

The Possibility of More

a Shift in what I believed was possible



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A over a week ago, I graduated from Bentley University.

And I think I've been avoiding writing this because I knew once I did, it would all start to feel real.

Graduation is strange like that. For so long, it exists as a countdown. A date in your phone. A thing people ask you about. Something that feels far away until suddenly you're sitting there in the cap and gown you imagined for years, hearing your name called while trying to process how quickly your life became unrecognizable.

I keep thinking about the version of me that first got to Bentley.

Nervous. Ambitious. Curious. Honestly a little overwhelmed too.



I was a first-generation Black girl from Providence carrying way more dreams than understanding. I knew I wanted a big life. I knew I wanted creativity. Leadership. Impact. I knew I wanted to build things that mattered. I just didn't fully understand how people got into those rooms. A lot of those spaces still felt distant from me then.

And truthfully, for a long time, I thought my path was already decided for me.

Because so much of my early leadership and campus work centered around diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and advocacy, I honestly thought the only future available to me professionally was some version of a DE&I role at a corporation I didn't actually feel connected to.

And there's absolutely nothing wrong with that work.

Some of the most transformative experiences of my college career came from advocacy, leadership, and building initiatives rooted in equity and belonging. That work shaped me deeply. It taught me how to listen to people. How to understand community. How to recognize patterns. How to think critically about identity, storytelling, behavior, power, visibility, and culture itself.

But I also knew there was another side of me.

The creative side.

The branding side.

The strategy side.

The part of me obsessed with campaigns, internet behavior, storytelling, rollout strategy, audience psychology, influence, aesthetics, music, fashion, sports, entertainment, and why certain things emotionally connect with people the way they do.

I just didn't fully understand that those two worlds could coexist yet.

Until someone exposed me to it.

That changed everything.

The more opportunities I got within marketing, entertainment, creator partnerships, and culture strategy spaces, the more I realized my background in social justice and leadership work was not separate from the work I wanted to do creatively.

It was the foundation for it.

Because understanding people is strategy.

Understanding culture is strategy.

Understanding emotion, identity, behavior, visibility, language, community, and aspiration is strategy.

And suddenly everything I thought made me “too different” for these industries became the exact thing making me valuable within them.

That realization genuinely changed my life.

Because once I saw a version of my future that actually felt aligned with who I was creatively, intellectually, and culturally, I could not unsee it anymore.

And honestly, that shift only happened because people exposed me to possibilities I did not fully know existed for me yet.

That happened through mentorship.

Through relationships.

Through conversations.

Through people deciding to pour into me when they did not have to.

There are so many moments from college that changed me, and honestly, a lot of them were moments no one else would even notice.

Someone answering a question I was scared to ask.

Someone forwarding me an opportunity.

Someone introducing me to another person.

Someone speaking highly of me in a room I wasn't in.

Someone trusting me with responsibility before I fully trusted myself with it.

Support like that changes the way you see yourself.

And for Black and Brown young women especially, I think there's something deeply transformative about finally entering spaces that make your dreams feel tangible instead of hypothetical.

That's part of why I've been thinking so much lately about access.

About how many talented young women are carrying vision, creativity, intelligence, leadership, and potential but simply need exposure, guidance, opportunity, or community around them.

Not because they are incapable.

Not because they are not ambitious enough.

But because navigating unfamiliar spaces without support can feel exhausting sometimes.

I know that feeling intimately.

I know what it feels like to be ambitious while still feeling like you are translating yourself all the time.

To know you are capable of more while not fully knowing where to place that ambition yet.

To feel creative but not see many examples of people who looked like you doing exactly what you wanted to do.

And honestly, I think that's why finally entering marketing, entertainment, and strategy spaces changed me so much emotionally.

Because for the first time, I could actually see myself inside the future I wanted.

Before that, a lot of my understanding of success looked narrow.

Respectable. Stable. Traditional.

And again, there is nothing wrong with those paths.

But I remember realizing during college that I did not just want to work somewhere.

I wanted to create.

I wanted to build.

I wanted to shape conversations.

I wanted to work on campaigns that made people feel something.

I wanted to understand why culture moves the way it does.

I wanted to sit in rooms where ideas, creativity, storytelling, strategy, fashion, sports, music, internet culture, branding, and influence were all intersecting at once.

I wanted work that felt alive.

And once I got exposed to those environments, there was no going back mentally.

I started realizing that the things I learned through advocacy and DE&I leadership were not limitations. They were tools.

The ability to understand people deeply.

The ability to recognize patterns.

The ability to understand identity, emotion, visibility, and community dynamics.

The ability to think critically about culture itself.

Those things became strengths.

And honestly, I think that realization changed the trajectory of my confidence too.

Because there's something powerful about realizing you do not have to separate parts of yourself in order to belong somewhere.

You do not have to become less thoughtful to be creative.

You do not have to become less strategic to be artistic.

You do not have to disconnect yourself from community in order to enter influential spaces.

You can bring your full perspective with you.

And sometimes that perspective becomes the very thing that opens doors.

And honestly, I think that's part of why graduating feels emotional in a way I didn't fully expect.

Because when I look back at who I was at 18 and who I am now, the biggest difference is not just accomplishment.

It's expansion.

Expansion in confidence.

Expansion in vision.

Expansion in community.

Expansion in what I believe is possible for my life.

And so much of that came from people who chose to pour into me.

Which is why this next part of my life feels so important to me.

Because I don't just want to keep building for myself anymore.

I want to build things that create expansion for other people too.

That's why I'm so excited to officially introduce The Culture Shift Foundation.

The Culture Shift Foundation was created to support Black and Brown young women through mentorship, leadership development, creativity, exposure, and community. It's rooted in the belief that exposure creates expansion and that access can completely shift the trajectory of someone's confidence, career, and future.

One of the first initiatives launching under the foundation is Shift Her Forward.

Shift Her Forward is a mentorship and educational support initiative for Black and Brown young women navigating college, leadership, creativity, career development, and community. The inaugural cohort will include 10 Collective members and 1 Shift Her Forward Scholar receiving a micro-scholarship alongside mentorship, community, and support throughout the year.



But honestly, what excites me most is not even the structure of the program itself.

It's the possibility of what it could become.

I keep imagining rooms full of ambitious young women exchanging ideas, collaborating creatively, sharing opportunities, building friendships, supporting each other's visions, and growing together.

I keep imagining what happens when talented young women finally find people who understand the way they think.

What happens when they stop feeling like they have to navigate everything alone.

What happens when community becomes a catalyst instead of just a concept.

Because I know firsthand how powerful that can be.

And in a lot of ways, I think this foundation reflects the chapter of life I'm entering now too.

Graduation feels like closure in some ways, but it also feels like the beginning of a completely different level of purpose and intention.

I spent the last four years building a version of myself.

Now I want to spend the next chapter building things that pour back into other people too.

Not because I have everything figured out.

I definitely don't.

But I do know what it feels like when someone expands your understanding of what's possible for your future.

That kind of impact lasts.

Applications for the inaugural Shift Her Forward cohort officially open June 1.

This is only the beginning.

For updates, announcements, and more from the foundation, follow [@thecultureshiftfoundation](#).