

# The Moment I Chose My Voice

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TS#3

I realized I was no longer just a Black girl the moment I chose my voice.

Finding the courage to speak, to inspire, and to walk fully in my purpose changed everything. Starting my nonprofit marked a turning point—I stepped out of bondage and beyond the walls others had built around me, and embraced who God says I am. Through trials, rejection, and personal battles, I discovered my worth and refused society’s limits. I am fearfully and wonderfully made—chosen and called. My voice matters. My story has power. My healing has become a bridge for others.

I learned early how to make myself smaller. As a young Black girl, I was often warned to stay out of the mirror. “You think you’re cute,” the women of my era would say—half joking, half correcting. It wasn’t encouragement; it was instruction. Don’t be too confident. Don’t stand too tall. Don’t let your presence become a problem.

I heard something else just as often: You talk too much.

I talked because I observed.

I talked because I noticed what others ignored.

I talked because I spoke truth out loud.

My voice was direct, and it made people uncomfortable. Instead of being heard, I was corrected. Instead of being guided, I was silenced. So I adapted. I learned to pull back, to survive by swallowing my truth.

Little by little, I placed myself in bondage.

By adulthood, shrinking felt normal. I mistook silence for maturity and compliance for wisdom. I convinced myself that being agreeable meant being evolved. Yet deep

down, I knew I was living restrained—not free—holding back parts of myself God had created with intention.

The shift didn’t happen on a stage or in front of applause. It happened quietly, late one night, alone with my thoughts and with God. I was exhausted—not just tired, but weary of living contained. Tired of carrying something meaningful and refusing to release it. Tired of watching the same cycles repeat because fear kept me still.

What finally broke me open wasn’t only my own struggle.

It was the girls I saw every day at work— young Black girls without confidence, without voice, without guidance in self-care or self-worth. They were overlooked and unseen, not because they lacked value, but because no one had stood up for them. No one had spoken for them. No one had shown them how to believe in themselves.

I recognized them instantly—because I had been them. That night, sitting in stillness, I understood: if I stayed silent, I was choosing bondage—not just for myself, but allowing it to continue for them. I could no longer shrink and call it obedience. I could no longer hide and label it humility.

That was the moment I stopped being a Black girl and became a Black woman.

Not because I felt ready, but because I felt responsible—responsible to walk out of bondage, to use the voice I had been trained to suppress, and to stand in truth even when it disrupted comfort. God was calling me forward, and for the first time, I answered without asking permission.

Unmuting myself didn’t come from confidence; it came from courage. Courage to reject labels. Courage to believe who God says I am over what others imply. Courage to move forward not only for myself, but for every girl who hasn’t yet learned she matters.

I no longer shrink. I no longer wait for permission. I stand boldly—free, grounded, and empowered—using my journey to help others rise. My scars are no longer hidden; they are proof of strength. I walk in truth, purpose, and faith—defined not by my past, but by the promise of who I’ve become in God.

I was born to shine.

And so were you.

I am Beverly Woods. TS#3 of 52 of The SoulTown Magazine. I want to thank you all for having SOUL! ✨



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Unmuted