MESSAGE



Fall 2026

In The Meantime Men .org

In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. is purposed to enrich, empower, and extend the lives of intergenerational Black men, respectful of sexual orientation, through social, educational, health, and wellness programs and services.

Programs and Services

Daily

Mental Health
Telehealth psychotherapy
Peer counseling
Sexual Health
HIV Counseling and Testing
Linkage to STI Screening
Linkage to PrEP, PEP
Linkage to Care
Case Management/ Linkage Services

Weekly

Every Tuesday
BROTHERS REACHING BROTHERS, Intergenerational social networking and discussion group.

Monthly

MYLIFE 2.0, Social networking and discussion group. Ages 18-39.

Quarterly

LOS ANGELES BLACK MEN'S TASK FORCE, Intergenerational meeting
FOR THE SAGES, Social networking discussion group, and social events.

Annual Activations

February

National BLACK HIV/ AIDS Awareness Day

June/July

Juneteenth/Black LGBTQ+ Pride Celebration

August

Black Gay Men's Wellness Month

September

Umoja Retreat

December

World AIDS Day
Anniversary Celebration



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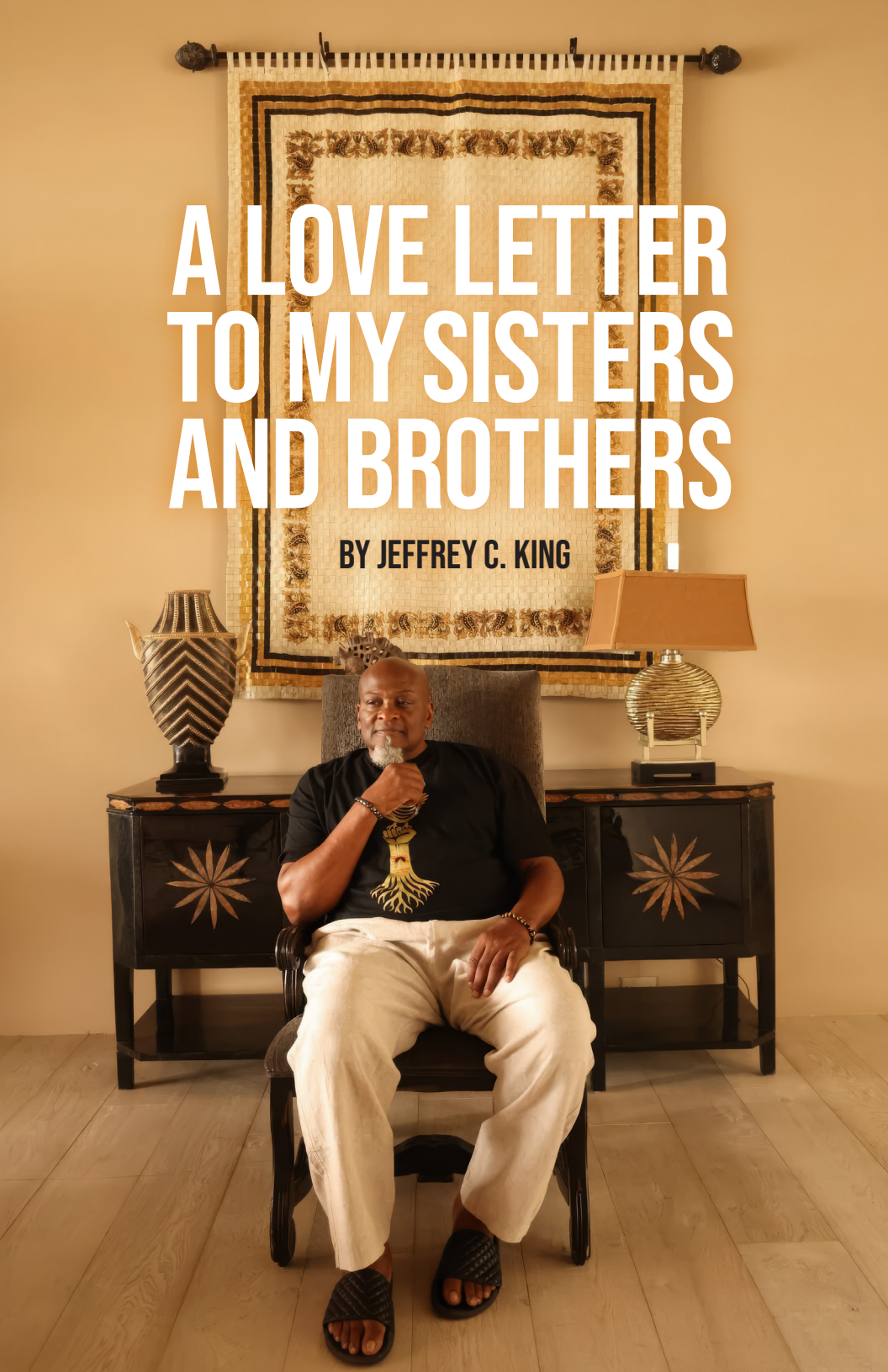
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A LOVE LETTER TO MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS

BY JEFFREY C. KING



It is in this transformative moment in the history/herstory of the universe, that I, Elder, Jeffrey King, pay homage to those Black Queer ancestors who paid the ultimate sacrifice, for living out loud. Today I hold space for every Black LGBTQ+ ancestor who feared for their lives and was unable to come out and live in their truth, centered in their total authentic identity.

I recall the collective decades of never-ending battles and advocacy for LGBTQ+/Black LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion. I am proud to say that I was and continue to be a part of this necessary movement. I recall the struggles of yesteryear and continue to witness the hard-fought victories over oppression, hatred, and bigotry bred and fueled by ignorance and the miseducation of our common society.

It is difficult to imagine and to endure a society that punches down on any segment of humanity. The fact that Queer people should have to fight to simply exist is unfathomable. We live it every day, and yet in our living we find joy, light, and spiritual nourishment to fuel us for the road ahead—the roads yet traveled.

The layers of indoctrinated, inbred hatred of ill-informed human beings continue to perpetuate ignorance and escalate violence that destroys souls and erodes our collective humanity at large.

A society that has been taught to fear, alienate, and subjugate will never rise up to the full meaning of its Constitutional Creed. The fact that Black LGBTQ+ people have to fight for a place at the table and for their fair share of the resources that have been denied us for centuries is criminal.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."
—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
March on Washington 1963

So, it is in the spirit of the elder freedom fighters, Black LGBTQ+ advocates, and co-conspirators that we center ourselves and constantly challenge ourselves to reach higher. We must dig deeper with roots that are grounded in the collective, history, wisdom, spirituality, brilliance, joy, and commitment to excellence. We must REMEMBER the struggles of our forefathers and mothers who continued to RISE under unimaginable horrors.

In closing, Beloved, never allow anyone to shame you for playing the "Black Card," for it is imbued with indelible truths of inhumane treatment in this country and around the world. It is informed by the legacy stories of our ancestors' commitment to our future.

Today, let us plant our feet in the earth, deeply rooted in our culture, art, struggle, joys, victories, and our continued commitment to REMEMBERING how we got here. It is through the ingestion of this collective wisdom that we will be able to move forward with divine right action.

Jeffrey C. King is a Community Social Architect and Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc.

YOUNG BLACK MEN'S ADVISORY BOARD

FEEDBACK AND IDEAS

BY PRINCE MARTIN

In The Meantime's Young Black Men's Advisory Board, also known as the Community Advisory Board (CAB), has continued to grow throughout 2026 as an important part of how we engage the community in our programs, outreach, and leadership development.

The CAB is made up of Black men ages 18–39 who provide feedback, share ideas, support ITMT events and programs, and help us identify ways to better reach and serve other young Black men. At the beginning of the year, members took on a more active role by helping facilitate groups, including the MyLife 2.0 social discussion group and the Game Night Series, recruiting new members, and supporting programs such as HIV testing, STI referrals, PrEP outreach, and other ITMT activities.

As the year progressed, the Young Black Men's Advisory Board



In The Meantime's Young Black Men's Advisory Board attending Umoja Retreat.



also worked to create more structure within the group. Members discussed their roles and expectations before developing an executive board structure that includes a president (Phil Percy), vice president (Brian Brass), event coordinator (Tamar Sibley), liaisons/advocates (Byron Keaton and Rome Wood), and secretary (Brandon Pattera).

CAB members also show up to support ITMT programming outside of structured meetings. In June, members volunteered during ITMT's Juneteenth celebration by serving food, welcoming guests, and tabling throughout the event to provide community members with the latest information about ITMT programs and services. In July, CAB members completed a professional development training on Leveraging AI for Entrepreneurship. This training is part of a quarterly professional development curriculum designed to help members develop skills and strategies that support their interests in areas such as nonprofit leadership, entrepreneurship, and public health. Additionally, two members accompanied ITMT's Program Manager during a presentation to the Los Angeles County Division of HIV and STD Programs on the HIV Cluster Detection and Response (C-Core) Project.

As we move through the rest of 2026, the CAB continues to strengthen its role within ITMT and the broader community. The goal is not only to receive community feedback but also to create more opportunities for community members to participate, lead, and help shape the programs and services designed for them.

The current active members of In The Meantime's Young Black Men's Advisory Board are Andre Barnes, Brian Brass, Jaylen Hibbert, Byron Keaton, Ron Norman, Brandon Pattera, Phil Percy, Tamar Sibley, Vershawn Smith, Chris Webb, Dayvon Williams, and Rome Wood.

Prince Martin is In The Meantime's Senior Program Manager and HIV tester, overseeing various holistic wellness and leadership development programs for Black same-gender-loving men throughout Los Angeles County.

COMMUNITY LIVES HERE

JUNETEENTH/PRE-PRIDE

BY PRINCE MARTIN





As a holistic wellness organization, In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. (ITMT) understands the importance of community. This Pride season, we wanted to ensure that every part of the Black LGBTQ+ community was represented, affirmed, and included in our outreach and celebrations.

Leading into June, we launched our BLACK LGBTQ+ WELLNESS campaign featuring three billboards displayed throughout South Los Angeles. Each billboard directed community members to our website, where they could access resources from Black-founded and Black-led wellness organizations. This campaign served multiple purposes: bringing resources and representation directly to the communities we serve while ensuring Black LGBTQ+ individuals know they are seen, valued, and supported.

Understanding the unique experiences of those living at the intersection of multiple identities, we hosted our Juneteenth/Black Pride celebration at our office, the historic Carl Bean House. This free, backyard barbecue-style gathering provided a safe space for our community to celebrate life, resilience, and joy beneath a vibrant sunflower theme representing our 2026 theme, Deeply Rooted.

We were honored to welcome 300 attendees, enjoy special performances by community icon Mother Ebony Lane, and hear remarks from Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass.

We also presented the quarterly King-Bremond Scholarship, named in honor of Jeffrey C. King, ITMT founder and executive director, and Duane Bremond, a founding member of At The Beach (ATB) Los Angeles Black Pride, to Juan Mercier. The scholarship supports Black LGBTQ+ students pursuing academic or trade-focused higher education.

We closed out the month of June with ONE VILLAGE: The State of the Black LGBTQ+ Community in Los Angeles panel presentation. Facilitated by Jeffrey King, the panel featured five community leaders and icons: Reverend Alfreda Lanoix, Queen Chela Demuir, Cynthia Thornburg Ruffin, Gerald Garth, and Scott Hamilton. The Carl Bean House was filled to the brim with community members and guests who engaged in a candid intergenerational conversation inspired by the principle of Sankofa, looking back to understand our history to help shape our future.

Our mission states, "In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc. is purposed to enrich, empower, and extend the lives of intergenerational Black men, respectful of sexual orientation…" This Pride season, we brought that mission to life through a series of campaigns and programs centered on the holistic wellness of not only Black men, but the Black LGBTQ+ community as a whole. Because at In The Meantime, "Community Lives Here."

Asé.

Prince Martin is In The Meantime's Senior Program Manager and HIV tester, overseeing various holistic wellness and leadership development programs for Black same-gender-loving men throughout Los Angeles County.









UMOJA AT DELGADO

BY JEFFREY C. KING



The lovely Delgado Estate was home for In The Meantime's Annual UMOJA Retreat, "Deeply Rooted." Thirty excited brothers boarded the charter bus at In The Meantime early Friday, September 25, 2026.

These brave adventurers set off on a journey of self-discovery and healing. This diverse, intergenerational collective of brothers entered the private gates of the Delgado Estate, awaiting the meticulously curated weekend itinerary. Each meal was





carefully designed by Mica's Soul Kitchen. There was something for everyone, and it was all beyond amazing.

All facilitators were handpicked and delivered excellence. Each group session was a master class on living. Through the unforgettable moments of laughter, tears, and introspection, all returned home better than before.

Jeffrey C. King is a Community Social Architect and Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, Inc.








In my defense,
I was left
supervised.





SON, RISE, SON, SHINE



TELLING THE TRUTH, REDEFINING SUCCESS, AND LEARNING TO LIVE BEYOND SURVIVAL

BY GERALD GARTH

There comes a moment in life when you realize that becoming who you were meant to be may require letting go of who you thought you were supposed to become. For a long time, I believed my life was about achievement. Work harder. Serve more. Lead well. Be responsible. Be dependable. Build something meaningful. Show up for everyone. Keep going.

And I did. I built a career around service and leadership. I spent years working to create healthier, safer, more affirming communities. I stepped into rooms where decisions were being made and tried to make sure people who had historically been left out had a seat at the table. I learned how to lead organizations, navigate complexity, build partnerships, raise resources, and carry responsibility.

I also learned how easy it is to become so committed to being useful that you forget to simply be alive. That realization is part of the story behind "Son, Rise, Son, Shine." The book is a memoir, but it is also a reckoning. It is the story of a Black man learning to make peace with the many versions of himself he had to become along the way—and learning that survival is not the same thing as living.

A STORY I HAD TO TELL

I did not write "Son, Rise, Son, Shine" because I thought I had figured life out. Quite the opposite. I wrote it because I had spent enough time looking backward to understand that some of the most important parts of my story were the parts I had once tried to outrun. There are experiences we survive and then quietly organize our lives around never talking about again. And there are parts of ourselves that keep waiting for permission to come home.

Writing this book became an act of giving myself that permission. I wanted to tell the truth—not a polished version of the truth, not the résumé version, not the inspirational version with all the difficult parts edited out. The real story. The story of becoming. The story of what it means to be a son. The story of masculinity and vulnerability. The story of Blackness, identity, faith, sexuality, family, community, love, loss, ambition, and healing. And ultimately, the story of learning how to rise.

WHY THIS STORY MATTERS

I wrote "Son, Rise, Son, Shine" especially with people in mind who have spent their lives trying to become acceptable before they allowed themselves to become whole. But "Son, Rise, Son, Shine" has shown me again that multiple things can be true at the same time. You can be successful and still be searching. You can be celebrated and still be tired. You can be surrounded by people and still feel lonely. You can build a life that looks impressive from the outside and quietly wonder whether it actually belongs to you. I know what that feels like.

I think about young Black men who are learning, often without enough language or examples, what it means to be vulnerable and still be strong. I think about people of faith wrestling with the complicated relationship between spirituality, identity, and belonging. I think about LGBTQ+ people who have had to negotiate the distance between who they are and who others told them they should be. I think about parents who love their children but don't always know how to understand every part of their journey. I think about the people who have spent years performing strength because they never felt safe enough to say, "I am tired." And I think about anyone who has ever wondered whether it is too late to become something different. It isn't. Your story is still being written.

SON. RISE. SON. SHINE.

The title came to mean something larger to me than I initially understood. Son. A word connected to lineage, family, inheritance, expectation, and identity. Rise. A command. An invitation. A decision to get back up—not because life has been easy, but because your life is still yours. Son. The repetition matters. Because becoming is rarely a straight line. We return to ourselves again and again. We begin again. And then: Shine. Not perform. Not prove. Not convince. Shine. There is a difference.

Shining is what happens when you stop asking whether you are allowed to take up space and start understanding that your existence is already worthy of light. That is the invitation I hope readers find in this book. Not to become me. Not to recreate my journey. But to become more fully themselves.

That is the story behind "Son, Rise, Son, Shine."

It is a story about becoming. About remembering. About choosing yourself without abandoning the people you love. About understanding that healing does not erase your history—it gives you a different relationship with it. And about discovering that sometimes the greatest act of courage is not becoming someone new.

It is finally becoming who you were all along. So, to the son who is still figuring it out: Rise. To the person who has spent years dimming themselves to make other people comfortable: Shine. And to anyone standing at the edge of a new chapter, wondering whether they are allowed to begin again: You are. Your life is not over. Your story is not finished. There is still light ahead. Son, rise. Son, shine.

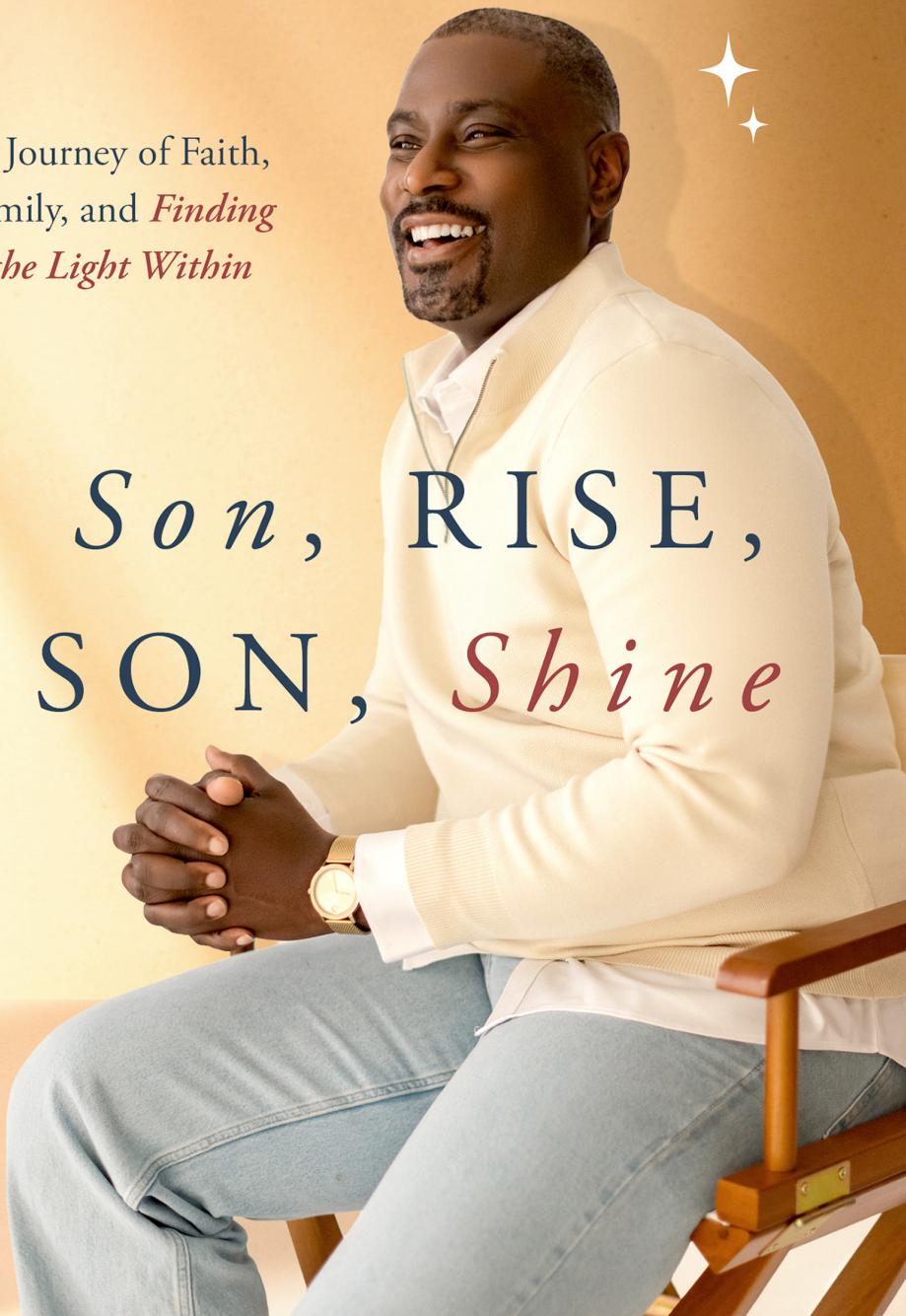
Gerald is a Los Angeles-based author, speaker, and community leader. To connect with Gerald and to get your copy of "Son, Rise, Son, Shine," visit www.geraldgarth.com.

GERALD GARTH, JR.

Foreword by Nathan Hale Williams

A Journey of Faith, Family, and *Finding the Light Within*

Son, RISE, SON, *Shine*





WHOLENESS

BY EMANUEL THOMAS

I used to think acceptance came after understanding. If people could understand me, perhaps they could still love me.

Growing up as a Black same-gender-loving young man within a Christian family in Los Angeles, where gang violence and drugs shaped much of the community around me, I often felt that my faith, my family, my Blackness, and my sexuality existed in separate worlds. I believed I would eventually have to choose between them. For years, I searched for examples that showed me those parts of my identity did not have to exist in conflict.

One of the people who transformed that search was my godfather, John Coleman, a Black preacher and philosophy professor who, after decades of serving as a married pastor, came out as a gay man in his fifties. Through his mentorship and introduction to communities like In The Meantime, I encountered a community of Black same-gender-loving men who showed me that wholeness was not something I had to invent alone; it was something I could inherit, cultivate, and one day help create for others.

To me, success as a Black LGBT/same-gender-loving young person in America is not making my sexuality the center of my identity, nor pretending it does not exist. It is becoming whole enough that every part of who I am can exist together. Success is measured by the freedom to live authentically while creating opportunities for others to do the same. It is having the same freedom as my heterosexual peers to speak openly about the person I love while ultimately being known for my character, my service, and the impact of my life.

Throughout my life, I have often heard Black same-gender-loving men say, "It's nobody's business." While privacy is a valid choice, I have also come to recognize how often those words are shaped by environments where authenticity feels costly. I have watched talented, compassionate men minimize parts of themselves to protect relationships, preserve professional opportunities, or simply feel safe. To me, success is having the freedom to choose privacy without ever feeling compelled to hide. I believe America is strongest when people can contribute their gifts without first hiding parts of themselves.

Through my work with the Los Angeles LGBT Center and my involvement in developing Treehouse Los Angeles, an emerging community initiative, I witnessed how belonging can transform a person's confidence and future. Those experiences convinced me that compassion alone is not enough. Lasting change requires leaders who understand how law, public policy, and nonprofit organizations can build systems that expand opportunity.

The Black same-gender-loving men who came before me expanded my imagination of what was possible. Through law, public policy, and nonprofit leadership, I hope to expand someone else's imagination—not by asking them to become someone different, but by helping build a world where they never have to choose between authenticity and belonging.

Emanuel Thomas is an L.A. native and beloved member of the ITMT community. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Political Science at Loyola Marymount University and aspires to advance social and political change through law and advocacy.



THE FEATURED MAIN CHARACTER

BY HASSAN JAMAL OLTON

As I sit at my desk and take a moment to reflect, I find myself filled with gratitude to the point of tears. People who witnessed my story have seen the many challenges and obstacles I've overcome. But there's so much that they did not see, and if they did, I'm curious if they would see my story through the same lens. It may appear that I am this disciplined, ambitious, smart, social, adventurous, spiritual person, but the story did not begin this way.

So let me briefly take you through my journey, beginning with my love for stories, then the creation of my own stories, and finally the shift in perceiving my own story, which shaped me as the main character I am today.

Growing up, I was always fascinated by movies, music, dance, and music videos. But I may not have been intrigued for the same reasons as others. Of course, there were cool dance moves in the choreography. Of course, there was entertainment and special effects in the movies and music videos. Of course, there were beautiful vibrations heard in the music.

But underlying it all was an essential story being told with a message for everyone. The story and how it was told always caught my attention. A good story needs its pivotal points, such as the challenges that develop the character, free him from his weaknesses, and introduce him to new strengths and new versions of himself. A good story needs the main character to have imperfections so the audience can either see their own imperfections or pass judgment while remaining attentive to what is happening. A good story needs a climax that keeps the audience on the edge of their seats, curious as to whether the main character is going to make it or give up. I think most would agree that a perfect story in which everyone got along and everything went according to the main character's plan would simply be boring and/or predictable. But through trial and error, a story is told, a new version of the character is born, and the audience intimately experiences the journey with the main character.

My attraction to the stories being told inspired me to write my own. As I began to write, I came to the realization that I had to write from an impartial perspective. I had to think about where the character was starting and where I was taking him, both internally and externally. Internally, if the character within was to develop, weaknesses were required so that I could make him strong. Externally, if the character had a desired destination, he could not start there because I needed to lead him to that place.

As my gift of storytelling developed, I noticed a perceptual shift in the way I saw life and myself. I became curious about who or what was writing my story, my role, my mission, and my purpose. I began to see the lessons that came with my challenges, internal development, and external skills or resources. I began to see opportunity within the chaos and the order that followed. As of today, I can say that even though my story was and sometimes is not easy to experience, it has been the greatest show I've seen.

I've broken both legs, but I survived to later become a professionally

signed dancer and walk New York Fashion Week for Puma. I was suffering from the disease of addiction and alcoholism, but later became clean and sober. Shortly after, my creativity and business leadership progressed for the better. I've experienced turbulence in all forms of relationships, but later reconciled them all and am currently surrounded by people who love and support me while I love and support others. I've held and defended limiting beliefs that were long expired, but later became acquainted with something bigger: the truth. And to be clear, the truth I speak of is the highest truth.

There were so many challenges and obstacles that I had no clue how to make it through, but there were beautiful people who were also the main characters of their stories and who shared their wisdom with me so I could apply it. It wasn't my plan that led me to these people, to the challenges, or to the opportunities. It wasn't my plan to grow into who I am.

So when asked, "What shaped me into who I am today?" my answer is: my entire story. It was my parents, my friends, my obstacles, my awareness of imperfections, my delays, my disappointments, my redirections, my choices which supported my decisions, my lessons learned, and wisdom applied. So I don't know how much credit I alone can take for writing the story called "My Life." But here I am, telling the story. A story of victory. A story of growth and development. A story of hope. A story of love. A story of adventure. All written by God. And I am honored to have booked the role of the main character in my story.

I am honored to have booked the role of a starring feature in another's story. And the story isn't over. It's just beginning. With each day, season, year, and chapter, I am introduced to new and more. New versions of myself and more of life as my story continues.

Hassan Jamal Olton is a writer and professionally signed dancer who has walked in New York Fashion Week for Puma. Through creative storytelling, he reflects on his journey of faith, resilience, and personal growth, finding purpose in life's challenges and the community around him.



Each quarter, ITMT supports deserving young people with King-Bremond Scholarships as they pursue academic or trade-focused higher education. Named after Jeffrey King, Founder of In The Meantime Men's Group, and Duane Bremond, Founder of Los Angeles Black Pride, the King-Bremond Scholarship Program was established to assist deserving Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in Los Angeles County by offering financial assistance to help meet educational expenses. Once selected, awardees write an essay on what it means to be Black, LGBTQ+, and successful in America.

These essays were written by this quarter's scholarship recipients. Students who would like to be considered for future scholarships should visit inthemeantimemen.org, download the application, and contact In The Meantime at 323-733-4868 for further instructions.

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AHF PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION


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JAMIL A. FLETCHER
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Activist
Community Organizer
The publisher of SWERV Magazine, the nation's leading Black LGBTQ periodical, shares his message on the importance of owning your story. For more than 16 years now, SWERV Magazine has been at the forefront of celebrating the culture and community of Black LGBTQ people in this country.
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