Toteme T-Lock mini calf hair clutch

MINI BAGS AND CLUTCHES

If you've ever struggled to keep a shoulder strap in place over a chunky winter coat, this is one trend worth embracing. Why battle a bag that won't stay put when you can tuck it neatly under your arm and turn it into an ultra-chic style statement in the process?

HAND WARMERS/GLOVES

Say so long to stuffing your hands in your jacket pockets for warmth. Keeping your hands and feet covered has never looked better, whether you choose wool warmers or classic leather driving gloves. You can still give soft and strength while keeping warm, even if you have nails done, we don't want those fingers cold. If anything, these will also save you from doing your nails, wink wink!

Staying chic in winter is not a survival project; it is a statement of intent. Choose your layers with precision, maintain your boundaries, and never let them see you shiver.



Credit - Pinterest



OVERNIGHT BEAUTY: WHY YOUR NIGHT ROUTINE MATTERS MORE THAN EVER THIS WINTER



Winter beauty in 2026 is officially entering its “overnight era.” From hydrating sleep masks and peptide creams to silk pillowcases and overnight hair treatments, beauty lovers are shifting their focus from complicated daytime routines to skin and hair recovery while they sleep.

The colder months naturally leave skin feeling dry, tight, and dull. Add indoor heating, stress, makeup, and lack of sleep into the mix, and it becomes even harder for the skin to maintain moisture and repair itself properly. That’s why nighttime beauty rituals are becoming one of the biggest trends of the season — because while you rest, your skin goes into repair mode.

Glowing skin
made easy with
these simple
care tips!



According to skincare experts, the skin's regeneration process is more active at night, making bedtime the ideal time to use nourishing and restorative products. This shift has inspired the rise of "overnight beauty" - a slower, softer approach to self-care that focuses less on perfection and more on recovery, hydration, and consistency.

The Rise of Skin Recovery Culture

For years, beauty trends focused heavily on fast results: harsh exfoliation, over-layering products, and chasing flawless "glass skin." But consumers are now moving away from overcomplicated skincare and leaning into routines that prioritise skin barrier health and long-term glow.

This winter, ingredients like peptides, ceramides, hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, and squalane are dominating beauty conversations for their ability to deeply hydrate and strengthen the skin overnight.

Instead of using ten different products, many people are simplifying their routines into a few essentials:

- A gentle cleanser
- A hydrating serum
- A rich moisturiser or overnight mask
- Lip treatments
- Eye creams
- Overnight spot treatments

The focus is no longer on doing the most, it's about doing what actually works.

Overnight Masks Are the New Beauty Essential

One of the biggest beauty staples this season is the overnight mask. Unlike traditional face masks that are rinsed off after 10 minutes, overnight masks are designed to stay on while you sleep, allowing ingredients to absorb slowly throughout the night.

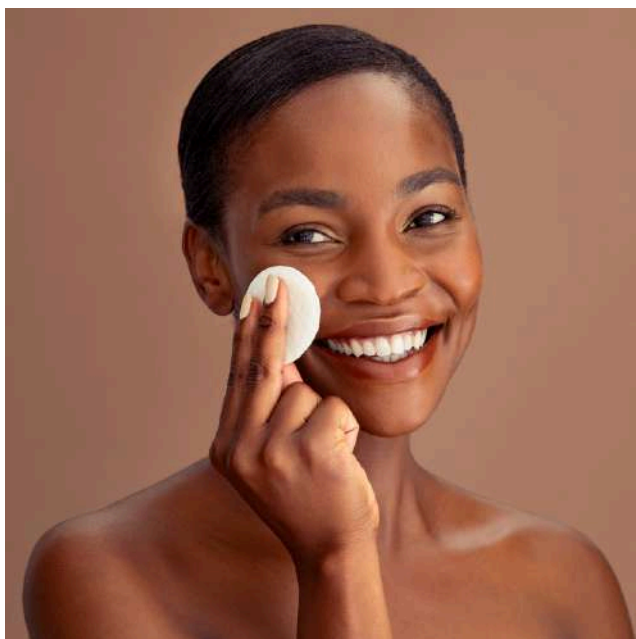
They help:

- Lock in hydration
- Soothe irritated skin
- Reduce winter dryness
- Improve skin texture
- Restore glow by morning

Beauty lovers are especially gravitating toward "slugging" inspired routines using thicker moisturisers or balms at night to seal in hydration and prevent moisture loss during winter.

Haircare Is Joining the Night Routine Too

Overnight beauty isn't just about skincare anymore. Haircare has become a major part of nighttime self-care, especially during winter when hair becomes more dry and fragile.



Silk bonnets, overnight oils, scalp serums, braid protection, and leave-in masks are becoming essentials for maintaining healthy hair while sleeping.

Instead of focusing only on styling, people are investing more in hair repair and moisture retention especially textured hair communities prioritising protective care during colder weather.

Beauty Sleep Is Finally Being Taken Seriously

The phrase “beauty sleep” may sound cliché, but the connection between sleep and appearance is very real. Poor sleep can contribute to dull skin, puffiness, breakouts, dehydration, and tired-looking eyes.

As wellness and beauty continue to overlap, nighttime routines are becoming less about aesthetics and more about intentional self-care. Lighting a candle, applying skincare slowly, wrapping your hair, drinking water, and disconnecting from screens are all becoming part of the modern beauty ritual.

In many ways, overnight beauty reflects a larger cultural shift: people are craving softness, balance, and routines that feel calming rather than overwhelming.

The Chic-Tribe Takeaway

This winter, beauty is slowing down.

The overnight beauty trend reminds us that glow doesn’t always come from expensive treatments or full glam routines. Sometimes it comes from rest, consistency, hydration, and taking a little extra care of yourself before bed.

Because in 2026, the real beauty flex is waking up looking refreshed.



Available at Clicks





THE QUIET POWER OF MOTHERHOOD: STRENGTH IN SOFTNESS WITH WENDY NOZOZO

BY PORTIA DIETA

In a world where strength is often judged by how loud, fast or visible it is, motherhood offers us a different perspective- one that reveals itself in quiet, deeply personal ways. It lives in the consistent presence of a woman who shows up every single day, not through grand gestures but through steady care, intention and emotional awareness. This is the quiet power of motherhood; a form of strength grounded in softness rather than force. Softness here should not be mistaken with weakness. It's the capacity to remain calm when patience is tested, to respond with empathy instead of impulse, and to give love even in moments of exhaustion.

Wendy Nozozo is a single mother who carries both responsibility and ambition with quiet determination. Her days are defined by movement and purpose-if she's not out in the streets selling, she's expressing herself through song. But beyond the rhythm of her daily life is a deeper drive: the commitment to build a future on her own terms. Currently selling INUKA products, Wendy is not just earning a living, she is laying the groundwork for something greater. Her journey reflects resilience shaped by experience and a mindset rooted in possibility. She refuses to let her past define her path, choosing instead to see it as part of a story she continues to rewrite.

With a clear belief that her destiny is in her own hands, Wendy approaches life with accountability and vision. She understands that the future she desires will be built through consistent effort, courage, and self-belief. In this interview, she shares her journey as a single mother, her passion for entrepreneurship, and her determination to rise into the businesswoman she knows she can become.

What does “showing up” look like for you on hard days?

Showing up means putting one foot in front of the other. It's about being there, even when you are exhausted, overwhelmed or unsure. Getting my son ready for school, preparing dinner, tucking him in at bedtime despite all the chaos that is going on in my head or the uncertainty I feel inside. It's owning up to the messiness and, finding tiny victories and celebrating them.

Are there small, everyday moments that remind you of your strength?

It's really the simple but meaningful things that my son does for me, him telling me he loves me out of the blue when I least expect it, him helping me with dinner preparations and seeing him learn something new, these will always remind me of the strength that I possess.

How has single motherhood shaped your resilience?

Being a single mother has taught me resilience - learning to adjust quickly to changing situations, practicing patience by meeting my son where he is rather than rushing him to my pace, and developing a sharp instinct for spotting challenges early. It's also taught me to value and celebrate the small victories, because they truly matter.

Can you share a challenge that changed you and what it taught you about yourself?

One challenge that shaped me deeply was financial pressure. I had to start hustling at a young age as a mother, and while it wasn't easy, it ultimately strengthened me and helped me grow into the independent woman I am today.

In what ways have you grown emotionally or mentally through this journey?

I've discovered a level of inner strength and patience I never knew I possessed, and with every challenge I overcome, my trust in myself continues to grow.

How do you handle moments of doubt or fear?

I always remind myself that I am doing the best that I can for both my son and myself.

How do you handle moments of doubt or fear?

I always remind myself that I am doing the best that I can for both my son and myself.

How do you create a sense of safety and love for your child?

These are created through consistent communication and quality time together. When kids know what to expect and feel heard, they feel safer, this is how I create a safety net for my son.

How do you balance providing, nurturing, and caring for yourself?

It's an ongoing balancing act, but taking care of myself helps me show up better as a parent. For me, it's the little things - a warm bath, getting lost in a good book, or enjoying a quiet cup of coffee.

What does “being enough” mean to you as a mother?

Being enough means letting go of trying to be perfect, embracing the mess and challenges that come with this beautiful motherhood journey. It's about showing your child that love, effort and growth are what truly matters.

Tell us about your journey as a single mother?

The journey of being a mom has been a rather difficult one as I had no support system, but God has been by my side and giving me the strength I need to survive through this journey. God's strength has kept me sane and helps me and my son survive any challenge we may face. Effective and good leaders understand emotions- both their own and those of others, mothers practice this daily. Parenting requires empathy, patience and understanding, which is now widely recognised as an essential leadership quality in the workplace and communities.

What does motherhood mean to you in this season of your life?

Motherhood means that you put someone else's needs before your own, you make sure they are well taken care of in every aspect, for example: making sure that my son eats before I do.

What does motherhood mean to you in this season of your life?

Motherhood means that you put someone else's needs before your own, you make sure they are well taken care of in every aspect, for example: making sure that my son eats before I do.

When you hear the phrase "strength in softness," what does it mean to you personally?

Strength in softness is like being a rock and a cushion at once. It's about showing vulnerability, love and care (the softness) while being fiercely protective and resilient (the strength) for your little ones. It's owning your journey with it's ups and downs and finding power in your ability to nurture and provide.



How do you embody softness in your parenting, even during difficult moments?

I embody softness in parenting even in tough times, this is like being hugged on a rainy day. It's about being present, listening and validating my child's feelings even when I'm overwhelmed. I am not about being perfect but being real, showing empathy and teaching resilience through my own vulnerability, something like 'Hey kiddo, mom's having a tough day but I'm here for you.'

What are some of the unseen or unspoken challenges you face as a single mother?

The challenges that I face as a single mother are mental exhaustion, financial stress, societal judgement and hardly having time to myself.

How do you find strength on the days when you feel overwhelmed or exhausted?

Prayer is my go-to remedy before confiding in a friend. My kid's hugs and jokes always have a way of calming me down, I also make sure I remind myself that I am doing my best, because sometimes we miss out on the good work that we do, this reassurance gives me the strength I need. Lastly, I take it one day at a time, one task at a time because Rome was not built in a day.

How do you set boundaries as a single mother with your child, family, or others?

Setting boundaries as a single mother can be challenging, but it's essential. For me, it means being clear and consistent about what works best for both my son and me. It also means understanding that with family and friends, it's perfectly okay to say no or ask for space when necessary.

Have you ever struggled with guilt when choosing yourself? How did you navigate that?

You can't give what you don't have, so I make it a priority to refill my own cup before supporting others. I no longer feel guilty for choosing myself.

How do you protect your peace while carrying so much responsibility?

For me, it's about carving out small moments to reset whether that's a quiet cup of coffee, a short walk, or simply pausing to take a few deep breaths.

How would you describe the bond between you and your child?

It's a strong, unshakable connection built on trust, laughter, and the moments we share where we naturally enjoy being in each other's company.

What are some moments that make everything feel worth it?

That one tight hug each day, along with all the little kisses I receive on a daily, this definitely feels like a pat in the back where someone tells you, you did it.

In what ways has your child shaped you as a person?

He's helped me become more patient, selfless, and loving. Through him, I've grown to be more responsible, learned to prioritize what matters, stay present, and appreciate the small moments of joy.

What has motherhood taught you about love, strength, and yourself?

Motherhood feels like a continuous lesson in love, strength, and self-discovery. It has shown me that love is limitless, you never run out of it; it only grows. I've learned that strength isn't about never falling, but about rising again each time you do. And as for me, I've uncovered a powerful, protective "mama bear" side I never knew I had.

If your child could describe you one day, what would you hope they say?

I hope my son would describe me as his safe haven - someone who has always been there for him, filled with love and laughter. He might also say I can be a bit strict, but only because I want him to make the right choices and stay focused on the right path.

Where motherhood is concerned one truth remain clear: motherhood is not defined by perfection, but by presence. It is found in the quiet consistency of showing up even on the hardest of days, and in the gentle strength that carries both love and responsibility at once. Wendy's advice to other single moms is 'be gentle with yourself—don't be too hard on yourself. It's okay to have difficult or messy days, to ask for support, and to make yourself a priority too. Your children need a version of you that is both happy and healthy. Take time to celebrate even the small wins and try not to compare your journey to other mothers. You are doing an incredible job.'



SELF-LOVE IS NOT PRIVATE – IT IS UBUNTU

There is a question I have been sitting with for years, and it has reshaped everything I believed about healing, boundaries, and what it means to be a strong woman:

What if the love I withhold from myself is not mine alone to withhold?

By Chule the Love Activist
Guest Contributor

We live in a world that praises selflessness, especially in women.

We are told that to be good – to be a good mother, partner, daughter, friend – is to give. To show up. To pour. To hold everyone else together while quietly falling apart ourselves.

But here is what I have learned, often the hard way: You cannot pour from a vessel you refuse to fill.

And more than that – when you withhold love from yourself, you are not just hurting you. You are contributing to the collective wound.

That is what Ubuntu taught me.

WHAT IS UBUNTU?

Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu philosophy from Southern Africa, captured in the proverb: “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.*”

A person is a person through other people.

Ubuntu means your humanity is not something you achieve alone. It is co-created – through your relationships, your compassion, your responsibility toward others. To harm another is to harm yourself. To heal yourself is to heal the collective.

This is not a sentimental idea. It is the actual architecture of reality – mirrored in quantum entanglement, where two particles once connected remain connected across any distance. What happens to one affects the other.

So when I say “I am because we are,” I am not being poetic. I am describing the physics of belonging.

And that physics has everything to do with self-love.

SELF-LOVE AS UBUNTU

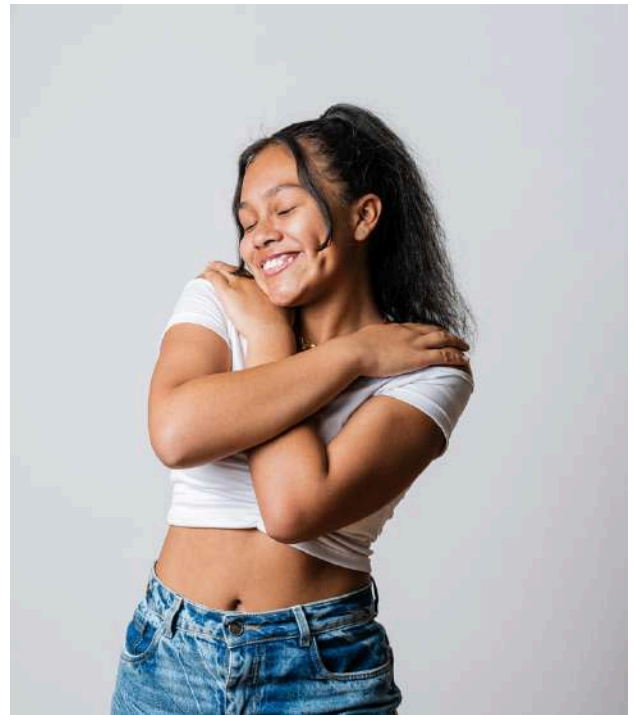
Most of us have been taught that self-love is private. Even selfish.

Something you do in a bubble bath or a silent meditation – nice, but separate from the “real work” of caring for and with others.

But Ubuntu flips that.

If I am because we are, then my relationship with myself is not a solo project. It is the foundation of every other relationship I have.

The way I speak to myself becomes the template for how I allow others to speak to me and how I speak to them. The rest I refuse becomes exhaustion the collective has to carry. The boundaries I fail to set become resentment that leaks into every interaction.



Then I found Ubuntu. And I understood:

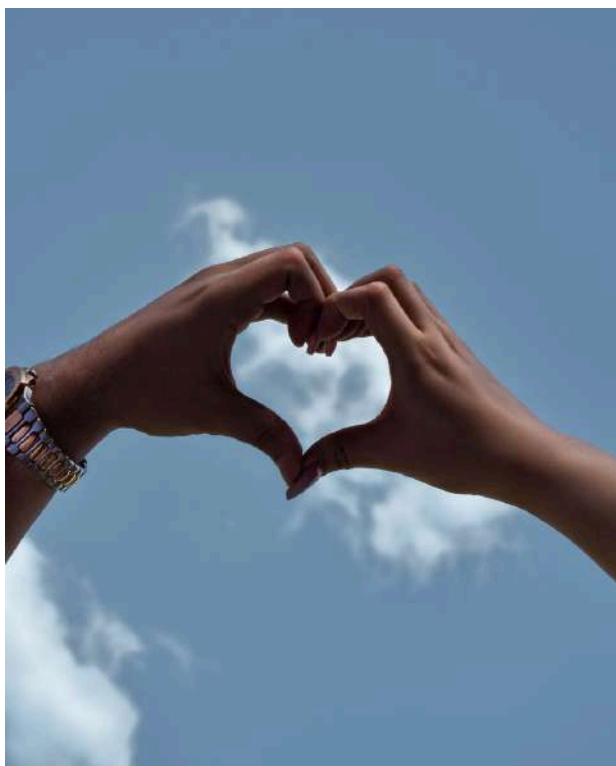
The lack of love you feel towards yourself poisons us all. The love you feel about yourself heals us all.

That line, from my *Self-Love is Ubuntu Workbook*, is now the heartbeat of everything I do.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SOFT STRENGTH, CARE, BOUNDARIES & RESILIENCE

The theme of this issue is Soft Strength: Care, Boundaries & Resilience. And I believe Ubuntu holds the key to all three.

- **Care** – True care begins at home. Not the house, but the body. The heart. The nervous system. When you care for yourself as you would a beloved child, you are not being selfish. You are building a foundation from which you can genuinely care for others – without resentment, without burnout.



- **Boundaries** – Ubuntu does not mean losing yourself in the collective. It means knowing that your wholeness is essential to the ecosystem of the whole. Boundaries are not walls; they are the banks of a river, channeling your energy where it can nourish rather than flood. Saying “no” to what depletes you is saying “yes” to what you are meant to offer.
- **Resilience** – We think resilience is toughness. But real resilience is soft. It is the ability to bend without breaking, to grieve without numbing, to rest without guilt. Resilience, in Ubuntu, is knowing you do not have to carry everything alone. Your people are there. Your ancestors are there. You belong to something way bigger.

I want to leave you with the question that holds me every single day:

Where am I holding myself apart from the whole, believing it protects me?

Because that is the trick, isn't it? We think if we keep ourselves small, separate, self-critical – we will be safe. We won't get hurt. We won't be too much.

But the safety we are protecting is an illusion. And the love we are withholding was never just ours.

So this is my soft strength: I am learning to let love in. To receive as radically as I give. To practice self-love not as a luxury, but as a contribution to every person and every ancestor who came before me.

Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.

I am because you are. And we are because we finally learn to care for ourselves.



THE PERFORMANCE OF GETTING IT ALL

By Ayanda Siboto
Guest Contributor



There is an entire generation of women who learned how to survive by becoming exceptional.

We were raised on the language of overachievement. Work hard. Push harder. Be excellent.

Be prepared. And for many young Black women especially, there was always an unspoken understanding beneath it all: in systems that were not built with you in mind, average would never feel safe enough. If you wanted opportunities, leadership, or stability, you had to become undeniable.

So many of us became fluent in endurance long before we ever learned restoration. Then came the era that told us achievement alone was no longer enough. We were not only encouraged to succeed within companies; we were encouraged to build them. Start the business. Launch the brand. Monetize the skill. Become independent. Become the CEO.

And if anyone knows anything about building something from nothing, it is that in the beginning, you are everyone. You are the strategist, assistant, accountant, customer service department, creative director, and founder all at once. There is no balance in survival mode.

There is only movement.

WHEN BURNOUT BECOMES PERSONALITY

Somewhere in the process, many of us developed personalities shaped entirely around functionality. We became people who could carry pressure well. People who could continue performing while exhausted. The problem is that society rewards burnout long before it punishes it.



People praise your discipline before they notice your depletion.

And because overworking often produces visible results - promotions, income, opportunities, recognition - burnout disguises itself as ambition for a very long time. It convinces you that as long as you are still functioning, you are still okay.

Until the body interrupts the performance.

For some people, it arrives as chronic fatigue. For others, anxiety, inflammation, insomnia, panic, or autoimmune disease. The body eventually begins speaking the language the mind ignored.

We learned how to perform capability, but not how to sustain wholeness. We learned resilience, sacrifice, and independence, but very few of us learned restoration.

Very few of us learned that ambition without recovery is not strength. It is prolonged strain.

THE BALANCE CONVERSATION WE DELAYED

Now, in our thirties, many of us are confronting the reality that our bodies have been keeping score for years.

And perhaps the hardest realization is that we no longer have the luxury of postponing conversations about balance until retirement. Previous generations were often taught to survive first and recover later. But our bodies are asking different questions now. Questions about quality of life. About emotional sustainability. About whether success still feels meaningful when your health deteriorates while building it.

Because balance is not something we should only begin searching for after burnout forces us to.

It should shape how we choose careers, relationships, lifestyles, and ambitions in the first place. Not from fear, but from understanding the life we are opting into the pace, the pressure, and the emotional cost attached to it.

And maybe this is the uncomfortable freedom adulthood eventually hands us: the realization that balance is allowed to evolve.

What you needed in your twenties may not be what you need in your thirties. What once felt exciting may eventually feel exhausting. What once looked like ambition may later reveal itself as survival dressed up as success. The blessing is that we are allowed to change. We are allowed to redesign our lives before they break us.

PERFORMING BALANCE

But many of us have not embraced that freedom because we are still performing every possible role at once. We are trying to look successful online, competent at work, emotionally available in relationships, financially stable, socially active, physically healthy, spiritually grounded, and endlessly productive - all at the same time.

We are cosplaying versions of balance without actually feeling balanced at all.

And I think that is why so many people feel quietly exhausted even while appearing successful. We inherited definitions of adulthood that measured achievement visibly, but rarely asked whether the person achieving it still felt human underneath it all.

Balance is not symmetry.

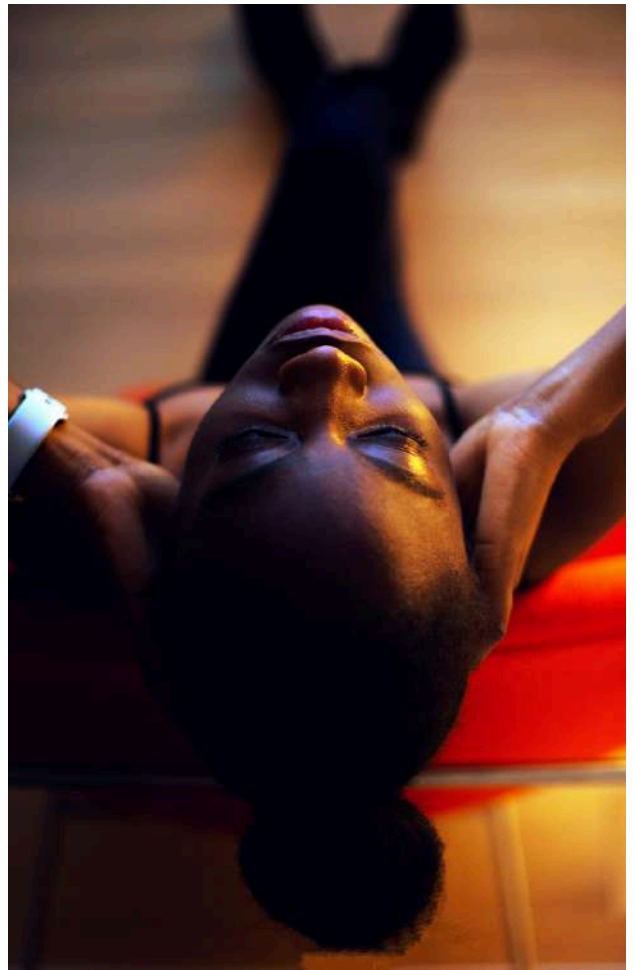
It is sustainability.

For one person, balance may look like corporate leadership and motherhood. For another, it may look like remote work, slower living, or intentionally earning less in exchange for peace. The point is not that one life is more correct than another. The point is that balance cannot be inherited blindly from systems that benefited from our exhaustion.

It has to become personal.

Not just what impresses people.
Not just what looks successful.
Not just what photographs well.

But what feels sustainable.
What feels human.
What feels like a life you can remain inside of without constantly abandoning yourself to maintain it.



Perhaps that is the real grief of our generation.

We became fluent in endurance but illiterate in restoration.

And now, after years of performing strength so convincingly, many of us are trying to learn something far more difficult: how to build lives that do not require us to abandon ourselves in order to sustain them.



How emotional exhaustion, motherhood, and quiet breaking points become the foundation for learning self-protection.

THE BOUNDARIES SHE NEVER HAD

As May arrives and conversations around Mother's Day begin to fill the air, there is always a quiet celebration of motherhood: the love, the sacrifice, the strength, the endless giving.

What is rarely spoken about, however, is how much of that giving comes from women who were never taught where to stop.

Long before motherhood, she had already learned how to live without boundaries. She learned how to be available, agreeable, dependable. She learned how to say "yes" when she meant "no," how to carry what was never hers to carry, and how to show up even when she was exhausted.

LEARNING BOUNDARIES AFTER MOTHERHOOD BROKE ME

By Thato Ozora Seopa

Because she did it so well, no one questioned it. It was called love. It was called strength. It was called being a good woman.

But often, it was the quiet loss of self.

When Motherhood Changes Everything

Before motherhood, she could stretch herself endlessly. She could accommodate everyone else while silencing her own needs. It felt normal. It even felt admirable.

Until it became exhausting.

Motherhood does not gently introduce this truth, it exposes it. Suddenly, the emotional, physical, and mental demands are constant. There is no room to overextend without consequence.

There are days when even the smallest task feels heavy. Days when rest feels distant and silence impossible to reach. Yet somehow, when it comes to her child, she still shows up.

And in that reality, something shifts.

Because while she can show up for her child, she can no longer show up for everything and everyone else in the same way not without losing herself completely.

THE QUIET BREAKING POINT

The breaking point is not always dramatic.
Sometimes it arrives quietly, in a single thought:

I can't keep doing this.

Not just the motherhood. Not just the exhaustion.
But the expectation that she must still be everything
she once was on top of everything she has now
become.

Some relationships begin to feel heavier than
supportive. Some people continue reaching for her
even when she has nothing left to give. She begins
to notice the weight in her body: the tension in her
shoulders, the heaviness in her chest, the
exhaustion that follows after constantly pouring from
an empty cup.

And slowly, she realises something she can no
longer ignore: some of the very relationships she is
holding onto are costing her more than she can
afford.

LEARNING TO CHOOSE HERSELF

This is where boundaries begin.

Not loudly. Not perfectly. But quietly and
instinctively.

She starts small. Letting messages wait a little
longer. Choosing rest over explanation. Saying, "I'll
get back to you," instead of immediately saying yes.

At first, it feels uncomfortable. Almost wrong.
Because she has spent so much of her life
responding, adjusting, and accommodating.

But now, she pauses.

And in that pause, she begins noticing what drains
her: conversations that leave her feeling heavy,
expectations that feel one-sided, and spaces where
she feels she must constantly perform to be
accepted.



So she starts choosing differently.
She pauses before agreeing. She allows herself to
say no, even when it feels unfamiliar. She protects
her energy the same way she protects her child
carefully and intentionally.

And slowly, she understands something important:

Choosing herself is not selfish. It is necessary.

WHEN THE WORLD PUSHES BACK

Of course, boundaries rarely exist without
resistance.

The moment she begins changing, people notice.

"You've changed."

"Since when are you like this?"

"Is motherhood that hard?" accepted.



The version of her they knew, the one who always said yes and was always available was easy to access. Easy to rely on. Easy to take from without question.

This version is different.

This version pauses. Thinks. Has limits.

And sometimes she feels the discomfort too: the guilt after saying no, the urge to explain herself, the temptation to return to who she used to be.

But she doesn't.

Because she is beginning to understand that awareness matters more than being liked.

REDEFINING STRENGTH

Motherhood has a way of revealing parts of a woman she may never have met otherwise. It stretches her, confronts her, and forces her to recognise where she ends and where others begin.

And perhaps that is what boundaries truly are.

Not pushing people away, but creating enough space for her to exist fully without constantly sacrificing herself in the process.

Because motherhood is not a single moment. It is a continuous act of giving. And without boundaries, that giving becomes unsustainable.

Maybe Mother's Day should invite more than celebration. Maybe it should also invite understanding - an understanding that motherhood is layered, emotional, demanding, and deeply human.

And that the greatest form of care a mother can offer is not endless sacrifice, but sustainable love.

The kind of love that includes her, too.

She is still learning. Still adjusting. Still becoming. Some days she gets it right, and some days she falls back into old patterns.

But something has changed.

She now understands that softness does not require self-abandonment. That strength is not measured by how much she can endure. And that love is not proven by how much she can carry.

Maybe the quiet truth she carries forward is this:

She can give without losing herself.

And in learning to protect her energy, she is not becoming less of who she was.

She is finally becoming whole.

Smiling Through It: The Silent Rise of High- Functioning Depression Among Women

May is Mental Health Awareness Month - a time that reminds us that mental health struggles do not always look obvious. Not everyone who is struggling stays in bed all day, cries constantly, or visibly falls apart. Sometimes, depression looks like answering emails on time, showing up to work, posting on social media, attending events, and smiling through exhaustion.

More women are quietly experiencing what many experts and online communities describe as “high-functioning depression” - a form of depression where someone continues to manage daily responsibilities while internally battling emotional exhaustion, sadness, numbness, or burnout.

Because they are still “functioning,” many women don’t realise they are struggling until they reach complete emotional burnout.



WHAT IS HIGH-FUNCTIONING DEPRESSION?

While “high-functioning depression” is not an official medical diagnosis, it is commonly used to describe people who appear outwardly fine while internally struggling with depressive symptoms.

Many women experiencing it:

- Continue working and meeting deadlines
- Care for others while neglecting themselves
- Remain socially active
- Push through emotional exhaustion
- Constantly stay “busy”
- Struggle silently with overwhelm, sadness, numbness, anxiety, or hopelessness

From the outside, they often seem successful, reliable, strong, and composed. Internally, many feel emotionally drained and disconnected.

In today’s productivity-driven culture, emotional exhaustion is often normalised especially among women who are expected to constantly perform, nurture, achieve, and remain emotionally available to everyone else.

THE PRESSURE WOMEN CARRY

Women today are navigating multiple pressures simultaneously: careers, finances, relationships, motherhood, family responsibilities, social expectations, beauty standards, and the pressure to “hold it all together.”

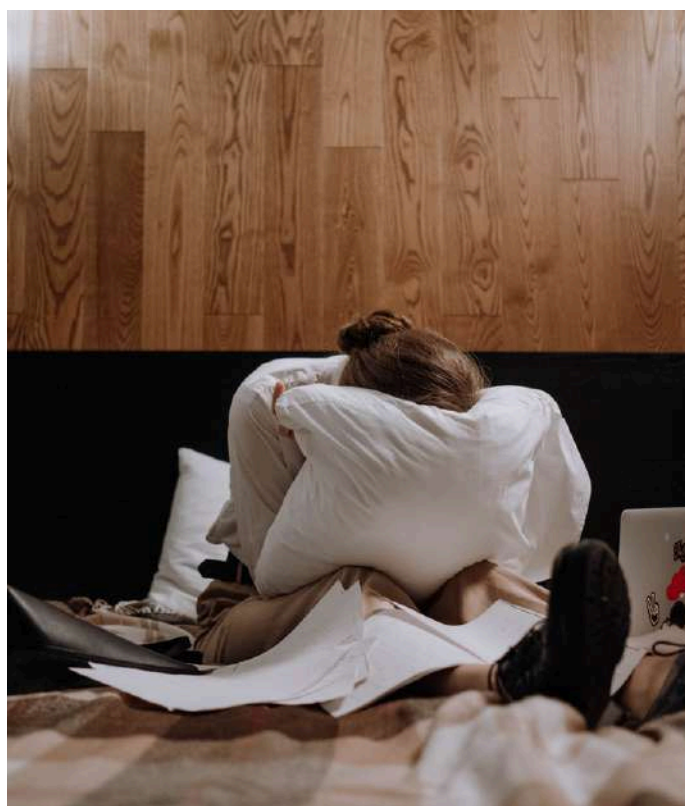
Social media has also intensified the pressure to appear constantly productive, happy, polished, and thriving.

Many women have learned to survive by becoming high-functioning. They keep moving because they feel they have no choice.

But constantly functioning in survival mode can quietly disconnect people from their emotional needs.

Sometimes high-functioning depression sounds like:

- “I’m tired all the time.”
- “I don’t even know who I am anymore.”
- “I can’t remember the last time I truly rested.”
- “I’m doing everything I’m supposed to do, but I still feel empty.”
- “I don’t have time to fall apart.”





WHEN BURNOUT AND DEPRESSION START OVERLAPPING

One of the reasons high-functioning depression often goes unnoticed is because it can look similar to burnout.

Women may dismiss symptoms as:

- Stress
- Being overworked
- Hormonal exhaustion
- “Just having a busy season”
- Lack of motivation

But ongoing emotional numbness, constant fatigue, irritability, withdrawal, hopelessness, difficulty enjoying life, or feeling emotionally disconnected may be signs that something deeper is happening.

Mental health struggles do not always announce themselves dramatically. Sometimes they appear quietly in the form of chronic exhaustion and emotional disconnection.

HEALING IS NOT WEAKNESS

One of the biggest barriers many women face is the belief that asking for help means they are failing.

In reality, acknowledging emotional exhaustion is often the first step toward healing.

Mental health awareness is not only about recognising severe crises - it is also about recognising when someone has been silently struggling for a long time while trying to appear okay. Healing may look like:

- Setting boundaries
- Resting without guilt
- Going to therapy
- Talking honestly with trusted people
- Taking breaks from constant productivity
- Prioritising sleep and emotional care
- Allowing yourself to not always be “the strong one”

This Mental Health Awareness Month, perhaps the conversation we need most is the one about the women who are surviving quietly.

The women who still show up.
Still smile.
Still work.
Still care for everyone else.

But are emotionally exhausted behind closed doors.

High-functioning depression reminds us that someone can appear perfectly fine and still be struggling deeply. And sometimes the strongest thing a woman can do is admit that she is tired and deserves support too.

RETURN TO SELF: RELEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF MIND, BODY & SPIRIT



Article: Sarah Banda

Photography: Francis Concept

Dressed By: Semelo - Fashion Brand

Tasneem Ahmed Basha is a holistic coach whose work bridges somatic awareness, cyclical living, and spiritual grounding. Her approach centres on helping women move out of disconnection and back into alignment with themselves in a way that is embodied, practical, and deeply personal. In this Spotted Sista feature, we explore both the woman behind the work and the philosophy she carries into the spaces she holds.

WHAT IS SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT PEOPLE OFTEN MISUNDERSTAND WHEN THEY FIRST ENCOUNTER YOUR WORK?

It's hilarious because people often think that I work with spirits or that I'm psychic. I think that actually speaks to how accurate kinesiology is, as well as how much detailed information is carried in both our electromagnetic & physical body.

Also because my work is holistic, many equate the word to eating healthy so people think I'm going to berate them for not eating salads (too much salad is not a good idea, but I digress).

People also assume that I'm an 'alternative healer' which must mean I don't believe in medical doctors or pharmaceutical medication; I absolutely do encourage medical attention & assistance and even have doctors and psychologists as clients.

These are the common misconceptions and honestly, I do see why people arrive there so easily. Holistic coaching simply means that as a practitioner I take ALL of what makes up your life into account as we work on a strategy to get you the outcome you want. I can never know anything a client doesn't know – and a big part of my job is showing people that they carry all of the answers, I'm simply showing them where to look.

WHAT FIRST DREW YOU INTO THE WORLD OF SOMATIC AWARENESS AND INNER HEALING WAS IT SOMETHING YOU CONSCIOUSLY CHOSE OR SOMETHING YOU WERE LED INTO THROUGH EXPERIENCE?

I'm more of a thinker than a feeler. I like to understand a concept or situation through logic or practicality in order to make sense of it. And then I had children. Anyone who has kids or is around them often will know what I'm talking about when I say children are really connected to their body's experience of life in a way we've forgotten as adults. Whether it's not wanting to wear shoes because they don't feel good or playing in mud because it does, they are viscerally connected. So a large part of my interest was based in wanting to connect with my children better.

In addition to that, the concept of the mind and body being a system and not two independent entities intrigued me. I recall reading some studies on the placebo effect and that just stunned me, I started wondering if for example our physical posture has an effect on emotions or mental state (it does), or what the cost is of ignoring my uncomfortable or scary emotions. In retrospect, I can see I came to this work both consciously & from a willingness to better understand my own experiences.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF OVER THE YEARS, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST DEFINING SHIFT?

It's tough to choose just one but a shift that I see as being vital to the woman I am today was finally understanding & accepting that my growth, fulfillment & joy was never dependent on anyone or anything being different or better. I had to realise that we don't get a free pass on pursuing fullness, or it won't simply be handed to us because situations or people were not supportive. Yes, support and safety are great but in the absence of it we are still responsible for the authorship and belonging to our lives.



I didn't want to be someone stuck in resentment, in 'what-if's'. I don't aim for things so that I can win, it's so that I can have the experience. You know, I think being a South African especially, we understand this on a very intrinsic level because as a country we've done this; we don't wait for everything to be just right, we take what we have and we make it work even better than anyone thought possible.

YOUR WORK CENTRES ON HELPING WOMEN RETURN TO THEMSELVES, WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU PERSONALLY HAD TO UNLEARN TO DO THAT FOR YOURSELF?

I had to unlearn asking everyone's opinion on everything! We've really been acculturated as women to believe that wisdom and agency is external, that we need to get permission from elsewhere in order to do what's necessary.





A practical example would be rest; duties completed would be permission to take a break. Sometimes it was illness. But I could never just feel the cue of tiredness and follow through – unlearning that has been liberating to say the least!

A lot of the time when we look for validation from others regarding our ideas or changes we want to make, what we're really looking for is safety & reassurance. The moment we try to hand that over to someone else, we're abdicating a very important role in our lives and that is sovereignty. All our choices are 50/50. By all means, we can glean knowledge or guidance from others but no-one else is you and no-one else knows your context.

WHAT DOES A GROUNDED, FULLY ALIGNED DAY LOOK LIKE FOR YOU IN YOUR OWN LIFE NOT IN THEORY, BUT IN PRACTICE?

My mornings are non-negotiable; prayer, movement, getting my youngest ready for school. I'm particular about making my bed & having a tidy bedroom, I see it as preparing my sanctuary so I can return without stress at the end of the day. I don't look at my phone for at least the first hour after I wake. The mornings are the part of my day where I can be most intentional about what's influencing me & I truly want to be present before the expectations of normal life coming knocking.

My working hours are between 9.30 am – 4 pm. I break in between for lunch with my family and prayer. And once the work day is done, I usually have a transitional cuppa before we settle in with homework, catching up with each other & supper. I watch TV on the weekends but most often it's some reading before bed, no later than 10 pm.

IN HOLDING SPACE FOR OTHERS, WHAT DO YOU FIND YOU ARE CONSTANTLY REMINDED OF ABOUT YOUR OWN HUMANITY?

I'm in this field of work for over a decade but it always strikes me how alone or strange or "wrong" we think we are...yet we share so many of the same challenges and fears. I guess I'm reminded really of how afraid we are and yet we still choose life. We still choose to do the courageous thing, to believe, to pursue that outcome we want.

I've never approached my work from the perspective of knowing better than the person in front of me – every single one of us carries an inherent wisdom, and with that in mind it's always beautiful to see and experience another's perspective. Each one of us counts, every experience counts and we've got to handle each other with care and respect.

IF SOMEONE WERE TO DESCRIBE YOUR PRESENCE IN THREE WORDS AFTER MEETING YOU, WHAT WOULD YOU HOPE THEY SAY?

People often tell me they take inspiration from me or they get a boost of self-esteem. I like to make people laugh so I'm really glad when people say I'm humorous. What I hope people experience in my presence is themselves. That's it. I don't aim to leave an impression or hope to be remembered. I just want to be a space where another can be witnessed, where they can know that they matter – whether my interaction with them lasted 5 minutes or a consult, I'd like people to walk away having seen themselves in some way that intrigues and interests them.

Soft Is Powerful: Redefining Strength Through Haircare With Thabisile Nonsikelelo Dlamini



By Portia Dieta

Haircare is often viewed as an ordinary routine, but for many it carries a deeper significance - it becomes a space of healing, identity, and self-respect. Through gentle practices and consistent care, a powerful truth emerges: softness is not the opposite of strength, but one of its most meaningful forms.

For many people, especially women, haircare goes beyond simple maintenance; it becomes a personal ritual of grounding and reconnecting with oneself. It reflects discipline in the way we care for our well-being, resilience in restoring what has been weakened or damaged, and confidence in how we present ourselves to the world. Every step from washing to nourishing to styling turns into a quiet reminder of self-worth and care.

Thabisile is a warm, bubbly, and loving woman whose caring nature is matched by a deep sensitivity. As the youngest of eight children, she believes her upbringing has played a role in shaping this emotional awareness. Above all, she identifies as a born-again child of God, a foundation that guides her values, identity, and the way she moves through life. In our interview with Thabisile, we explore how haircare can be understood as an act of empowerment and self-definition.

WHAT DOES HAIRCARE MEAN TO YOU BEYOND APPEARANCE?

Haircare to me is a personal moment where I get to pamper myself and make myself feel good, and since I prefer doing it myself, it helps me feel empowered and capable.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR HAIR AND HOW IT HAS EVOLVED OVER TIME?

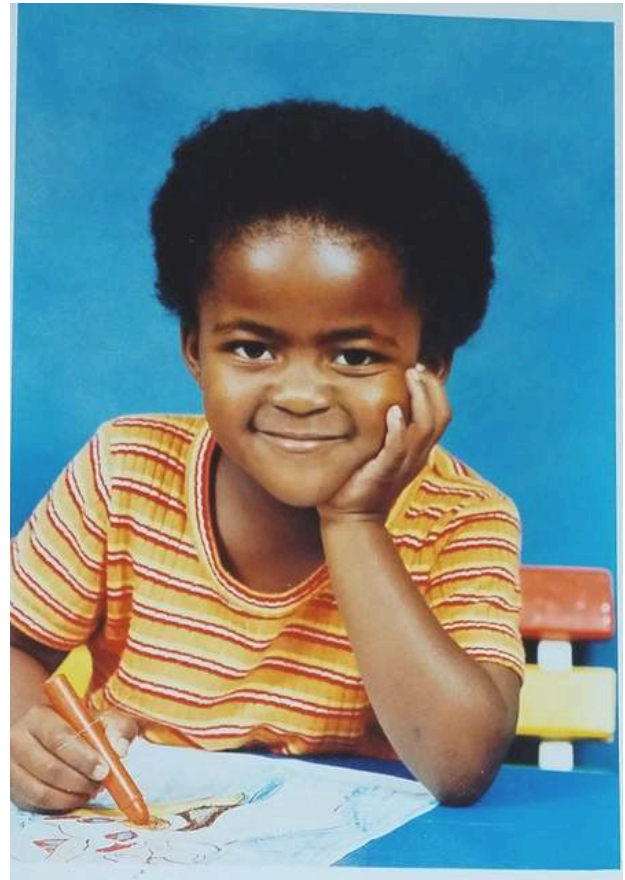
My hair has ALWAYS been my favourite physical feature because of its beauty. When I was younger before I started primary school education, I kept an afro. My Mom started relaxing my hair when I went to what I called 'big school' and I kept that up until high school and a little into post high school. My hair got a lot of attention because of its really black hue. People used to think it was dyed. Of course, I enjoyed the compliments. In the year 2017, after I had cut my hair the previous year, I decided to grow an afro. BEST DECISION EVER. PERIOD!

IN WHAT WAYS DOES CARING FOR YOUR HAIR CONNECT TO YOUR SENSE OF IDENTITY OR CULTURE?

Growing an afro helped me realise the importance of my identity as an African woman, not encumbered by colonial oppression telling me that straight hair is better hair. I am so privileged to have hair that has the ability to be straight if I want it to be with or without chemicals. But if I had to choose (which I have), I would definitely keep away from the relaxer because of its burning downside. I am in the process of unlearning the lesson I was taught growing up which was, 'beauty is pain'. No, it should not be.

HAVE THERE BEEN MOMENTS WHERE YOUR HAIR JOURNEY INFLUENCED YOUR CONFIDENCE OR SELF-IMAGE?

My whole life. I recently realised that when I am not feeling my best, it reflects on how I feel about my hair that day. If I am down, I will most likely keep my du-rag or bonnet all day, or if I'm going somewhere, put on a doek. But sometimes, I instantly feel better once I style my afro to my liking; confidence boosted immediately.



HOW DO YOU DEFINE "SOFT STRENGTH" IN THE CONTEXT OF HAIRCARE?

I believe it's the perfect middle ground where my haircare routine ensures that my hair is strong enough to withstand combing and styling, and remains soft and moisturised and looks and feels healthy, with a natural shine.

DO YOU SEE YOUR HAIRCARE ROUTINE AS A FORM OF SELF-CARE OR EMOTIONAL GROUNDING? WHY?

Definitely. When it's wash day, I get to take care of my favourite feature, which makes me feel good about myself. Massaging my scalp and inhaling the great scent of my haircare products has a calming effect and helps me feel anchored and at peace.



CAN YOU SHARE A MOMENT WHEN TAKING CARE OF YOUR HAIR FELT EMPOWERING RATHER THAN ROUTINE?

I went through a terrible break-up, and when a moment of feeling deep sadness overcame me, I washed, conditioned and moisturised my hair. I remember feeling composed and the meltdown that was meant to happen, didn't and I couldn't help but smile.

HOW DOES GENTLENESS IN HAIRCARE REFLECT HOW YOU TREAT YOURSELF OVERALL?

I am a very sensitive person and flourish when I treat myself with gentleness, especially when the urge to be hard on myself for my shortcomings is strong. So when I am gentle on my hair, it flourishes too.

HAVE YOU FACED ANY CHALLENGES IN YOUR HAIR JOURNEY? HOW DID YOU NAVIGATE THEM?

I am, in fact, facing a challenge in my hair journey. I became obsessed with braids, tying them up which pulled on my roots and practically destroyed my hairline. In frustration, I could have decided to cut off my hair, but instead, I researched what I am supposed to do and bought a hair growth oil that focuses on stimulating the hairline. Quitting was definitely going to hurt me in the long run because, I have days when I truly miss my hair. I am already seeing an improvement in my hairline.

HOW HAS YOUR HAIR TAUGHT YOU PATIENCE OR RESILIENCE?

My hair has taught me many lessons, but these stand out the most.

I should not compare my hair journey to anyone else's. I can take inspiration from others, but I shouldn't count myself out if what works for them doesn't work the same way for me.

Healthy hair takes time, whether it's growing it out, repairing damage, or learning a routine. That process teaches me to be less harsh on myself and more comfortable with gradual progress.

Research will give me the information I need to make my hair journey a success, and success includes the daily, weekly and monthly wins.

WERE THERE TIMES YOU FELT PRESSURE TO CONFORM TO CERTAIN BEAUTY STANDARDS? HOW DID YOU RESPOND?

I am fortunate to not have felt any pressure to conform to any beauty standards when it comes to my hair. Instead, my hair was celebrated and inspired others to go natural too.

WHAT LESSONS HAS YOUR HAIR JOURNEY TAUGHT YOU ABOUT SELF-ACCEPTANCE?

This is the hair that God gave me and I am beautiful just the way I was fashioned. I should not look down on myself and hair because of the things I struggle with and rather work with what I have, and improve what can be, and accept what cannot.

WHAT DOES YOUR HAIRCARE ROUTINE LOOK LIKE, AND WHAT PARTS FEEL MOST MEANINGFUL TO YOU?

I prepare the water, and line up my hair washing and conditioning products. After I have washed, conditioned and detangled, I usually apply hair food to my damp hair and scalp and the hair growth oil to my hairline, and massaging the products into my scalp. I then apply an oil moisturiser and twist my hair and then put on a doek or du-rag. I thoroughly enjoy detangling and massaging my scalp because it feels really good.

ARE THERE ANY RITUALS OR TRADITIONS TIED TO YOUR HAIRCARE?

For me, it's important to take care of my hair in sections, and to twist my hair while it is still damp to prevent breakage.

HOW DO YOU ADAPT YOUR HAIRCARE ROUTINE DURING STRESSFUL OR BUSY PERIODS?



I keep it to the bare minimum, although I don't skip conditioning, and moisture sealing because those are very important to me. If detangling will take time, I prefer a quick finger detangling.

WHAT PRODUCTS OR PRACTICES MAKE YOU FEEL MOST CONNECTED TO YOUR HAIR?

Definitely when I apply hair food to my scalp, and massage it. It's a grounding feeling and I absolutely love it.

HOW DO YOU SET BOUNDARIES WHEN IT COMES TO OTHERS' OPINIONS ABOUT YOUR HAIR?

I am very protective of my hair and once the comments about my hair starts to be nasty, (like when someone who doesn't understand shrinkage, made a mean comment about how short my hair was), I will definitely defend myself fiercely because if I don't, no else will.



HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO UNLEARN HARMFUL HAIR PRACTICES OR BELIEFS? WHAT WAS THAT PROCESS LIKE?

I grew up hearing my sisters and mother saying “we suffer for beauty” and associated pain with beautiful hair or hairstyle, which would lead to facial tightness that prevents laughing freely, or those uncomfortable braid bumps around the hairline. Such practices lead to long-term and permanent issues if not addressed.

WHAT DOES “PROTECTING YOUR HAIR” MEAN TO YOU, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY?

For me, being able to do a haircare routine that minimises breakage and hair manipulation and promotes moisture is very important to me. Plus, I don’t like it when people touch my hair, which is why I have a shirt that I love with the words ‘DON’T TOUCH THE HAIR’ written on it.

That’s another way to set boundaries for those handsy fingers. Emotionally, I choose to be patient with my hair, and do my best to not feel pressured to any beauty standard set by society. Physical protection is about caring about my hair; emotional protection is about respecting it, both by others and myself.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE EXTERNAL EXPECTATIONS WITH WHAT FEELS RIGHT FOR YOU?

I always try to keep in mind that my hair journey is personal. My hair is mine. It is also very important to distinguish between valuable input and unhelpful comments. In addition, being flexible and willing to learn new things can help my hair journey improve and evolve, but I must make sure I’m not abandoning myself to be accepted.

Concluding, Thabisile highlights how embracing natural hair is both a journey and a commitment to self-understanding. Her insights remind us that strength is not found in rushing the process, but in the patience, care, and intention we bring to it. For anyone transitioning to natural hair, Thabisile highlights knowledge as the most important starting point.

She strongly encourages, “Research. Research. Research,” urging individuals to take time to truly understand their hair through porosity tests, reliable articles, and guidance from trusted afro hair influencers. This learning journey becomes a valuable tool in uncovering what best suits your unique hair needs.

EVENTS

Brought to you by Chic-Tribe Digital

THE
Femme
FRONTIER
FEST



SAVE
THE
DATE

29 AUGUST 2026 Johannesburg

EVENTS

LEADING BOLDLY, ACTIVATING COURAGE

'HOW TO HER' YOUNG WOMEN IN BUSINESS BRUNCH

AUDACITY ACTIVATED
LAPARADA ROSEBANK
SAT 23 MAY
11:00 - 15:00

FREE ENTRY
FOOD AND DRINKS
WILL BE SOLD

8TH EDITION
LIMITED SPACE
REGISTER TODAY

KIKO VITALS
Mist
LAPARADA

Our Incredible Speaker Line Up:
Michelle Expert, Thandiwe Dube, Niki Breger, Vuyelwa Nkambule, Mitterra,
Nomaswazi Tshabala, Elma Akob, Michelle Lima, Davina Bemako

WWW.INSIDEOUTGIRLSCAMPAIGN.ORG
073 104 1863

EVENTS



**THE
WELLNESS
COLLECTIVE**
— S U M M I T —

Keynote Address, Panel Discussions & Master Classes
A day to gain insights by engaging with knowledgeable speakers and to discover innovative well-being approaches. The event is aimed at expanding collaboration opportunities and building a community with like-minded individuals.

**PERE HOUSE
MIDRAND** | **4 AUGUST 2026
09:00 - 16:00**

 | **THE
WELLNESS
COLLECTIVE** | **TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE VIA QUICKET** | **@WOMENCAN_SA**
     

EVENTS



SEASONS OF HER
Winter

Date: 4 July 2026
Venue: Salehs Bakery
Time: 9:45 am for 10 am 'til 1pm
Ticket Price: R360
To Book contact: 064 865 1925



Advertise With Us

For more information: info@chictribe.co.za

Subscribe to Chic-Tribe Digital



NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!

Get your copy before everyone else

Have a story idea for us email:
info@chictribe.co.za



VISIT CHIC-TRIBE DIGITAL ONLINE



WWW.CHICTRIBE.CO.ZA

Catch the freshest features
Updated weekly
Read anytime, anywhere