EVERYDAY MAGIC

The Joy of Not Being Everything and Still Being MORE THAN ENOUGH

MATTIE JAMES
For Christopher, my love
and the most MAGIC person in my life.
few years ago, a friend of mine who worked at a law firm was reading my blog when a coworker asked her what she was reading.

“My friend Mattie has a blog where she shares her favorite style and beauty products. You should check her out.”

“Okay, I will. What’s her website?”

Back then, I had a blog called Mattieologie where I posted outfits and beauty product reviews for readers. My friend gave her my site and social media info and the coworker followed up the next day at their office.

“So, I checked out your little friend and I mean, I don’t get it.
She’s just a regular Black girl.” My friend was shocked at her coworker’s response. Why wouldn’t being a regular Black woman be enough to talk about clothes and makeup? This friend and her coworker were both Black women like me. Everything ain’t for everybody, so it’s totally fine that my blog wasn’t for her, but in hindsight, her response revealed that she had missed the point.

That was the point: I am a regular, everyday Black girl. I’m not everything to everybody, and I’m fine with that. But I’m an everyday Black girl who works really hard to make my life MAGIC. That is more than enough.

We’ll get back to this story in a moment, but before we go any further, allow me to introduce myself. I’m Mattie, a wife and mom based in Atlanta. Chris and I have been married for twelve years and have three amazing kids—Maizah, Caliana, and Christian. In 2009, I had the honor of winning Miss Liberia USA and started blogging soon after. Today, I’m the influencer and entrepreneur behind The Mattie James Company and BOSSFLUENCE. I create content online for my website, MattieJames.com, and @themattiejames across social media while influencing my followers to buy products I create or from brand partners like Amazon, Gerber, T.J.Maxx, and Clinique. I also teach influencers how to pitch brands and create content at a full-time level. For the last seven years, I’ve worked for myself as an influencer, which has helped me learn much about myself, the women I create content for, and the products we use every day. At The Mattie James Company, our mission is to create content, products, and experiences that encourage women to thrive in their everyday lives and take the mysticism out of living well.
Between you and me, I started blogging because I really enjoy my everyday life and I want other women to enjoy theirs too. I felt this way over a decade ago, when only my mom and a couple of people from my high school read my blog and I was working retail. And now, just like then, every day is not perfect—far from it. I don’t cross all the items off my to-do list, I disappoint people who expect more from me, work overwhelms me because I didn’t say no, the house is sometimes messier than I’d like to admit, and I order takeout when I originally intended to cook. But at the end of the day, I still love myself and my life even when I’m not everything to everyone because I understand that I’m more than enough.

Honestly, it’s a little deeper than just a sunny disposition, and from what I can remember, I’ve always been this way.

Growing up with immigrant parents from Liberia, my mom and dad always reminded my sister and me how fortunate we were to have the life we did, and they were right. We knew so many friends and relatives who had endured unfortunate circumstances due to the Liberian civil war in the late ’80s and early ’90s. I watched as my very hardworking parents willingly helped their parents, siblings, and close friends get back on their feet in a variety of ways even during their own humble beginnings. When my parents moved to the US in 1980 after my dad received a scholarship to The Ohio State University, they lived in an efficiency apartment that was about 500 square feet in size. My mom always did her best to make our house a home, whether we lived in a one-bedroom apartment or a five-bedroom home while she worked her retail gig. Whether she made lunch for my dad to take to work or hosted a holiday party, she always...
gave 100 percent. She was honest about when she was tired; she’d rest and then start again where she left off. My dad is also a hard worker—an incredibly brilliant man who has always put forth an effort to give us what he believed to be the best. He always affirmed me and my sister by telling us we could do anything as long as we were willing to work for it, and he set very high expectations for us. By no means were my parents perfect, but they certainly did their best with purpose. And through it all, my parents enjoyed their lives. They would take us on vacations, make birthdays and holidays a big deal, have parties where they would celebrate with their loved ones, and consistently gave to others without complaint or resentment. If I’m being honest, I learned that every day could be MAGIC because of their example. By 2010—thirty years after they moved to this country—they lived in a house seven times the size of their efficiency on the campus of The Ohio State University. But their lives were MAGIC not because of things, but because of their perspective.

While we moved from Huntsville, Alabama (where I was born), to Saudi Arabia (where I attended preschool), when I was a kid, the bulk of my childhood was spent between Atlanta (elementary school), Philadelphia (middle school), and Pittsburgh (high school and college).

As a kid, I always believed that I could succeed at whatever I decided to try. Becoming an honor roll student, making the cheerleading squad, and serving as an editor for my school newspaper—these are all things I achieved growing up. My disciplinarian father wanted me to make straight As and I wanted to please him. The mistake I used to make was that I believed if I wanted to achieve
something that mattered to me, it should be easy or come naturally to me, and that mindset resulted in my getting Bs and Cs instead. I believed that if I daydreamed about and envisioned being good at playing the violin, I would be entitled to playing it well. I was average at best and lessons were a waste of my time and my parents’ money. I thought that because I was nice and friendly with the girls who played basketball, I would make the team. Turns out that being nice is not a prerequisite for developing your basketball skills, or any skill for that matter. Being kind matters, but it is not a substitute for doing the work.

In my twenties, I went to a satellite campus of Penn State until my junior year. After transferring once to Robert Morris University to be closer to home after I realized that college wasn’t the walk in the park that high school was, I dropped out of school and moved to New York City to fulfill my dream of being a pop star. I soon learned that a consistent work ethic wasn’t expected just in school; it was necessary in real life as well.

In hindsight, my experience in NYC taught me about hustle. During the day, I was a temp for the merchandising director at the Macy’s corporate office; and at night, I was an assistant to my friend Forrest, who was a party promoter. Those were two jobs that required me to be intentional, even though they were temporary. My boss at Macy’s was very demanding, requiring me to handle small odd jobs around the clock. And even though getting into parties for free was quite the perk at my other gig in the evenings, I still had to put fires out and make sure the party went as planned. At twenty-two, it was quite the learning curve for me. I was operating on a schedule
where I had to be everything to my two bosses, leaving very little if anything in the cup for myself.

After living and working in NYC for a year, I learned my grandfather had fallen ill, so I moved to Atlanta to work retail and be close to my family. This was where I met my husband, Chris, after a couple of years of poor dating choices and living paycheck to paycheck through various retail gigs. Chris is kind, hardworking, and wildly intentional. He has a kind of honesty that stopped me in my tracks when we met because it was so pure and undiluted without being brutal. When we started dating I soon learned that Chris held me accountable and expected me to do what I said I was going to do. To that point, most men had just accepted what I said because it sounded nice. This forced me to grow up and understand that you can have a beautiful relationship and beautiful life when you do the work. Sometimes that work is hard because it’s unfamiliar, but most times it’s demanding because it requires a constant effort to maintain the relationship’s goodness.

It took me a while to realize that the good results and good things that were happening in other people’s lives weren’t simply because they wished for them, but because they put in the necessary work. Nowadays, in this social media, hustle-hard, 24/7 news cycle, entrepreneurial-driven world, we’re made to believe that the work gives instant results, especially if you have a lot of followers. You see no-nonsense messages online to “do the work” if in fact you want to make it in your professional life. “Ask for more and expect more to get more” is what they say online and in professional development books. But so many people expect their personal lives just to fall into place, and that just doesn’t happen. And it’s not because anything is wrong.
with them (or with you). There was nothing wrong with me. However, the work just wasn’t being done. Every day requires a deliberate effort to make MAGIC. The everyday effort is the MAGIC.

I use the acronym MAGIC as a framework in this book, but by magic, I don’t mean a trick, illusion, or even a hack. MAGIC is the discipline of showing up and doing the work to make every day:

- Meaningful
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Goal-oriented
- Intentional
- Consistent

Creating everyday MAGIC takes work—not sporadically, once in a while, or when it’s convenient work. It takes showing up every day to do work that matters to you on a consistent basis and that brings you closer to your goals in an intentional way. You can do that without sacrificing what you deem beautiful or trying to be everything to everyone.

What my friend’s coworker seemed to believe was that to make every day MAGIC meant you needed to be an anomaly—the first, the only, the best. That’s simply not true. Living a regular, everyday life where you do the necessary work to take care of yourself, your family, your home, and build a life that matters to you is MAGIC. MAGIC doesn’t require a million followers or dollars. It also doesn’t require you to shrink or play small. It doesn’t mean you’re supposed to be everything to everyone. It requires you to understand that you’re
more than enough. Everyday MAGIC requires honesty, openness, understanding, and confidence as you walk your own path. You will discover your everyday MAGIC when you’re willing to do the work on purpose daily, not just when it’s convenient or comfortable.

My life radically changed the moment I discovered my MAGIC. I thrive day to day because I do the work to make each and every day MAGIC. And you can too.

The entire point of making every day MAGIC is to make every day matter. It’s the result and sum of the parts of what you want every day to be. Every day doesn’t need to be perfect to matter. It just needs to have MAGIC. Your MAGIC helps you discover your joy and peace every single day, even on tough days, helping you remember that you don’t have to be everything to everyone and that you’re more than enough as you are. The everyday MAGIC framework helps you shift your mindset and shape your perspective, so you thrive on both the good days and those inevitable hard days. Everyday MAGIC is the method to the madness that daily life can often bring. Let’s break down what each part of the framework means and how to apply it to your everyday life.

**M IS FOR MEANINGFUL**

So how do you make every day meaningful? When something is meaningful to you, it matters to you. Whether the meaning of something is sentimental, nostalgic, or something else is up to you. The goal is to take action and make decisions that matter to you on an everyday basis. When you practice making your everyday matter, you essentially
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create a life that matters to you. Often we make the mistake of believing that because something is a good idea or a good practice, we should make space for it in our lives. However, if something lacks meaning or purpose in your life, it will always stick out and be in the way. Understanding your why and knowing why certain routines, practices, and processes are present every day in your life will help you build a life that matters to you. The great news is, this is only up to you.

A IS FOR AESTHETICALLY PLEASING

Making every day aesthetically pleasing will look different for everyone. This is so important to understand because what’s aesthetically pleasing to you isn’t necessarily the case for others, and it doesn’t need to be. When you surround yourself with things you deem beautiful every day, you appreciate and value them, which in turn helps you value yourself as well. You’ve probably heard the saying “You are the company you keep.” The things you consider aesthetically pleasing within your vicinity—art, decor, objects, photography, and so on—are your company too.

G IS FOR GOAL-ORIENTED

We often see the hashtag #goals on social media when someone does or achieves something great. However, making every day goal-oriented isn’t about trying to achieve something big and audacious on a daily basis. It’s about remembering what matters to you on this particular day in this particular season in your life. Vague goals get vague
results. Having specific goals—whether it’s completing the five things on your to-do list, moving for thirty minutes every day, or having a dry January—helps you win. It’s impossible to score without a goal, and having goals to work toward creates focus, momentum, and purpose for every single day.

I IS FOR INTENTIONAL

Intentionality is important because we often lead busy yet undisciplined lives. Making every day intentional requires decisiveness to make it count in a personalized way. It’s not deep, just deliberate.

C IS FOR CONSISTENT

How do you create an everyday life you can look forward to? With consistency. Being consistent is hard and inconvenient in most cases because routines and processes can be mundane and boring. However, consistency makes space for you to develop new habits and creates a foundation for you to accomplish goals—whether they’re short-term or lifelong. Sure, being consistent requires deliberate discipline and practice, which is often uncomfortable, but it breeds a level of self-confidence that’s unmatched thanks to the results it produces.

There are a few ways you can use this book to make sure you get the most out of it. This is absolutely a “take the meat and leave the bone” kind of book. As you read, take what you need and leave what you don’t.
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You and I may be alike in many ways, but we’re likely very different in many ways as well. I want you to always honor yourself: Use what works for you and leave behind what doesn’t. There’s a lot of stuff in here that was written with the intent to help you thrive day to day, but if what I share doesn’t apply to your current situation, season, or life period, it’s fine to skip it and keep moving.

There are sections in this book that act as rest stops or opportunities to go a little deeper in the cases when something does resonate with you:

**MAGIC Memo**
A quick note where a point is elaborated to create a deeper understanding.

**MAGIC but Real**
A quick confession where I admit how human I am and the compromises I make for peace of mind.

**MAGIC Moment**
A quick story about a moment from my real life where everyday MAGIC was clearly exemplified. Stories have a powerful way of making you understand a point through another’s experience (versus just explaining it).

You can read this book from the first page to the last page, word for word, or you can skim it to find what you need. In either case, I encourage you to use it. There is nothing more MAGIC than applying
what works for you. *Everyday MAGIC* was written to encourage you to discover things—old or new to you—that help you thrive on a day-to-day basis. Here you won’t be shamed or lectured for not doing something a certain way. This also isn’t the book that will “fix” you or turn you into a “superwoman.”

*Superwoman.* That’s what an innocent follower called me once as she commented on a photo of me with my kids on Instagram. Of course, I wasn’t upset by it, but it certainly made me think about once upon a time when I used to try to be my own version of a superwoman.

It was a very played-out version, by the way.

I used to go to work, try to always say the right thing, decorate the house, dress my kids perfectly, have dinner on the table, and impress the people around me (or on the internet). This definition of a superwoman was all in my head, of course. No one ever told me that was required of me. I just assumed it was required of everyone. Usually, I’d end up being late no matter what, but I’d never ask for help, which often caused miscommunication with my husband, burning dinner, and then being too exhausted to willingly and patiently be with my kids. It was a vicious cycle. But that’s exactly what happens when you try to do everything. You were never designed to do everything. So, trying to is a misuse of God’s creation.

The problem with being everything to everyone is that you end up being nothing for yourself. What’s in your cup is for you; the overflow is for everyone else. You cannot serve from an empty cup, though day to day as women that’s how we try to operate. We’re running on fumes because we want to please our families, grow our
following on social media, increase our income at work or in our business, be a good friend, and not disappoint others. That sounds good, but it feels overwhelming in almost all cases. I know this because I’ve tried to do everything, be there for everyone else, thinking it would make me feel whole and complete—because I pleased others. But it didn’t.

When you take away the money, the job, the business, the spouse, the kids, the friends, the followers, and all of the other things, what are you?

You’re already complete.

No one or nothing else completes you. The meaning of complete is to have all the necessary or appropriate parts. You already have all the necessary parts to become the version of yourself you’ve always wanted to be. Your completeness makes you suitable to enter any room and able to reach any level you strive for. God makes no accidents—He intentionally made you complete.

I’m married to the most incredible man I’ve ever met, yet he does not complete me. Neither do my kids. Or my seven-figure business. Or my remarkable friends. I am complete and have been complete since the moment I was born. And so are you.

Of course, who you were as an infant and who you are as an adult are different versions of you. You were complete in both cases, just in different phases. When you change from who you once were to who you have become, it’s not because you lacked anything; you’re simply in a different phase.

Let’s say your completeness is represented by a set of LEGO bricks. For this example, it’s impossible to lose any of the pieces. However,
your completeness doesn’t reflect every type of LEGO ever created. Just enough to create a complete shape or structure. Here’s the cool thing about LEGO sets: You can take them apart and rebuild them into something else. The pieces don’t change, just their position and function. And the longer you have those pieces, the better you know how to use them. This is what happens as you grow in your completeness—you have that same set of LEGO bricks and you’ve built a stronger and sounder structure with fewer pieces. And now you have completeness with some pieces left over. So you no longer have just enough pieces; rather, you have more than enough.

That’s exactly what you are. You’re more than enough.

Your duty is to take the pieces of your completeness and build a life worth living. A life worth living makes everyday MAGIC.

Friends and followers often ask, “How do you do it all?” I don’t. That’s the MAGIC.

I’m not good at cooking on the fly, but I’m great at meal planning. I don’t like doing household chores, so I’m great at batching them. I’m not good at remembering self-care, but I’m great at scheduling it.

I don’t like forgetting what I have to do, so I’m great at writing it down.

I’m not good at managing a lot of stuff, but I’m great at purging regularly.

Others think I’m doing everything because I give my all to the things I am doing. I give them my completeness. However, they don’t see all the things I’m not doing. And they don’t see the work that went into making conscious decisions that ensure everything in my
life is meaningful, aesthetically pleasing, goal-oriented, intentional, and consistent. They see the things I’ve chosen to do because they fit my framework.

You deserve a really good life, but you are not entitled to it. You will have to work harder than you expected on an everyday basis and shift the pieces of your life to adjust to the appropriate seasons. But the beauty of everyday MAGIC is that it’s always relevant. Something will always be meaningful to you. Something will always be considered aesthetically pleasing to you. You will always have goals—whether they’re big or small. Intentionality will always matter. And being consistent always pays off in the long run.

God’s creation of you was meaningful. You were fearfully and wonderfully made.

You are aesthetically pleasing in His eyes.

His goal was to make you complete and that goal was accomplished. This is why He made you in His image—He is not an incomplete God. He lacks nothing—neither do you.

He was absolutely intentional and deliberate when He created you. Which is why He knows the plans He’s made for you.

And He consistently pours blessings into your life whenever you make space for Him. Those plans He has for you? They’re to prosper you. And He has. He does. And He will do so even more. That’s not an opinion. It is the truth.

Whenever you come to a place where you’re conflicted and trying to be everything to everyone, remember the MAGIC HAT. It’s your “abracadabra-ask”—how to figure out whether or not something is for you.
A relationship.
A job opportunity.
A business proposition.
A life goal.

There are many things that are meaningful, aesthetically pleasing, goal-oriented, intentional, and consistent, but you have to ask, does it:

Honor you?
Apply to you?
Teach you?

HONOR YOU

If a MAGIC thing makes you feel seen, safe, heard, valued, and respected, you should pull it out of your hat and put it in your life. All things, from a job to a relationship, must honor your completeness. Something that honors you also fulfills you; and if the MAGIC thing doesn’t, put it back in the hat. There’s no space for it in your life, or at least, not in your current season.

APPLY TO YOU

Running a marathon is a goal many people have. It physically challenges you and gets you in great shape. You have to train consistently to do it well and it requires a lot of effort. It’s a great goal to have—if it
applies to you. If you want to run a marathon, it applies. If you don’t, it doesn’t. There are many things in life that you’ll come across that work for others but don’t work for you. If something isn’t relevant to what you want, what you do, or who you want to be, that’s fine. The goal here is to be explicitly honest with yourself about whether or not something actually applies to you. Self-honesty will always be your compass.

TEACH YOU

When things are challenging and even difficult, we often want to walk away from them because they’re hard. But completing hard things is typically where we are taught new lessons and skills—both personally and professionally. Granted, strife isn’t something to normalize in your everyday MAGIC—but learning is. If a new chapter in your life or even a new person is teaching you something and forcing you to grow, embrace the experience. Again, this is where self-honesty comes in, and it will certainly let you know if you should pull this out of your hat or keep it where you found it. The beauty of this is that only you can decide.

If something you’re considering doesn’t honor you, apply to you, and teach you, then it doesn’t get to come out of the hat and into your life. It only comes out of the hat if it’s MAGIC. That’s the rule. Whatever MAGIC is out there must honor, apply to, and teach you. If not, it’s not for you. No need for FOMO; what’s meant for you will not miss you.
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I’ll be honest: Before I discovered everyday MAGIC, I used to get paranoid whenever things were going well in my life. For some reason, I felt that I didn’t deserve that good fortune, and I lived with a sense of inevitable doom as I waited for it all to be taken away.

I’m here to tell you, that’s not how any of this works. That’s not how God works. God wants you to have good. He wants you to have a lot of good. And He wants you to have it every day.

It’s scary when you’re trusted with a lot. When I pray, I sometimes ask, Respectfully, are You sure, Lord? And He always reminds me that He trusts me, so why shouldn’t I trust myself?

And yes, you, too, should trust yourself enough to make MAGIC, every day.

Everyday MAGIC isn’t a destination, it’s a journey. The process requires being present, doing the work, and still being joyful while the work is getting done. That’s right: joy and work—they can coincide. That’s the whole point of everyday MAGIC. It’s not that the work gets easier, it’s just that you have learned to get out of your own way and are now truly grateful to do the work.

Getting out of our own way is an extreme sport. It requires explicit honesty and acute self-awareness that make most of us uncomfortable. But if you stand flat-footed and answer the hard questions, I promise you that there’s good stuff underneath and you’ll discover that every day can be meaningful, aesthetically pleasing, goal-oriented, intentional, and consistent.

Now that you know what everyday MAGIC is, let’s discover how to make it your own.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mattie James is a full-time content creator, lifestyle influencer, and CEO of The Mattie James Company. She creates lifestyle content for her blog, mattiejames.com, Instagram, and YouTube channel while working with brands like Samsung, T.J.Maxx, and J.Crew. After being crowned Miss Liberia USA in 2009, Mattie started her blog as a hobby and grew it into the seven-figure business it is today. She’s taught thousands of content creators and influencers how to grow their following, pitch brands, and create content for profit with her online courses and programs. She currently lives in Atlanta with her husband and three beautiful children.