Aijah’s American Dream

I knew for a very long time that it was impossible to be the only young, African-American female with a dream. Not just any typical dream, but the American Dream! How could I forget those days as an innocent little girl craving to be on the front page of a magazine, or even on the stage happy as ever, performing without one care. With a pouting face and a look full of disappointment, I felt as if this “dream” I once thought of, was not even close to reality. But as I began to mature and transform from a little girl with big dreams, to a young lady with even bigger dreams, the truth flashed fast before my eyes. Anyone can achieve their American Dream. Yes indeed, I said it. ANYONE. Fifteen going on Sixteen, as I watch my fingers run rapidly across the keyboard, society starts to whisper words into my ears. “You won't make it, you’re a black female and a minority”. I often felt like this because this is how I have seen a lot of black people being treated growing up just because of the amount of money we had, or didn't have. These words disappeared as they went through one ear and out the other and were never seen again.

It’s a huge struggle being an African American female, but I can't say it isn't a beautiful one. Fears of getting discriminated by others because of my light-brown skin and poofy hair, stereotypes getting thrown at me left right, the feeling of not having anyone to hear my voice, and even feeling like I have no voice at all at times. When I need to vent, who will open their ears and listen to me? This question will remain unanswered but those are only a few of the obstacles I run into each and every day.

Living in Southeast San Diego for almost my whole life has caused a huge impact on me. People would always mention,“Oh my God! You live in a bad neighborhood”. But the way I seen it through my eyes was the total opposite. I was able to build relationships with some of the most friendliest people and its helped shape me into the person I am today. Although it isn't the “richest” neighborhood, it is my home, and my home is one of the most happiest places. This just goes to show that money isn't everything. Growing up, everyone gave so much value to this little green piece of paper. But for me, that was not the case. Coming from a low class family, our main value was each other. When times were hard we lifted up one another and made each other stronger than ever. We didn’t have all the millions in the world but my parents still worked their very hardest to get my siblings and I anything that we needed. But I also had my low points as well. Feeling the need to fit in as I sat in a classroom full of unhappy rich kids, tears began to run through my cheeks. Why can’t I be like them? The cool rich kids. Oh you know, all the expensive outfits, i-Phones, wallets crammed with twenty dollar bills. All of a sudden a light switch went off in my brain. Do I really want to be like them? They might have been rich, but I know deep down some of their hearts were only filled with poor because they were only familiar with living in a materialistic world.

I am aware that there is going to be a lot of competition in this world. It’s going to be a rocky road and people with more money are always going to be put on a higher mountain, but being raised by a family full of not only loving people, but hard workers as well, I know that with commitment, dedication and a kind heart, I will be able to achieve anything I put my mind to. One day I vision with my two brown eyes that Americans will be treated equally with equal opportunities for everyone. No matter what race or social status you may come from and that the rich will one day open their eyes and realize that they can do so much change in the world with just one helping hand. Stressed out, mind all over the place, wondering if I’ll have enough money to pay for a four year college. Questioning if I will ever even have enough to by my own beautiful house. Kind of like the ones you see on MTV cribs. In two more years I will have the number 18 written all over my face. My American Dream has already begun, but 2017, will be the year that I start to see change for sure in myself and hopefully in the world.

What do you want your specific American Dream to be?

Also consider your structure of the American Dream story and providing more “Show not just Tell” moments. You need to expand in certain areas.