

A letter to my younger self

If you could go back in time and tell yourself something important, what would it be? In this issue, celebrity fashion stylist Erica Matthews takes a look back at her life and shares some valuable lessons

Dear Erica, at this point I want you to know how brave you are. You are finding yourself, discovering your passions and fearful about stepping out and taking a chance. The next few years for you are crucial in who you are about to become and there are a few things I want to shed light on so that you can become the best version of yourself.

Those years of you hating how full your lips are, your skin tone or even when you're told how 'bottom heavy' your thighs and bum make you look, ignore it. Give it a few years; the narrative is about to change. Where we are now, the things about your appearance that make you feel like you are inadequate, people are buying; it's all a trend. So please, take this moment in time to love yourself and how God made you. These diets that you are obsessing yourself with, please stop because at a size 6/8 it's only going to get worse. Without truly loving yourself, your outsides will change but you will still remain the same inside. So look in the mirror and speak life into the person you see. You. Are. Enough.

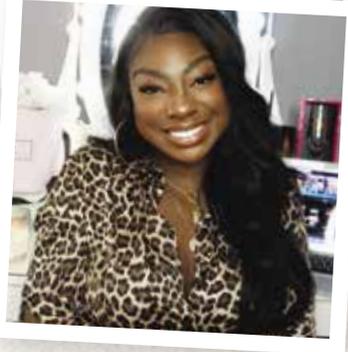
Let's talk about love, though I know you're not really keen about that topic. You are strong, independent and not really open to the idea of having kids

or getting married. You do open up; and you are going to get your heart broken again a few times. One of them will be really hard, maybe the hardest you will ever experience. But this is a pivotal moment that will allow you to step into who you really are, so ride through it.

I know right now you are thinking about quitting the amazing job you have and taking a step of faith into this 'fashion world'. You are terrified, but from where I am standing right now? It will be worth it. I would be lying to you if I said it would be easy. I would be lying to you if I said that all the friends you have around you are going to stay. But know that God wants you to grow and in order to do that, you need room.

Your first job will be assisting a huge celebrity stylist who is working with Kelly Rowland and Nicki Minaj. Then in a few years you will be styling your first big star, Shingai Shoniwa, and standing on a stage while she is performing with Sir Paul McCartney. You will style a fashion film for Nick Knight's SHOWstudio; you're even going to have work published in *Vogue* THREE TIMES! You are going to do big and small campaigns for brands like Pepsi, McDonald's etc. and lose count of how many magazine covers

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your work will grace! You'll even be sitting front row at fashion week, and I saw you on BBC 3 last week on the TV programme, *The Glow Up*.

You've been considering starting your YouTube channel for a few years. Don't worry, there is going to be a perfect moment when you do start. Submerge yourself in every experience you have along your journey, both good & bad, because you will use these experiences to help other people on their journey to success and it will change lives. Trust me, I have their thank you messages.

And lastly, like many others, you are going to put a lot of pressure on yourself and where you should be. Please forget this 'when I'm 30' deadline. The secret everyone is keeping is that 30 is when life REALLY begins - so enjoy your 20s, and look forward to the good stuff.

Love Erica x

Check out Erica's fashion and lifestyle website: www.stepstostyle.com and follow her on Instagram: @ericafmstyle

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