

FEB. 2020 | VOLUME 1 · ISSUE 2

# SARAHN SAYS

NUTRITION.ENLIGHTENMENT.WELLNESS.SANCTUARY.

# N.E.W.S.LETTER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SARAHN SAYS LLC

Dear N.E.W.S. Readers,

If you're reading this, it's not too late. You can still do everything you have dreamed of doing to create the life you want for yourself. It's only February of course. I mean, IT'S ONLY YOUR LIFE! Everyday is a new opportunity for you to wake up energized, prepared to accomplish all you goals, and be more alive in the scenes of your dreams. You have to open your eyes however, as see the opportunity and power of your freedom of choice, and investment in resources. Your time, energy and money are the most valuable tools you have to create the life you want for yourself. If you want to be at peace with your purpose, you have to be at plan with your purpose. PLAN YOUR WORK, and WORK YOUR PLAN. You can be in control of your life, or your life can be in control of you. It's your choice. So take your pick intentionally. You do it everyday already anyway. Naivety and humility is not an excuse, so cut it, and get your life.

Sanity + Stamina,  
Sarahn

**FEATURED  
THIS MONTH:**

**February 2020  
Calendar  
Challenge - 2**

**Melissa Henderson:  
Violet Summer Zine - 3**

**Creating Advancement  
in Adjustment - 7**

**Book Review: The Bluest Eye  
by Toni Morrison - 10**

## CLICK BELOW TO DOWNLOAD CALENDAR



| SUN   | MON   | TUE   | WED  | THU  | FRI  | SAT  |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>2020 is the year of GRIT, GRATITUDE &amp; GOAL-SETTING! One day of positive action towards improving your health is great, but real transformation comes from consistency and developing healthy habits, and routines. This month is about GRIT. Everyday this month, challenge yourself to make one small action towards becoming a more passionate, purposeful and resilient individual! Get your family, friends, and co-workers involved and share on Facebook, Twitter &amp; Instagram. #sarahnsays<br/>                     Visit <a href="http://sarahnsays.com">sarahnsays.com</a> for more calendar challenges and to access the February 2020 Sarahn Says N.E.W.S.Letter</p> |   |   |  |  |  | <p><b>1</b><br/>List 4 things you know about yourself!<br/>(NO DOUBT!)</p> |
| <p><b>2</b><br/>Write down 3 things you are passionate about</p>  | <p><b>3</b><br/>List 3 things you have control over to make today great!</p>                  | <p><b>4</b><br/>Name one thing you're going to stop talking about and start doing</p> | <p><b>5</b><br/>Break down a big goal into smaller goals</p>           | <p><b>6</b><br/>List 2 ways you can go harder at reaching your goals</p> | <p><b>7</b><br/>Go the whole day without complaining</p>   | <p><b>8</b><br/>Participate in an engaging activity</p>                    |
| <p><b>9</b><br/>Acknowledge the sacrifice GRIT requires</p>   | <p><b>10</b><br/>Celebrate someone who has a gritty success story</p>                         | <p><b>11</b><br/>Reminisce on a goal you worked hard on and it payed off</p>          | <p><b>12</b><br/>Take the "Grit Test" online</p>                       | <p><b>13</b><br/>Watch an inspiring video on GRIT</p>                    | <p><b>14</b><br/>Read <i>The Rose that Grew from Concrete</i> by Tupac Shakur</p>                  | <p><b>15</b><br/>Talk to someone who motivates you to work harder</p>      |
| <p><b>16</b><br/>List 3 ways you can be more committed to yourself and your goals</p>   | <p><b>17</b><br/>Have a conversation about GRIT</p>   | <p><b>18</b><br/>Identify a mistake you made in the past and laugh about it</p>       | <p><b>19</b><br/>Meditate on GRIT for 10 minutes</p>                   | <p><b>20</b><br/>Practice doing something you're good at</p>             | <p><b>21</b><br/>Reflect on an experience you had in life where you exhibited courage</p>          | <p><b>22</b><br/>Do something outside of your comfort zone</p>             |
| <p><b>23</b><br/>Take an action towards any one of your 2020 goals</p>  | <p><b>24</b><br/>Reflect on an experience you had in life where you exhibited persistence</p> | <p><b>25</b><br/>Choose powerful positive words to include in your speech</p>         | <p><b>26</b><br/>Remind yourself all day that you can do anything!</p> | <p><b>27</b><br/>Recite GRIT related affirmations</p>                    | <p><b>28</b><br/>Identify one action you took this month that brought you closer to your goals</p> | <p><b>29</b><br/>Do something you enjoy doing, and do it well!</p>         |

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## MELISSA HENDERSON: VIOLET SUMMER ZINE

*Interview by Sarahn Sankofa*

When Melissa Henderson walks into the room, her poise and posture speak for her. You know right away that she's in charge. When she goes to speak you feel immediately the creativity and sincerity coming from her. She is not only a strong woman, but also a woman who empowers others to command their own space and celebrate their unique skills and talents. As a leader, she is no stranger to the importance of teamwork, community engagement and activism through art. Melissa is the Founder/CEO of Violet Summer Zine (VSZ), an urban literary magazine, geared to millennial and Gen. Z audiences, which aims to uplift and empower the international urban identity. Since 2015, VSZ has allowed Melissa and her team of contributors to impact readers across the globe with thought provoking storytelling that challenges social and political issues as well as celebrates individuality and community. Melissa now lives in NYC and works as a business strategist for companies including THE ROOT and Netflix. She focuses on writing in a digital space and teaches people the nuances of culture and lifestyle. Along with VSZ her entrepreneurial work extends to her technology driven content firm, Mel Writes LLC and her Violet Summer Zine candle company. As a young creative in the digital space, Melissa has excelled in her ability to make her writing voice heard and she is moving forward while paving the way for other writers, content creators, and digital artists to do the same.

**One of the first things I noticed about you was that you are extremely passionate about your work/craft. Where do you get that passion from?**

**MH:** I've always wanted to be a writer growing up. I used to sit on my porch and write while waiting for the mailman to drop off my Teen Vogue. I used to write in a journal, find corners in my house to hide and write. Throughout my life, I've never lost the passion to just write! I also had and still have a passion for reading. Now that I'm an adult, I like to be in my power and not have anyone tell me "No!" I had a lot of teachers tell me that I couldn't write and that I would never make it as a writer. But I am happy to say that now I'm thriving as a writer. I am blessed to not have to be a 'struggling artist' and I'm able to exercise my passion for my work everyday.

**You talked about getting your family on board in your work. What is the value of that for you?**

**MH:** I got fired and wanted to prove to myself that I could do it without having to impress other people with my writing (get the approval). I've also been exposed to lots of family businesses and I've learned the value of having something to pass down to your family. I like to use my family experiences and crazy stories to get inspiration for my writing. Getting my family to take hold of that name and take ownership of it, is something I take pride in. Also, Violet is my great-grandmother's name.

**VIOLETSUMMERZINE.COM**

**@VIOLETSUMMERZINE**

**@MELWRITESNYC**

**As a writer, how do you see your work inspiring people?**

**MH:** Issue 2 of Violet Summer Zine was on music and style. I decided to tell a story about a female protagonist going through the ups and downs of being in your twenties...and the story was not a fairytale. I wrote a story about a couple who were in the music industry. There was a lot of drugs and alcohol in their world. At the end of the story there was a revenge porn plot. To market the story, I wrote about a true experience I had with an ex boyfriend committing an act of revenge porn on his ex girlfriend while we were dating. It scared me. If he would do that to someone else, he might do that same thing to me. Between the fiction story that I wrote and my own personal essay, it set the tone for Violet Summer Zine. People were coming up to me at work and other places saying that they had never heard about revenge porn and its effects on the black community. A lot of people in my circle didn't know about revenge porn and I was able to bring that awareness to them. I own that experience as a pivotal moment in my writing career. The story was covered by UK Daily Mail and Yahoo! News. People reached out to me and I was able to connect to a lot of people through writing that story.

**How do you maintain your health through your creativity?**

**How does your being creative influence your mental health?**

**MH:** One of my goals is to be more "healthy". I have some anxiety, I have seasonal depression, and the way that I got through the winter was working on the 'Zine'. That set the tone for some of my work. I would take stories and write about what was on my mind, and it really helped me, having that release. Identifying with other writers has also helped me.

**What are your self care regimens?**

**MH:** I just got my own apartment, and my space is my self care. I like to light sage, and buy fresh flowers for my space. It also makes me feel energetic and rejuvenated when shopping at good will, going for a walk, journaling, and reading.

**What's the biggest challenge you encountered in 2019?**

**How are you working on it? And how has it made/is it making you stronger?**

**MH:** I've observed a lot of people in business and I feel I have adopted their "my way or the highway" disposition. I have an attitude problem (being from Philly) if I don't get what I want. Going off on people generates bad karma but I've learned to just develop tough skin instead of leading with my emotions. You need tough skin in business, especially as a woman. I'm learning how to take deep breaths and react when I feel threatened or disappointed. I've had to lay the foundation, trying to appease to clients, and accepting that I can't do everything myself. I'm good at getting business but I can improve my skills in relationship management. I don't have a lot of time, and developing patience I know will help me to excel in both my personal and professional lives.

**In your opinion, what is the number one threat to our wellness right now?**

**MH:** PILLS! People abusing prescription drugs. If you're going to take prescription pills, you shouldn't be smoking or drinking and abusing your body. Pills can give you a fragmented reality. It's best to do research on taking care of yourself. I've walked down the street in Harlem and sometimes hear people selling pills on the street. I didn't realize it was such a problem, and that pills are being abused by so many people. Being responsible is important when medicating.

**What is something you think every millennial should be doing?**

**MH:** Every millennial should be watching the news. A lot of my peers don't watch the news because they think it's boring or not positive. But watching the news makes you a better person. If you're not watching the news, you're missing out on important information use can apply to better your life.

**If you could spend the day with any person, who would it be and why?**

**MH:** Megan Markle. I'm really inspired by her. Violet Summer Zine wrote a piece about Ego and Truth on her. She is very hard working, and on top of her business. She is also really into philanthropy. She gave up her title, and made an important decision to honor the life she wanted to create for her family, over money and fame. I just feel like she knows a lot and I could gain from being around her.

**What things are you most grateful for? How does gratitude take shape in your life?**

**MH:** I'm so grateful for my own space, my job, small wins, I'm always praying. I like being around people who are grateful. I grew up in the black church and I take pride in going to church. In business when you have people around you who don't have the same values as you, it can be trying. I am grateful for creative control. I am just thankful for my own life right now.

**What is the most exciting thing about being Melissa!?**

**MH:** The people I meet! At work and in life, I think I have great energy and I'm surrounded by love. I'm also so lucky to have the family I do. They are fun, loving and supportive!

**You moved from Philly to New York to pursue your career.**

**What advice would you give someone who wants to move away from home to pursue a career?**

**MH:** JUST DO IT! If you have someone's couch to crash on, great! Don't have fear. Fear is no excuse. When I moved to NYC, I would see this man on the train everyday who had no shoes. He was surviving with no shoes, all year, through the seasons, and on the train. He made me realize that whatever obstacles I face, I can survive through anything, and that I'm thriving when I don't let fear of the challenge effect my decision-making.

**What is your winning formula for success?**

**MH:** Consistency. Not accepting no. Rising above rejection.

[\*\*Click here to read Melissa's UK Daily Mail Story\*\*](#)

**What are you inviting into your life in 2020?**

**MR:** Strategic partnerships, book deals, mentorship, more philanthropic opportunities.

**Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?**

**MH:** I see myself as a full entrepreneur. Im more of an intrapreneur. But I know everything I want can happen for me. It's only a matter of time, I just need to be patient.

**Bonus Question: What does being a true Leo mean to you?**

**MH:** I'm a Gemini rising, and I show up very introverted sometimes. I can also be the life of the party. Being a true Leo is about living your best life, and getting those around you to do the same. But I'm super chill.

**MORE ABOUT MELISSA**

**Passions:** Digital rights, revenge porn, human trafficking in the digital world

**Purposes:** Content creation, helping LGBTQ people find their way into narratives, helping women show up in male dominated spaces

**Hobbies:** Tennis, shopping, thrifting

**Habits:** Listening to podcasts in the morning, getting my nails done every two weeks, buying flowers

**What's your favorite book/Last good book you've read?**

Nobody's Victim by Carrie Goldberg ....it's so juicy

**What's your favorite music album?**

Roddy Rich - Anti-Social

Beyonce - Lemonade

**Where's your favorite place in the world?**

Cape May, NJ and Biarritz, France. I'm a beach town girl.

**Favorite healthy food to snack on?**

I don't like healthy food to be honest.

**What things in life bring you the most joy?**

Being around friends...real real friends, and enjoying good food with family.

**TV or Movies:**

TV

**Eat Out or Cook at Home:**

Eat Out

**Fruits or Veggies:**

Fruits

**Truth or Dare:**

Dare

**Coffee or Tea:**

Coffee

**Fall or Spring:**

Spring

**Turn up or Turn In:**

Turn UP

**Talking or Texting:**

Texting

**Vanilla or Chocolate:**

Chocolate

**Hip-Hop or Oldies:**

Hip-Hop

**Audiobook or Podcast:**

Podcast

**Smile or Poker Face:**

Smile

**S**



*"My experience at Haus of Opulence exceeded my expectations. Jae's space was so clean and serene. I felt right at home as I was serviced with my facial and foot bath treatments. I particularly enjoyed the attention given to the ingredients used during the services and the warm and nurturing energy of Jae. I would recommend Haus of Opulence to anyone who wants or needs to pick themselves up with a little self care."*



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C E L E B R A T E

B R A G K

L O V E

# CREATING ADVANCEMENT IN ADJUSTMENT

## SELF CARE IN THE FACE OF CHANGE

*Written by Sarahn Sankofa*

2020 is moving along, as time does, and recent events of loss and life have made us present to the ways that life is evolving and changing. Change can be sad, and stiff, and sexy and steady. Change might be fun, fortunate, frail. Sometimes change is painful or uncomfortable. Sometimes we can't wait for change to sweep into our lives reminding us that hard times can and will get better and that we are not stuck in the soil where we've been planted. It doesn't even matter, because change is going to come. Change is a function of time that we can't avoid. Change is inevitable. Change is consistently inconsistent; as are we as humans. Change is the very essence of our existence. We don't always have a choice in change, but we do have a choice in how we respond to change. Progress of course is the concept, but we have to be mindful of how we care for ourselves when the winds of change are blowing us every which way. We have to maintain present in the change remembering to pay close attention to what we need during our time of transition. We have to always remind ourselves and each other that the process of change gives birth to the possibility of growth and that this opportunity to level up, by gaining strength, courage, and wisdom, is a moment to be centered in and celebrated. Change is an opportunity for us to find advancement in adjustment.

### **LISTEN INSTEAD OF LOAD.**

During a time of social, emotional, financial, structural, or spiritual change, the experience of change is living in the immediate places of your body. It's easy for you to access the feeling of change, in the front of your mind, in your stomach, with your heart or in your hands. And the feeling of change whether painful or pleasurable is stimulating. You might be responding to this stimulation by overloading yourself with other stimulations. Instead, be still in this new change. Now is the perfect time to go within and spend some quality alone in meditation. Find time to just listen to what your inner voice is communicating to you. Instead of loading yourself up with new relationships, new lifestyle choices, etc., just be still and go inward. By doing so, you will be able to move forward through the change with stability knowing that you were prepared for this change to occur, and prepared to move forward with what your life has in store for you.

### **TIREDDNESS, FUNCTION & RESISTANCE.**

You know the feeling you get when you push against something? First it feels like tension and exertion of energy, but eventually you just feel fatigued. The more we resist, the more tired we become. We expend our energy on going against the natural occurrence of change, and very seldom if ever, find ourselves the stronger force. It serves you best to be submissive to change. Moving in the direction of the change, is the wise choice to make. It makes the process of change less painful, and allows you to preserve the energy needed for you to grow and evolve through the change. True growth doesn't take place until you move in the direction of the change and invest your energy into bettering yourself instead of combating your new life with your old life which is asking to be released. Save your energy for something more fulfilling and energizing like spending time with people you love, doing things that bring you joy, and counting your blessings.

### **HONOR YOUR HOMEOSTASIS (MANAGE YOUR MOOD)**

You are going to have ups and down through this time of change. Some days you're going to feel on top of the world and other days you'll feel like the world is on top of you. Most of the time, the really high high's and the really low low's only last in fleeting moments of intensity. As you come back to the middle you realize that the balancing act of energy is already doing its work. You don't have to force yourself into any mood, or fake a smile cause you think that's all you have to work with. You have your whole complex and complete self to work with. Every part of you is experiencing this change and you advance during this time, by finding a new homeostasis in this change. It often takes time, patience, and persistence to find this new homeostasis. And the way you work through that is honoring where you are in each moment. When you feel good, appreciate it. When you feel not as good, appreciate that too. When you feel blah, honor the blah. Just observe the constant flow of high and low thoughts and feelings. And eventually, maybe sooner, maybe later, your thoughts and feelings will become familiarized with something new. At that moment, you begin to enjoy the experience of change and will welcome it again upon its inevitable return.



## FEBRUARY'S YOGA POSE: FORWARD FOLD

*Written by Sarahn Sankofa*

*"It is often not necessary to force things. Sometimes you just have to go with the flow, until the flow goes with you."*

Flexibility is a mystery to the mind and a familiar acquaintance to the body, that is until it becomes a friend. When you make the decision to form a bond with flexibility you are signing up for a little pain and you are subscribing to a great deal of patience. The difference being of course that pain comes in temporary moments of fervent attempt and patience doesn't come at all, it just is. When you are yielding to the process of reaching further and going deeper, you don't make up your mind to accept, and then aim, you instead make up your mind to allow. Patience comes with the effortless action of allowance. Allowing is the beginning, middle and end. You first allow yourself to fall, fold, forward. Then you allow your body to naturally bend at the joints; the knees, the elbows. Then allow them to straighten. You allow yourself one day, to surprise yourself with your ability, and the next day with your inability. That is allowance. That is patience. And eventually the mystery of it goes away, and you're left with the moment. In the moment, your body is your friend. You are in a position of power. In the moment, you can wait and not anticipate. You can bend and not break, in the moment.

FORWARD FOLD (Uttanasana)\*Forward Fold Pose works the hips, hamstrings, and calves. It's a calming stretch that reduces stress, anxiety, depression and fatigue. It also activates the abdominal muscles and keeps your spine strong and flexible.\*

## FEBRUARY 2020 AFFIRMATIONS

FOR GRIT

When I **practice**,  
I see great  
**results**.

I am a **creator**.

The right  
amount of  
everything I  
need is already  
**within me**.

I am **capable** of  
doing great  
things.

I don't always  
get what I **wish**  
for, but I always  
get what I **work**  
for.

When I put forth  
more **effort**, I  
**improve**.

To know  
**success**, I must  
know **failure**.

# 10 SONGS YOU NEED TO BE BLASTIN' THIS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Knocks Me Off My Feet -  
Stevie Wonder

FOR LOVE AND POWER

Bigger - Beyoncé

We The People -  
A Tribe Called Quest

Black - Buddy

Be Ever Wonderful -  
Earth, Wind & Fire

If I Ruled The World -  
Nas

Sounds of Blackness -  
Optimistic

LOVEHAPPY -  
The Carters

Collide -  
Tiana Major9 & EARTHGANG

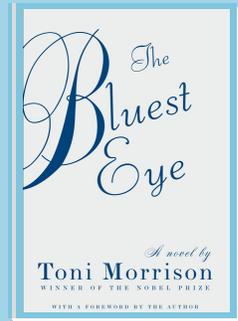
F.U.B.U.- Solange

## UNTITLED

*Written by Rashaun Williams*

His story will live as long as we tell it. Your story will live only if you author it. Having the authority, authenticity, and audacity to author your own story is the difference between being history and making history. This is the difference between letting your work be felt rather than having your voice simply heard. Let the ripple effect of your life's work be tides in the sea opposed to a wave that we see. Remember that your life is only a long scene. While alive, live life so that when we see you, we feel you. That means living authentically. That courage, to be that present and present yourself to the world in this way, takes audacity. Be audacious. Remember that time will pass, and as time passes, you get closer to the abyss of credits that conclude your story. What is your story? While this month, like all Februarys, is as bright as the sky is Black in the night, colorfully lit by the stories of stars who made constellations here before the world could see them in the heavens, each day is a moment to make history. For those who celebrate this month in remembrance, resilience, revolution, and rejoice, this is a time to remember that there is no perfect way to be Black, rather than to simply, yet fully be Black. Your authenticity will author a new beginning for a people who share the truth that their stories would be long forgotten if their names were written into history as we know it. These ancestors authored a place for themselves in the world by being audacious and authentically themselves. Remember this, for you are the sum total of your ancestors and will soon be an the ancestor among them. While you have life to live, be authentic, audacious, and author a story for all the world to hear so that every time the children say your name, your spirit is felt as much as your spirit is here. That means, leave us with so much of your life, you never really leave us at all. And like leaves on a tree, we leave only to meet life at the root of our origin. Life is a cycle. The circle of life should not have us forget that history is bound to repeat itself if forgotten. This is the importance of making your story known. This is the importance of making your voice heard, remembering that voices are felt as much as they are heard - like the feeling that the bass provides when it warms your heart with its vibration. This is the importance of letting your voice and your actions be the harmony between being heard and being felt. Let your story be one that leaves a song in the souls who sing it. Tell your story in a way that makes others want to sing your song. Conduct your life in a way that makes others want to add a voice to your choir. Let the harmony of being felt and heard create a chorus that others wish to sing along too. Author a story that continues beyond your ability to continue writing its symphony so your name rings bells of freedom within those who hear your name. That my friend, is truly a life worth living.

BOOK REVIEW:  
**THE BLUEST EYE BY  
TONI MORRISON**



*Review by Sarahn Sankofa*



**CLICK ABOVE TO WATCH!**



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**SPECIAL THANKS TO VIOLET SUMMER ZINE & HAÜS OF OPULENCE**



**HAÜS OF OPULENCE**  
"WHERE BEAUTY IS THERAPEUTIC"