



The Expand & Flourish Reading List

Ten Essential Reads
for Black Women Who Desire to Expand and
Flourish from Within

BY REV. NEICHELE R. GUIDRY, PH.D.



Hey there!

If you've got this list in your hands, then I believe that you're ready to expand and flourish into a new season of profound joy and deep soul satisfaction. In fact, if you're anything like me, your deepest desire is to ease into a life that you *enjoy*. You've paid your dues in sorrow and struggle. You've settled for "good enough." Now, you're wondering if there's more to your life, your vocation, and your relationships than what you've experienced.

I've been there. **Let me encourage you, from my own experience: there is more.** As someone who has come through a divorce, vocational trauma (™), and various interpersonal losses, I can personally attest that with the right perspective, practices, and people, your next chapter can be a portal into your *best life*.

I believe that flourishing is the birthright of all Black women. Period. While I'm mindful of the cultural, social, systemic, and interpersonal hindrances to our flourishing, I'm also mindful that healing, expansion, and flourishing are forms of intentional resistance.

This bibliography is **here to uplift your spirit**, ground you with tools and techniques for self-healing, and guide you to your God-given agency to create a passionate, thriving, enriching life. These texts have ministered to me by helping me to find my voice, shift my mindset, expand my horizon, and claim a faith that encourages me to see myself as God's worthy and inherently good creation. Take some time with one, or some, of these texts. Sit with them. Let them speak to your spirit. Let them inspire you to take hopeful action.

You deserve the more. You deserve to expand into your fullest potential. **You deserve to flourish.**

With love,
Rev. Neichelle Guidry, Ph.D

Each title is accompanied by a line that represents its essence.
Which line most resonates or piques your curiosity?

I recommend that you start there.

What Matters Most: Ten Lessons for Living Passionately from the Song of Solomon
by Renita Weems

"Your desire for a full and fulfilling life begins with your resisting the definitions and labels others place on you to define who you are and their attempt to tell you what you ought to want."

Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype
by Clarissa Pinkola Estes

"When women reassert their relationship with the wildish nature, they are gifted with a permanent and internal watcher, a knower, a visionary, an oracle, an inspiration, an intuitive, a maker, a creator, an inventor, and a listener who guides, suggests, and urges vibrant life in the inner and outer worlds."

One Day, My Soul Just Opened Up
by Iyanla Vanzant

"Willingness does not make your life easier. What it will do, however, is make it easier for you to move through every experience that may confront you in life."

In Search Of Our Mothers' Gardens Womanist Prose
by Alice Walker

"A Womanist... "Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless."

Their Eyes Were Watching God
by Zora Neale Hurston

"Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman."

Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk
by Delores S. Williams

“Rather, for the slave, the wilderness was a positive place conducive to uplifting the spirit and to strengthening religious life... The wilderness experience was not easy. One tarried and struggled in the wilderness with oneself and finally met Jesus.”

The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity
by Julia Cameron

“My creativity heals myself and others.”

Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto
by Tricia Hersey

“Softness is available to us. Care is available to us. Rest is available to us. Community is available to us. Sleep is available to us. Justice is available to us. Pleasure is available to us.”

My Soul is A Witness: African-American Women's Spirituality
Edited by Gloria Wade-Gayles

“The testimonies in this anthology, richly textured and diverse, speak to specific ways in which [that] spirituality expresses itself, resonating individually and collectively, with teaching fundamental to the socialization of most African-American women: Nourish the Spirit within. Invoke it, receive it, and yield to its power.”

“The Eye of the Beholder,” in *Wild Stars Seeking Midnight Sun*
by J. California Cooper

“She sipped a bit. “I have little savings. I have a future if I'm careful. I may be alone, but, thank God, I am free. I can make any decision, so within reason, whatever I want to do. All I have to do is work hard, take care of my own health, and live! And travel, and go back to school for whatever I want and can afford. I am free. I didn't know this was where I was headed, but here I am ... free!”

*I hope this list is helpful to you.
If you'd like to connect with me to learn more about my
coaching and speaking services, you can slide into my
Instagram DMs (@neichelleg) or send me
an email at neichelle@revneichelle.com.
You can also visit my website www.revneichelle.com.*

*Go expand. Go flourish.
And always, be well.*



Rev. Neichelle R. Guidry, Ph.D.