

## Finding and Using Your Voice

**Brian Hamlin** has the kind of infectious energy that makes you want to get up and change the world. And if you are indeed already doing something inspired and positive in your life, he compels you to want to do more. His voice is powerful, and the passion he has for life is palpable. Driven by his insatiable desire to motivate, educate, and inspire the world, he is the Founder and Creative Director of *Saint Gabrielle Street & Company*.

The company's website says, "In an age of uncertainty, where fear is used to boost media ratings and influence the masses, the powers that be relentlessly attempt to reduce the nature of mankind into accepting that people are hopelessly incapable of successfully dictating the direction of their own lives. *Saint Gabrielle Street & Company, New Media Inspirational Entertainment*, provides its audiences an intimate opportunity to consider the possibility of so much more."

Voices Under 40 had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Hamlin and ask a few questions.

### 1. How did you discover your talent for public speaking?

Because my background is as an educator, primarily in schools located in low income or at risk areas, I found it in the eyes of my students. I was typically placed in classrooms where no one had success in breaking through to the students. I didn't see this as a public speaking skill, but there was something about the way I approached, spoke, and dealt with students. They trusted me enough to let their defenses down. When I would talk to these kids and have breakthroughs, I would just get fired up. At the same time, colleagues would visit or have me do trainings, see my posture, my passion, it was all confirmation. So it came first from an internal feeling based on my students' breakthroughs, and then was followed by confirmation from colleagues who advised me to go into public speaking.



### 2. Who or what inspired your desire to motivate, educate, and inspire others?

Plain and simple, my mother. Her name is Lyn Hamlin and she is a 30 plus year educator. She developed and ran an Upward Bound program in my hometown, Pittsburgh, PA, for over 20 years. And over the course of those years she touched the lives of thousands of students. Growing up in that environment, I literally watched her transform people; almost to the point where you would not recognize them, the person who entered the program and left the program would be two different people. We get Christmas cards from people, 20 or 30 years later, saying "if it wasn't for you we wouldn't have families, or be the people we are." And I could not shake the impact it had on my life.

### **3. What is the one word you think best describes your generation and why?**

It's two words: New Revolutionaries. We were the first youth to be parented or raised by children of the 60's. Our parents went through the diversity of experience that came out of that generation and time period. In essence, they've passed the torch to us. The thing about it is that we didn't have the same in your face battles to fight. So we pioneered it our own way. Hip hop came out of our generation, social change, unique ways of expressing ourselves, we did it in everything from education to big business. We are not marching and maybe not as obvious, but we're finding revolutionary realms in technology and music, and politics. I like to think it's the hip hop generation that put Obama in office. I sum it up as New Revolutionaries.

### **4. What is the best advice you've been given and who gave it to you?**

It came from my folks. You can become anything you want with hard work, sacrifice, and dedication. I heard it all my life. Now I've realized it comes down to believing it and understanding success does not happen overnight. Second would be to be authentically you. Don't sell yourself out, don't sell yourself short.

### **5. Who is the first person that comes to mind when you hear the word inspirational and why?**

I honestly have two responses.

On the world stage, Muhammad Ali. This is someone who came from a very meager background. He was able through his god given talent to rise through the ranks and become the youngest heavyweight champion during his time period. He did it with a braggadocious bravado, that did not lack sincerity and was a very colorful extension of what he thought about his abilities. But in terms of the biggest part of why he really inspires me; when society made him choose between his sport/profession and his internal beliefs, he chose his beliefs. He believed so much in fighting against the injustices that African Americans were facing in this country. If you know anything about boxing, the years he was going through litigation were the prime times of his years as a boxer. He lost his best years because of his beliefs. So I think that's one thing that makes him great to me; he was willing to put his profession, the money, the fame to the side for a greater cause.

Second, one goal of Saint Gabrielle Street is to take away the fixation that you can only find inspiration in celebrity or iconic figures. I think of single parents who are raising families on limited resources, friends who have relocated from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and what they've been able to achieve, people who are still in New Orleans who have not left and are fighting everyday, the firefighters from 9/11 attacks, people who have lost their job and are still making it. The common man and woman, is who I think about. You know it's real easy to look good when everything is fine. But when your back is up against the wall, the rug is pulled from underneath you, the true test of character is those who can still come out as a hero. When I get a chance to talk to those folks, I get real inspiration from their stories.

### **6. What advice would you give to someone trying to find the power in his or her own voice?**

First, respect the power of words. If you are trying to be an orator, presenter, or public speaker, or an artist, and you've gotten someone's attention, you have to respect the potential of the influence or lack thereof it will have on your audience. Words have brought countries to war and at the same time released people from bondage. Second, be authentic with your message. If you speak from that authentic you, and you know how to

craft it, and can present with passion, you have the power to change the world.

**7. Why did you name your company Saint Gabrielle Street, and what are some of your plans for the next 12 months?**

When I created Saint Gabrielle street, I took a lot of time to make sure that every piece of it was a natural extension of who I am. Saint Gabrielle represented a play of words. Saint Gabrielle meant some representation of the divine gift that we all have been given. It did not have a religious connotation. I believed people would see the name and recognize or get a divine feeling. At the same time I had to use the word street to keep it grounded in the every day person. When you combine the two, it's the divine spark, gift, or purpose that we've each been given, that the common man, and common woman all have. That's where it came from.

And, we've got some exciting things coming. We are working to make sure we have the right team. And we are working on positioning ourselves to take things to the next level. Press kits are on the horizon. I've also recently been chosen to participate in the New Voices Speaker & Events Bureau which is an exciting venture from Jeff Johnson and Quinn Conyers. I've got a new show coming up, some acting classes, a lot of good things are on the plate.

**Favorites Of The Moment (who can pick just one of all time):**

**Favorite Book:** The Celestine Prophecy

**Favorite Song:** Award Tour, Tribe Called Quest

**Favorite Word or Quote:** "The world can't hold me, too much ambition." Jay-Z

**Favorite Movie:** The Matrix and Lean on Me

**Public Speaker I admire and why:** Right now, in terms of style, Anthony Robbins. He took it to a multimedia level, he was so passionate and so strong, it almost became undeniable, the life change you experience listening to his presentations.

To find out more about Brian Hamlin and his company Saint Gabrielle Street and Company visit [www.saintgabriellestreet.com/About the Artist.html](http://www.saintgabriellestreet.com/About_the_Artist.html)