

HOHCHV Featured Artist - January 2020

Ashley Renne' Gillard of Coatesville, Pa - Artist/Mental Health Advocate



“I learned a long time ago the wisest thing I can do is be on my own side, be an advocate for myself and others like me.”

-Maya Angelou

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How y'all doing? Y'all alright? I'm Ashley Renee' and I make it my responsibility to advocate for mental health. Especially mental health in the black community. For so long and still until this very day we have swept these conversations under the rug and pretended as if they never existed. Our community has crafted some of the biggest stigmas surrounding mental health and it's time to lay them to rest. It's time to give name and diagnoses to the things we've for TOO long have suppressed.

Mental health is personal for me. Not only have I recognize it in family members early on but I too was diagnosed with bipolar II disorder. I've seen the darkest of days and striving everyday to remain near the light. I make it a point to be very transparent about my diagnosis and journey because I know I'm not alone.

What I want y'all to know:

"I want you all to know... it's okay not to be okay and you do not have to suffer in silence. Know that there are resources out there. Make it a point to educate yourself because it's just that important. "

Advice:

"My advice...

Your truth NEVER hide; & ALWAYS listen to the deeper conversation being held inside."

Also... find your tribe. Find People who support your 100 percent. People who embrace your vulnerability and authenticity. People who call and check in when you seem distant or notice when your not yourself.

What has helped you?

Therapy!! Therapy!!! THERAPY!!!!

It helps make all the difference. I wish it was mandatory that everyone had a therapist.

And yes! Black people do go to therapy!

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That and journaling. Journaling has really helped to open doors for me. It has become my voice. It's what keeps me anchored. It helps me to check in with myself. I have made it a daily practice so much so I'm in the midst of turning my journal into a published book. So invest in expressing yourself.

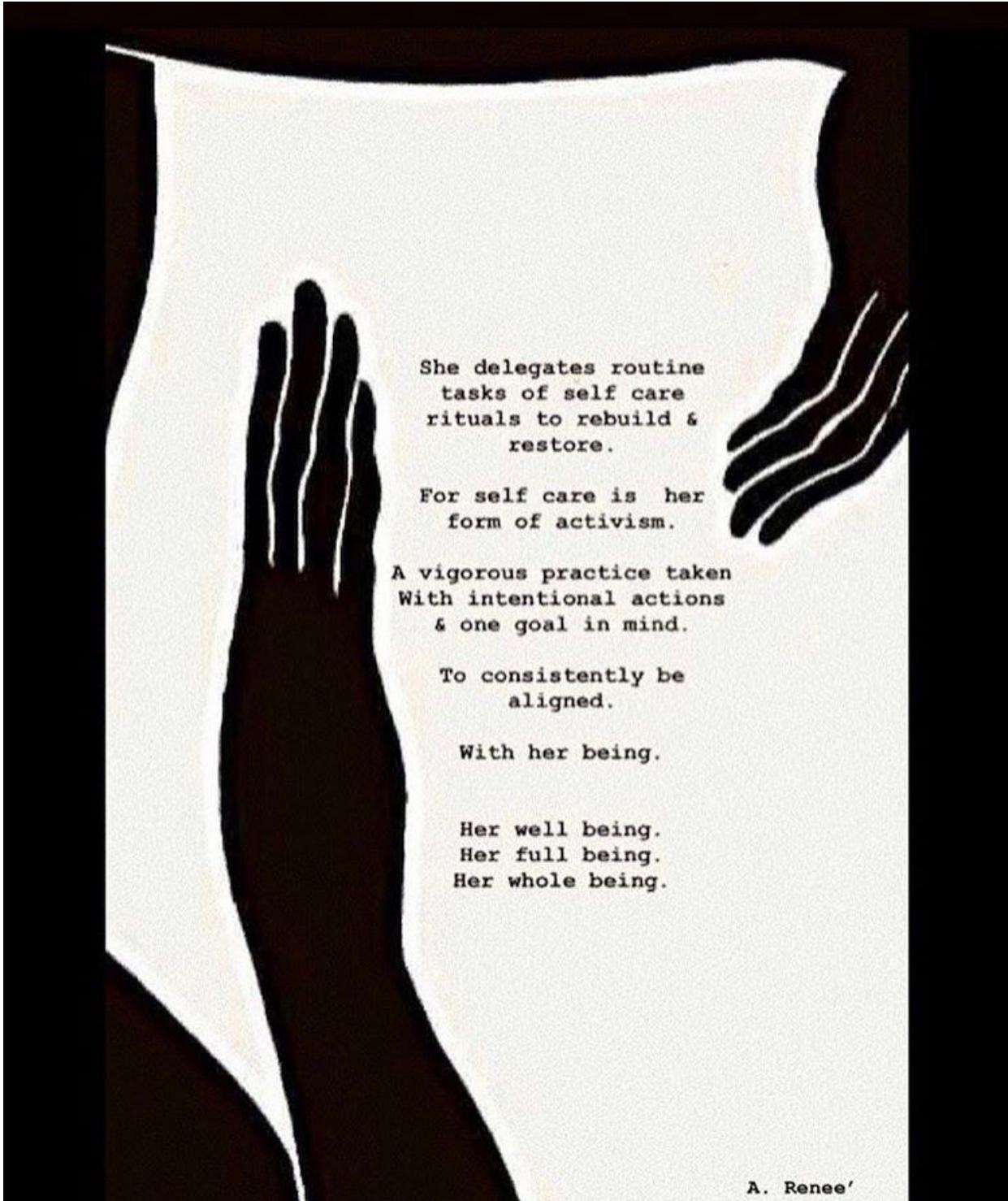
Last words:

Enclosing find space to be committed to bettering yourself by any means necessary. Health is wealth (mental, physical, spiritual, emotional).

Also feel free to reach out to me via Instagram @dear_self_ . I love sharing my stories, experiences, and always sending positive vibes, light and above all things Love. Look for my up and coming book entitled Dear Self,. Light & Love beautiful people.

-Ashley Renee'





She delegates routine
tasks of self care
rituals to rebuild &
restore.

For self care is her
form of activism.

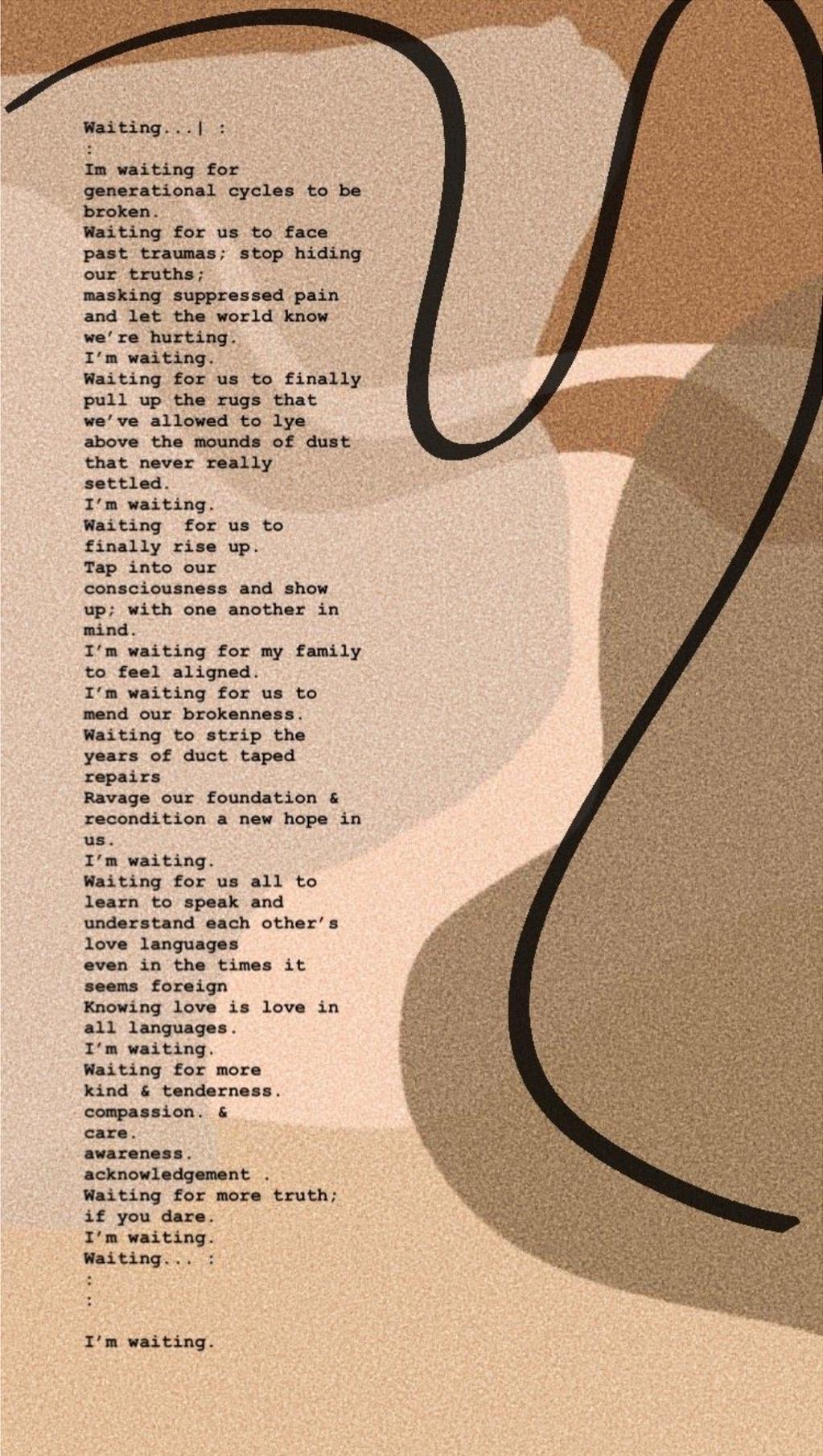
A vigorous practice taken
With intentional actions
& one goal in mind.

To consistently be
aligned.

With her being.

Her well being.
Her full being.
Her whole being.

A. Renee'



Waiting...| :
:
Im waiting for
generational cycles to be
broken.
Waiting for us to face
past traumas; stop hiding
our truths;
masking suppressed pain
and let the world know
we're hurting.
I'm waiting.
Waiting for us to finally
pull up the rugs that
we've allowed to lye
above the mounds of dust
that never really
settled.
I'm waiting.
Waiting for us to
finally rise up.
Tap into our
consciousness and show
up; with one another in
mind.
I'm waiting for my family
to feel aligned.
I'm waiting for us to
mend our brokenness.
Waiting to strip the
years of duct taped
repairs
Ravage our foundation &
recondition a new hope in
us.
I'm waiting.
Waiting for us all to
learn to speak and
understand each other's
love languages
even in the times it
seems foreign
Knowing love is love in
all languages.
I'm waiting.
Waiting for more
kind & tenderness.
compassion. &
care.
awareness.
acknowledgement .
Waiting for more truth;
if you dare.
I'm waiting.
Waiting... :
:
:
I'm waiting.