We had the good fortune of connecting with Maisha Miles and we’ve shared our conversation below.

Hi Maisha, as a parent, what do you feel is the most meaningful thing you’ve done for them?

Firstly, showing them that as their mom, my love is unconditional. That it does not come with terms or conditions. Neither does their fathers.

Secondly and most importantly, My husband Anthony and I show our two boys that their voice is theirs and that it’s okay to express their thoughts/ideas or concerns. Regardless of whom you’re conveying them to. Being young doesn’t not make you automatically wrong or inferior.

What should our readers know about your business?

Every business has an Origin Story. Ours is bags, bags, bags! Specifically Maia.Mega Bohemian Hobos w/ Ankara Prints. Afro Boho is where it has always been at for us!

A Versatile You began its creative journey 6 years ago after the birth of my son. As a new mom I knew the only way to stay by his side was to become a mompreneur and with the support of my husband I did just that.

With a background in Graphic Design, 15+ years in Retail and a love for handbags, this allowed me to combine my skills and passion to create “Wearable Handbag Art” in a way that feels relevant to the culture.

I feel like this alone sets us apart because you don’t have a lot of people creating their products by hand. That’s a trade, which is always important to have.

The Aromatherapy aspect of my business has been in the works since 2018 with the start of my Aromatherapy Candles and shower fizzes for men. It wasn’t an easy transition because at that time I was doing so well with the bags that when I would tell people that I wanted to add a Home Collection they would tell me that I needed to just focus on my business which were my handbags.

Letting their fears become mine, i let that dream fizzle. The challenge in doing that was that I was never satisfied. The next thing I know a few people around me began their journeys into holistic work and I felt that if I did it then it would seem like I was doing it because they were.

Again, I let people around me tell me that that was their niche/gift/journey and that I should just focus on the one thing.

But during my last pregnancy, I leaned more into my desire of creating holistic healing because I suffered from Anxiety, Stress, Insomnia and Blues during my second trimester through the first month postpartum. I felt that I needed to lean even more into that calling of healing and that’s just what I did.

The more I got out there the more customers would request different things from me and I would go to what I call my cookbook of recipes/formulas/ingredients and put these things together. It felt so natural because it was something that I had always done for myself and hadn’t realized it until I realized it.

That said, I feel worthy of what I am doing. I do not stand with imposter syndrome nor do I need the advice of others on my path unless it’s constructive to push me in the right direction.

That said, right now my business is going through a processing and learning phase. I am currently in a program that will teach me how to flourish in a way that we will have continued longevity.

After coming off our 3rd BWe (Black Women’s Expo), having participated in Silver Room Block Party and Sunday’s on State via the Chicago Loop Alliance; I can say that we are still headed up the right path.

As a reminder, “You control your fate. You control your path. You control your journey.”

If you had a friend visiting you, what are some of the local spots you’d want to take them around to?

Anyone that knows me knows that I like low-key fun. So of course it would be filled with Reading, Art, Culture and mostly Relaxing.

Because We Read:

– Barnes & Nobel at the DePaul Center

– Harold Washington Library

Because We Love Art:

The Art Institute of Chicago

-Museum of Contemporary Art (First Friday’s)

Because We’re For The Culture:

-DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center

– The Promontory (events depending on dates)

– ETA Creative Arts Foundation

Because We Shop:

– Thrifting

– Boxville 51st Marketplace

Because We Eat

– Chemistry Chicago

– Panera Bread

– Portillos

– Lexington Betty (iykyk)

– Grand Lux Café

Because We Relax:

-King Spa

– Oakwood Beach

– Garden of the Phoenix

Who else deserves some credit and recognition?

My mother Rita Hodges-Gordon, is a Multi-Creative person. As a Realist/Abstract Artist, she really does not give herself enough credit for the amazing work that she does.

She paints with so much passion and detail that you can feel it being convey through her pieces. The latest series that she is working on is very captivating and soulful with the feel of rich history. It’s definitely museum worthy.

My sisters and I have all taken a chip off the block and are multi-creatives as well.

Lakeesha Oates-Mattox with her press-on nails “Royal Create” and booming balloon business “Royal’Oates Create.”

Shontaya Hodges, with her “Kandy Klips” and a clothing line by A-Journ Marie. They are hair accessories and “Mommy and Me” matching wear for girls and their moms that was inspired by her two daughters.

Allison Hodges-Oates, whom is a flight attendant, but is also gearing to be a travel blogger.

Dohminique Hodges-Gordon with her own hair salon “She-Slay Beauty Bar. But also an aspiring music artist. Her music can be found on Apple Music under artist Big Dohmo.

Myself, Maisha Hodges-Miles, who makes handmade handbags, hair accessories, aromatherapy candles, room/body sprays and natural skincare products.

We’ve all taken some aspect of what we do from observing our mother do most of these things and incorporate that into our daily lives. For that we are all grateful.

Fun Fact: If you take all of our initials and put it together you get DR. SLAM.

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Maisha Miles

Nominate Someone: ShoutoutAtlanta is built on recommendations and shoutouts from the community; it’s how we uncover hidden gems, so if you or someone you know deserves recognition please let us know here.