

Owning Our Struggles

**QUOTES TO
INSPIRE**



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INTRODUCTION

“I learned that what was wrong with me was the direct result of the things that happened to me. And although what happened to me wasn’t my fault, it was my responsibility to heal and liberate myself from the trauma and the oppressions that weighed me down.” (2)

“Self-healing may be powerful, but we are not healing to exist within a vacuum; we are healing to integrate within our community and build healthy, supportive networks.” (5)

CHAPTER ONE

“What we go through does not define us, but what we go through has the ability to mold and shape us.” (9)

“Our life experiences during our formative years can alter and influence brain development. Studies show that early experiences of trauma can leave an impact even twenty to thirty years later and affect our quality of life, education, and even romantic relationships.” (17)

“When we are hurting and have not done the work needed to heal, we are at risk of continuing the same cycles of dysfunctional patterns that hurt others and ourselves.” (18)

“To thrive as healthy adults, we need to nurture our inner child. Nurturing your inner child is a way to regulate your nervous system by reminding yourself that you are safe in your body.” (20)

“Boundaries teach us that we are not powerless people.” (27)

“Our core beliefs are like the soil of the earth, and our thoughts are the seeds that we plant. What grows depends on whether the soil is healthy or rotted.” (32)

CHAPTER TWO

“Healing is a social justice issue because trauma impacts not only the individual but the family unit, our communities, and the social and economic structure of our country.” (45)

“The truth is, emotions are not harmful, but what we choose to do with our emotions can be.” (53)

“As long as we are alive, healing will be an everyday practice, which also means that there is no perfect start time.” (66)

CHAPTER THREE

“I was indeed exhausted, but my exhaustion had nothing to do with being in Black skin; it had everything to do with the power of white supremacy and how its roots run deep within American soil.” (76)

“I will never shrink myself, play small, or stop speaking up because I am concerned about being cast as a stereotype. If a person thinks I’m an angry Black woman for having an opinion, they must deal with that. I am not responsible for managing other people’s racist judgments about me. I am exhausted enough by the weight of the world and all the things I already must carry, so I refuse to do someone else’s antiracism work.” (78)

“Treating internalized oppression also allows us to repair both our community and the family unit, which suffer because of intergenerational, institutional, and systemic trauma. This is where we start to recognize that self-care is the bridge to community-care, and community-care is the bridge to community healing.” (87)

“Being strong and avoiding intimacy are not the badge of honor you think they might be if you are left feeling depressed, unhappy, lonely, and unfilled. Avoidance simply pushes us further away from the source of growth and the joy we seek.” (98)

“To be well and whole will require us to look to our roots and restore the practices that have been destroyed or devalued over time as a critical component to our healing as BIPOC.” (104)

“Creating sacred bonds is essential for our growth, so who we bond and interact with is intrinsic to our evolution.” (105)

“We all have roots, and even if we feel like we have been disconnected from them, we can find our way back to ourselves through learning our history and reengaging with our customs, as well as by cultivating new ones that run through the family unit.” (107)

CHAPTER FOUR

“During stages of healing, it is normal for people to live in two conflicting states where they are seeking change but desiring homeostasis. It’s like playing an internal game of tug-of-war: one side is pulling and nudging at you to stay the same and exist in your comfort zone, while the other side of you is pleading for change, new habits, and to disrupt the things that are not working and causing you harm.” (115)

“It’s misguided to believe that we outgrow the desire to be nurtured by a parent, and it’s misguided to believe that parenting has an expiration date. Parenting never stops; however, as the child matures through different stages of life, the parent-child dynamic will shift as the child gains more autonomy and independence.” (121)

“Even when they are giving their best, parents may still inadvertently cause harm to their child. As an adult child, you must recognize this about your parents. And as a parent, you need to acknowledge that two things can be true at once—even in the midst of trying to do better, you may make choices that hurt your children.” (125)

“Too often, we feel powerless in the midst of conflict, but we have to remind ourselves that although we cannot control other people, we can control how we respond to people and that is what it looks like to set a boundary with yourself.” (128)

“Growing up around emotionally immature adults often leads to the eradication of healthy emotional attachment and development that remains even in adulthood. Emotionally immature parenting can also lead to toxic parenting styles, abuse, and various forms of neglect.” (135)

“People are not wired to be constantly exposed to emotional violence, and at some point, those emotional injuries will have an impact on the child’s well-being.” (139)

CHAPTER FIVE

“In our society, people tend to think in black and white, so they will characterize a person’s desire for a relationship as a lack of self-love, without considering the duality of our emotions, and that it is quite possible to love yourself and still seek to be loved by someone else.”

(149)

“Dating is an act of opening yourself up repeatedly while having to heal from rejection, breakups, ghosting, deceit, and more, until you find a partner that fits closely with your values and there is unequivocal interest from both parties to pursue something further.”

(151)

“We are never fully healed as people because healing is not a destination, nor is there a finish line waiting to be approached as we navigate certain seasons in life.” (153)

“Believe people when they show you who they are and listen to them when they are vocal about their truth and desires.” (157)

“Many of us have a standardized checklist of what we think makes a good-fitting partner, but too often, our checklist does not reflect the proper guidelines that would give us insight into what will create a healthy, meaningful relationship.” (158)

“The most important thing you can do when dating is trusting your gut and intuition. Don’t confuse trusting your gut with feelings of anxiety. When you trust your gut, you are guided by peace and comfort regarding what you are feeling and thinking, and there is no confusion, fear, or worry.” (166)

“Healthy relationships are formed when people take the time to address the issues that are manifesting in their relationship instead of ignoring them, minimizing them, or pretending they don’t exist.” (167)

“When we have boundaries, we are not only advocating for our needs but are also taking responsibility for our actions, and we are asking our partners to be responsible for themselves and own their behaviors.” (171)

“No relationship will ever be fifty-fifty. There are going to be times when the work of sustaining a relationship manifests differently for each partner depending on the roles and dynamics at play.” (172)

“No one wants to feel alone, but there is a difference between experiencing aloneness and feeling lonely. Being alone can be an act of solitude.” (176)

“Stillness activates us; it shows us the cracks and crevices of life that we continuously overlook because we are so busy doing and never stop to notice the parts of life that need patching, all the shattered pieces of our lives that need to be put back together, and the fractures in our mind, body, and spirit that are seeking wholeness.”
(177)

“We gave ourselves the closure we needed, which was owning and understanding that even in friendships, forever is a myth, and longevity does not have more value than short-term experiences. Any connection is one worth learning from.” (188)

“A healthy friendship thrives when there is respect, reciprocity, and trust—those are the legs of the relationship that allow it to walk and go the distance.” (188)

CHAPTER SIX

“America has fostered the biggest toxic work environment dating back to slavery, and at this point, the inability of Black people and other communities of color to rest is another lingering symptom of intergenerational trauma.” (198)

“The American dream stands on the premise of individualism, when in fact, community is how we advance both individually and as a society.” (201)

“As individuals, we must play a role in collective healing by doing the work needed to heal ourselves so that we are not oppressing others and upholding detrimental systems and structures of power that cause harm—and this work takes a whole lot out of you.” (207)

“In a world that is always heavy with its endless traumatic experiences, we must choose ourselves daily or else this world will pick us apart.” (207)

“We must be willing to push our own boundaries, because sometimes the limits that we put in place to protect ourselves are self-sabotaging. They keep us small and unseen.” (210)

“Learning to disconnect from the culture of excessive doing and toxic productivity is seriously a day-by-day, moment-by-moment task. It requires mindfulness and a willingness to do something different, no matter how uncomfortable it feels.” (213)

“Our desire to please and be everything to everyone, while also having people view us as superhumans with capes, is why the act of resting can feel so difficult, because when you choose rest, you are choosing to put the cape away and be unavailable.” (214)

“Getting better with your boundaries is the only way to ensure you are practicing emotional rest. Often, tendencies like people-pleasing are a coping mechanism to either deal with or avoid conflict and tension, but the result is always self-injurious.” (224)

“There is a strong correlation between who we surround ourselves with and their impact on our well-being. It’s important to surround yourself with people who are supportive, emotionally safe, and who cultivate a space of acceptance and belonging, but what’s also critical to understand is that we can feel drained even when we are around people who are good for us.” (226)

“Stop putting limitations on what you think rest is, open your eyes to things that drain you, and find ways to preserve your energy.” (228)

CHAPTER SEVEN

“Don’t be afraid to take a chance on yourself, try new things, make new friends, or find a partner because you are so fixated on healing. Remember that healing happens best in community. Healing happens when we give ourselves permission to experience life and learn lessons along the way.” (234)

“Courage isn’t something that just falls into our laps; it’s something that we build, brick by brick, and one step at a time.” (236)

“Healing does not stop pain from existing, but it does give us the tolerance to manage our pain when we have the tools needed to regulate it by using the brain and body.” (236)

“Everywhere you turn, there is a voice that will try to tell you how to live, but one of the best ways to know you are healing is when you finally learn to trust yourself and your ability to make choices for your betterment, instead of second-guessing yourself and constantly requiring approval and validation from others on whether your needs matter or how to live your life.” (252)

“Owning your struggles is the bridge to owning your healing.” (253)

