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Sakina Ibrahim, A voice for those seeking their own

By Danielle Layton
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Her name is Arabic for “divine presence” and “peace”, which she gracefully embodies. Ibrahim is a NAACP Image Award nominee for Outstanding Literary Work, an author, speaker, social entrepreneur, and dance teacher. She is known for her inspirational interactive book for young children called, *Big Words to Little Me: Advice to the Younger Self* and her most recent work, *Daily Moves: Affirmations for the Millennial*.

“I believe we are all rhythmic beings that operate in sound, time, and the tempo of our own heartbeat, which is our inner drum.”

Ibrahim has identified herself an artist from the young age of 5 as a dancer. It was her outlet of expression when she had not yet found her voice. She often “felt silenced” and was not sure how to voice her feelings. To cope with the distractions in her life she kept herself busy by singing in a gospel choir and attended a performing arts high school, where she was casted as Dorothy in *The Wiz*. Despite her tribulations, Ibrahim was able to escape the pressures of life through her creative energy which drew her closer to her divine purpose. *Curly Hair Magazine* was able to speak with Ibrahim on how she defines her artistry and her recent work *Daily Moves: Affirmations for the Millennial*.



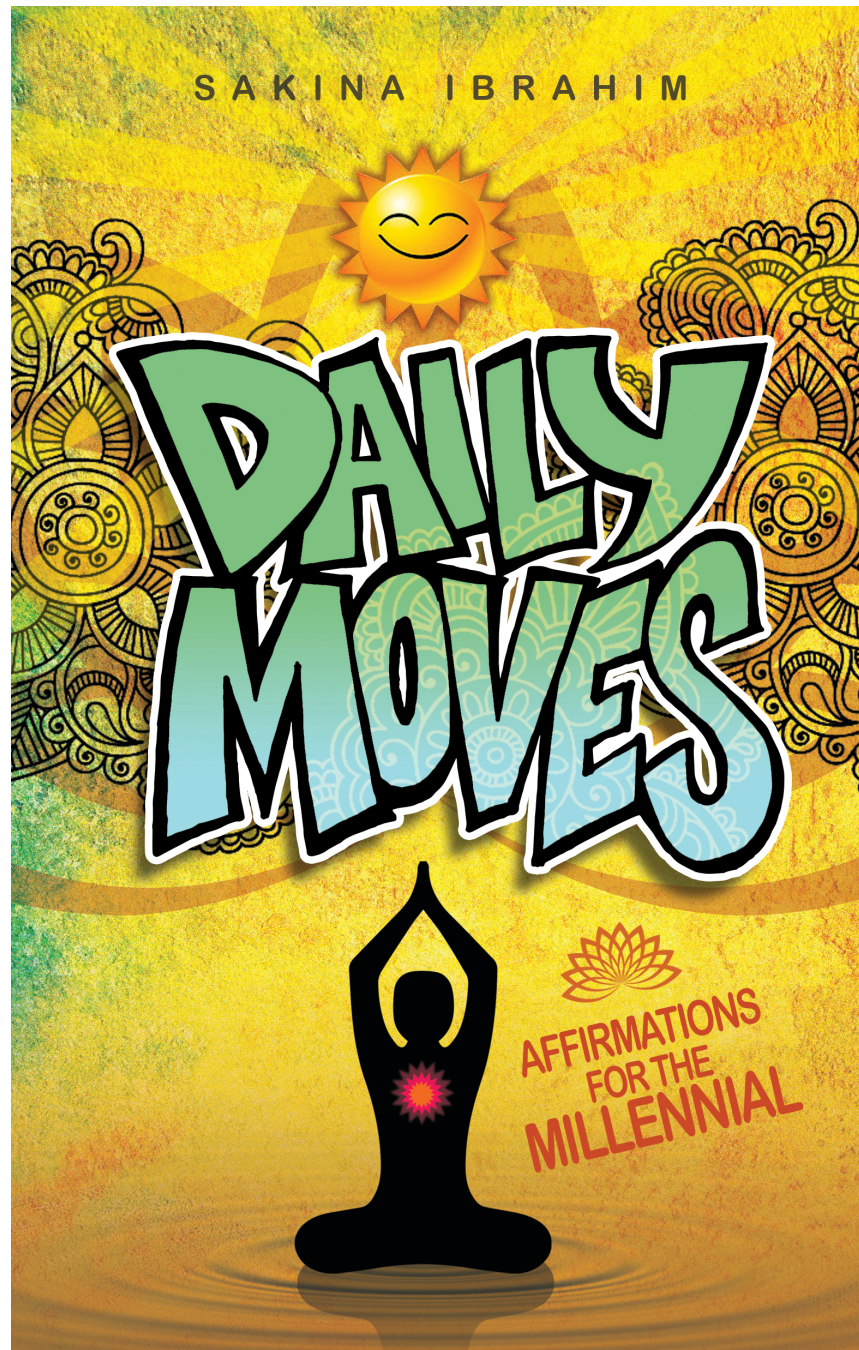
CHM: What motivated you to write an affirmation book for the millennial?

Sakina: I had a vision to write a daily affirmation book for millenials and it was inspired by just becoming aware of how unique my generation is and the generations that come after me and we happen to be called millennials now. Because of the technology age and

social media, I think that from conversations I had with friends and obviously I'm always inspired by my students, I realized that there are just so many things that pervade our minds that affect our self-esteem, how we feel about our lives, and how we should feel about our lives and I'm very aware of self-aware. Some of the challenges that come up are we are constantly comparing ourselves because of social media. So it was sort of really inspired by this idea to channel these negative messages we get in our everyday lives from social media or from the news and wanting to set the foundation for readers and my audience having something positive to set their intentions each day. So the book is 35 different affirmations and short narratives of set daily intentions that the reader can set for each day.

Quote from
Daily Moves:
Affirmations for
the Millennial:
“Day 3
Affirmation:
Today I move in
self-care taking
full
responsibility
for my life
knowing it is no
one else's job to
take care of me.
The way that I
treat myself
gives others
permission to
treat me.”

“I wanted to
create
something
for my
generation.”



CHM: How does Sakina find her solitude?

Sakina: The water helps me to reset, just doing anything outdoors. Not being connected to a device, not having a deadline for somebody else to meet and just having 5-15 minutes of stillness. I also do love exercise and yoga and walking. Being active is a necessity for our wellbeing and our spiritual wellbeing. Being around music helps me find solitude and reading a page or two in a book. AND CATNAPS! I've recently given myself permission to take 20-minute naps and not feel guilty about it [laughs].

CHM: What was the influence to the cover of *Big Words to Little Me: Advice to the Younger Self*?

Sakina: I think every black woman can identify with the afropuffs. For some reason our hair is already part of African culture but it becomes how we identify, a huge part of our self esteem, and how we feel about ourselves.

Our hair as little girls is a part of how we're socialized into our communities, whether it's going to the salon, whether that's memories of your aunt taking your braids out or putting your beads in, hair is so beautiful and part of our identity. We live in an age where we see more and more girls getting weaves and getting perms at an earlier age because we are also not always educated on the healthiest ways and best ways to care for our hair. We are taught so young to hate our hair to hate what is natural and as we grow into adults if we

have not been taught by our parents, sisters, aunties, teachers to love ourselves that hate expands into all other kinds of expressions of unworthiness. We have to begin to create our identities beyond what we look like. Luckily we are in the age of *Curly Hair Magazine*, and *Carol's Daughter*, and *Shea Moisture* and platforms that really help us embrace the uniqueness of our hair. So one of the first things that came to me when designing the cover was my experience with my hair as a young girl. I think that because of the impact of not having animated characters or characters in the media there is always a conversation on what black hair should and should not look like. I think women should feel empowered to do whatever it is they want. Our hair is an extension of how we want



to feel about ourselves and we should have the agency to decide what that is and it should not be open for public opinion.

CHM: Why are the youth such a big target for your work?

Sakina: The youth are my passion because I realized how much of a target they are for the negative stuff. I think that you have a responsibility to be a mentor through your actions. Through my actions and my work it's a way to help show them what's possible and what is valuable and important. We do not have enough people in the media and spotlight talking about compassion, peace, and purpose.

You can follow Sakina on her social media and website listed below to see what she is up to next!

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