



May 21, 2025  
A Note from Nikki Buskirk

**Dear Friends,**

I often find myself asking, where did I turn left while others kept straight when it comes to individualism? I can't remember a time when I didn't think about others' welfare, when I ever wanted to not include someone.

When I was younger, I was the shy, nerdy, Black kid who was often left out. I always tried to make sure others weren't excluded in anything I was in. Whether it was making sure everyone got a turn in tetherball, or when I was captain of our track team, I made sure everyone had someone cheering for them. Even our field team.



This quest for inclusion continued as an adult as I began to march, speak, and vote for the inclusion and rights of others. I have been marching and fighting for well over 20 years now. I first started with LGBTQIA+ rights. It baffled me that my very good friend could officiate Tyler's (my partner) and my wedding, but he and his partner of over 10 years at the time couldn't be married. They loved each other the same way Tyler and I loved each other after all. I helped in Pride parades and spoke up for them.



Even choosing to be a part of this church came down to how would our kids' "Guncles" be treated if they ever decided to walk through these doors. It took many years to get here, but I am happy to say that this year, I was honored to be able to return the love and officiate their wedding.

My fight didn't end there. It continued after the birth of my oldest (Sawyer) when Travon Martin was killed. He wasn't related to me, but he was still my kid. I felt his mother's pain like it was my own.

As Black women we often “adopt” other kids as our own. We are everyone’s “Auntie.” When he was killed, that crushed me. Not only because he looked like my son, but because he was someone’s son.

I showed up. I went to marches and protests, where we were trampled by police on horseback and called vile names. Someone even tried to spit on us. I was terrified, but I kept showing up because Black boys should be able to walk through neighborhoods minding their business like their white counterparts.

When white nationalists’ signs showed up in Hilliard, and people in this church community wanted us to not “make it a big deal,” this shy introvert organized, held a rally, and spoke at City Council about next steps if this happened again. I helped Hilliard take a stand against racism and hate.



When kids were being killed in schools and nothing was happening, I helped organize Columbus’s March for our Lives. I spoke in front of our state’s government about gun laws. My kids don’t do in-person school, but we were there marching alongside families.



I have three bio boys. And I have done my darned best to make sure they treat others with kindness. That they understand it’s not easy to be a woman in this world, especially for Black women. My boys understand their privilege as boys and that they need to use that to help others. (Here’s my oldest, Sawyer, speaking in front of the school board about the importance of DEI.)

Why? Because it’s what we do as Black women. We take care of everyone. We protect others; we try to build others up. We want the best for everyone even to the detriment of ourselves.

Fast forward to the recent election, where this country showed Black women just how much the hate us. They showed us that no matter how educated we are — we are among the most educated demographic in this country —

they still don’t value us as humans.

We are *always* there for others, fighting for them, making sure they are included, yet we are always left in the dust, not cared about, voiceless. While this is not the first time our “allies”

have left us in history — the suffrage movement is one of many — this was the first time many of my generation have experienced it.

It's been a hard pill to swallow. We fight so hard, yet no one ever cares to listen to us even though it is happening to us.

So, the collective, the proud 92%, have decided we are resting as a part of our resistance. (There's a growing movement among African American women called 92%, based on the 92% of Black women who voted in the last US election, mostly for the Harris campaign.) We are no longer being on the front lines; we aren't putting our bodies and mental health up as collateral. We are finding our joy. This does not mean we are giving up. After all, we have always been harmed, and what happens to the whole is worse for us. We just aren't going to be the group that is in the front of it all.

At first this was hard for me. It feels so weird not being out there. I struggled with this, especially as my body is literally making me rest right now. My amazing therapist had to remind me that I am already doing the work. It just doesn't look like it used to.

I'm doing the work in Godly Play by making sure *all* kids see themselves in God and know they are loved. I do this when the Faith Finders learn about others and show love to other communities. I'm doing this when I teach about social location in Deeper Waters. I'm doing this every time I advocate for the inclusion of our disabled and immunocompromised community. I'm doing the work.



And I'm resting. I've picked up what we Black women are calling our soft girl era. I'm reading; I'm gardening; I'm cooking in my Le Creuset pot like the Duchess of Sussex. I learned the boots-on-the-ground line dance. And yes, I even own a fan. I am finding my joy as a Black woman and living my best #Blackgirlmagic life.

While the 92% are resting, this is the time for you to step up. Show us what it looks like to be a real ally, that you are going to fight for us like we fight for you. Remember intersection, and that we show up in many other spaces, that we matter and are included when human rights are at stake. Show us what it looks like to truly love your neighbor.

Until then I'm going to work on getting my body healed, make sure my mental health is in a good place, and perhaps when we get through this, I'll teach y'all a dance. Get your fans ready!

With love always!

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