



## Maya Jai Pinson

Interview by Carol Wright  
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### When did you know that you wanted to be an actress?

I started modeling in magazine ads at the age of 1. I played basketball, volleyball, Lacrosse and softball but around 11 years old, I decided to explore acting and film opportunities like my older sister and my mom. Once I started and the more opportunities I had to showcase my talents I love it.

### What has been your favorite project you've worked on so far?

Well it's hard to pick one but I'd say it has to be either the movie Believe or the TV series Dads Do It Too they both have allowed me to grow in my acting. The cast and crew on both projects have been professional and fun to work with. While I love acting and filming, the most favorite project that I've worked on so far has been motivational speaking and co-hosting the radio show Voices of Our Teens. I love inspiring and speaking to my peers and younger kids. I've always loved helping people, so I started speaking at schools, expos and recreational centers about Dreaming Big. I find great joy in motivating and helping others.

### What inspired you to write your book "Back Pack Lilly"?

I've always loved writing and it started when I was younger. It began with poems and haiku's. I've almost always had a lot of extracurricular activities and at the time I had a 4.15 GPA that I was trying to maintain. I knew that balancing a heavy schedule wasn't always easy so, I came up with a solution that I call "Stop, Drop, Work, then Play". The method is a pretty easy one to remember; "Stop what you're doing", "Drop what you are doing" "Work on your assignment" "Then you can Play or have leisure time". I saw that some of my peers could use that method and I figured if you started developing that habit at a younger age it would become your first thought so, I incorporated my motto into my book Back Pack Lilly. The summary of the book is Back Pack Lilly teaches kids how to prioritize their studying and school work over extracurricular activities and playing.

**Do you hope to publish more books in the future?**

Yes, I do plan on writing and publishing more books in the future. Although my filming schedule has picked up with this being my freshman year in high school, I made the choice to scale back on some activities to make sure that I make the adjustment from Middle to High school.

**What has been the most rewarding part of co-hosting "Voices of Our Teens"?**

The most rewarding part of being a co-host on the Archie Beslow radio show "Voices of our Teens" segment, is that I got to meet and work along the side of an awesome host. I love being able to give teens a platform to speak from their hearts on the issues that are impacting them negatively and positively. The host and I also give them advice on various ways to approach certain situations. In listening to other teens I get inspired to want to help them in a positive way, whether it's giving them advice or encouraging them to continue to do the positive things that they're doing.

**Has "Voices of Our Teens" served as inspiration for you to continue to work towards your goals?**

Yes, Voices of our Teens (VOOT as we like to call it) has definitely inspired me to keep working harder towards my goals. It allows me to be expressive, creative and inspirational all of which helps me in the classroom, my motivational speaking and acting. The host Archie, is a great mentor and pushes me to better myself and to never give up.

**You've already accomplished so much at fourteen. Where do you see yourself in 5 to 10 years?**

I want to continue to grow in other areas and experiences. I see myself graduating from college, starring in major films, continuing to be an inspiration through my work while giving back to the community in many ways.

**What advice do you have for young people who may be nervous to start pursuing their passions?**

Dream as big as you want because you can pursue whatever dreams your heart desires. Dreams can't be achieved without discipline and consistency if you haven't "start now" to develop plan. Incorporate

Stop, Drop, Work then Play in your daily routine. And remember "a dream without goals remains a dream". You should pace yourself and make benchmarks and no matter how hard it gets, you can do it - just keep pushing and never give up!

I appreciate my parents and family for supporting and standing behind me on all of my endeavors.

More about Maya Jai Pinson can be found on [www.mjaip.com](http://www.mjaip.com) and you can follow her on Instagram @mayajai04.

