



THE LEADERSHIP Issue 3

BIASES

LeadHERship was started to provide a platform for women and girls of all ages and walks of life an opportunity to share their stories and our readers the opportunity to learn from their experiences. While some editing occurs, we feel it is important to hear directly from our contributors in their own voices.

This publication is associated with the nonprofit organization, Nerdy Girl Success, Inc. The mission is changing the landscape of leadership by educating and encouraging teen girls in the pursuit of business and political leadership positions.

We understand that it is easy and tempting to share this digital magazine with family and friends. However, we would ask that you encourage others to become subscribers as 100% of those dollars go to the programming Nerdy Girl Success, Inc provides.

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Thank you for your subscription!



Your subscription dollars allowed us to purchase supplies and do a one week pilot program at the Krause Children's Center in Katy, TX. The Krause Children's Center is a residential facility for teen girls. Many of the girls arrive at Krause after experiencing severe abuse or neglect. These courageous young women are between the ages of 12-17, and they begin to grow and heal through in-depth clinical therapy, personal development activities and spiritual care in a safe setting. Pictured above are some of the supplies purchased (left) and two of the staff at Krause with our founder, Christina (right).

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## Letter from the Editor

Our last issue was about the crossroads we face. Those decisions that we've made and the impact that they've had on our lives. Not only shared the consequences of those decisions but about what influenced us in making those decisions...at least those things that we were aware of that influenced us.

In this issue, we look at another side of what influences our decisions, our biases. It's something we all have in common. We have all experienced the impact of someone else's bias about us. Sometimes it has benefited us. Other times not. We have all used our own biases towards others. Sometimes to their benefit. Other times not.

I don't know that we can ever truly be without or act without bias. But, I do know that we can be aware of the biases we hold. We can look for it in our behaviors and attitudes. When we are able to do that, we are able to correct for it. And when we do that, we can start having a huge impact on changing the world.

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**Christina Meade**  
Editor  
Founder & Executive Director of  
Nerdy Girl Success, Inc



# Does Social Proofing Affect Our Bias-labeling Outlook?



You ever heard something that just punches you in the face?

It makes you angry?

You ever seen something that lightly taps you on your forehead?

It gets your full attention?

It's most likely that what you heard or saw triggered one of your personal bias-labeling outlooks.

If we take a closer look at how social proofing affects public opinions, we can clearly see that a bias outlook can be easily misunderstood when we do not have a well thought-out point of view... Especially, on things that are happening in our world.

Our biases can create mental shortcuts... which are like tiny mental disruptions without a lot of thought or reflection.

Biases, affect how we make every day decisions. All of us have biases. It's part of the human-landscape that connects us or disconnects us.

It's almost like making nothing happen very slowly when we hang on to our biases especially when we don't open our minds to other people's situations.

*We get some rules to follow...*

*We get some pills to swallow...*

*We get some biases to wallow...*

Most likely what set-off our personal biases is the lack of focus when listening with 'openness'. The resistance to slow down and listen can affect our bias because we're so conditioned to be quick with our response(s) on many topics.

So, when we don't give a little hyper-focus on what comes into our minds and what comes out of our mouths we affect the outlook of our social proofing... And boom! There you have your bias.

Let's get some direction here with short descriptions of what is bias, what is social proofing, and how social proofing can affect our bias-labeling outlook?

### **What is social proofing?**

Social proofing is the influence that the actions and attitudes of the people around us (either in real life or online) have on our own behavior. The "proof" element is the idea that if other people are doing it (or saying it), it must be correct.

### **What is Bias?**

Bias is a particular tendency, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived. Bias is a tendency to lean in a certain direction, often to the detriment of an open mind. Those who are biased tend to believe what they want to believe, refusing to take into consideration the opinions of others.

### **How does social proofing affect our bias outlook?**

There are many ways social proofing affects our bias outlook. For the sake of keeping this article somewhat briefs... let's look at bias-labeling. This is the way a person is labeled or described and how social proofing can influence what we think about them.

Biased-labeling information can influence us to change our minds, i.e., how we think. Being aware of biased-labeling and knowing how to identify, analyze, and assimilate biased information properly is a skill to be valued. It puts you in charge of how we think instead of what we should think.



*“Sometimes the greatest way to say something... is to say nothing at all” – these are lyrics from Justin Timberlake’s song Say Something [collaboration with Chris Stapleton]*

While I was writing this article, this song came on my Pandora shuffle and it launched a thought to write this article on how we can easily get caught up on making biased decisions; especially biased-labeling.

There are so many different biases to write about; I opted biased-labeling because it goes hand-in-hand with social proofing.

Can we truly be free of our biased-labeling in world that is deep into social proofing? That’s a tough question. Our newfangled media(s) have become like a group of professional social proofing spin-doctors who concentrate on spinning biased-labeling... You know turning something positive into something negative and vice versa turning something negative into something positive.

We will always have biased-labeling in pretty much everything we do. Hell, we even have biased-labeling on the fruit we buy at the grocery store before we put it into our shopping basket. Do you get where this is going?

It's going to continue because that's part of our cultural interaction and mental processes.

Before we readily whip our biased-labeling card and slap it down on the table, let's take a twinkling moment to look deeper into a statement that reflects a partiality, preference, or prejudice for or against a person, object, or idea.

We are all the sum of what we decide; what we choose. Don't be so quick to accept all the levels of social proofing [whether you read it or hear it] because it will affect your biased-labeling outlook. Remember when you were a little kid and you would say, "You're not the boss of me!" - - Well, yeah, that's pretty much what we should say to all media platforms when they spin out their bias-labeled view points.



## Sharon Zapata

~ No Filter Writer | Author | Artist | Podcaster  
Work Hard. Live Well. Don't fuck with me

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# A Mother's Experience



Thirteen years ago I struggled to breastfeed both of my children. Not because my milk wasn't coming in or because they couldn't latch but because I was absolutely terrified of public breastfeeding. That lack of support created a lot of stress when going out and forced me into pumping which was not an easy endeavor. After they were weaned, I faced a different struggle with my body image. My stretch marks, scars, loose skin, and extra weight made me terrified to go out in public in a bathing suit. Motherhood brought me an incredible amount of joy but an unexpected amount of fears and shame.

That was thirteen years ago and those fears and shame don't have the same grip as before. Which was wonderful because eleven years later I found myself pregnant with my third. The experience of pregnancy, breastfeeding, and a new found passion for entrepreneurship came together one hot Texas summer day. As I was getting ready to take my tribe out to a water park, I figured one of my many bikinis would work to breastfeed my son. I was wrong. They didn't fit my 5-month postpartum body very well and almost all of them felt like they were digging into my milk ducts. Forget easy access. I was going to be lucky to be able to keep my top on and just deal with the discomfort.

So I decided to "treat" myself with a breastfeeding bikini. I was prepared to pay a high premium but it seemed worth it to be comfortable and not risk a blocked duct. I couldn't find anything. Only one company made bikinis for breastfeeding. ONE. They weren't really

my style so I was stuck. I asked around and no one could even refer me to a one-piece suit. The only logical conclusion was that I needed to create them myself because it takes someone who truly understands the problem to solve it. The problem seems obvious to me but that's because I was willing to admit it. No one thinks moms should be in bikinis and no one designs breastfeeding friendly anything that is specifically for a public space. Why? Because postpartum bodies are rarely used in the media and public breastfeeding continues to be a faux pas in the US as it was only fully legalized in all 50 states in 2018.



Started by a mama for mamas

EST. 2018

I created Orolait to combat both issues. I did my market research and found an overwhelming amount of mamas just wanted the option to breastfeed comfortably in a swimsuit so they could go about their outing. They would also feel more inclined to buy the suit if the models looked more like them. I worked with designers and had a small focus group and after 9 months, we had suits ready for the public! The initial

reception was phenomenal. Mamas were excited to wear and use the suits so the next step was to try out a couple of marketing campaigns.



It seemed really straightforward that if I was going to see breastfeeding friendly bikinis and swimwear that I should share images of the suit in action. Everything was fine and dandy until the time came to use those images in ads and in my Facebook shop. After getting an initial message that I had somehow violated their advertising policy because “we don't allow the sale of adult items or services (ex: sexual enhancement items, adult videos)”, I assumed my appeal would clear things right up. I was very wrong. After attempting no less than 10 appeals and getting the same automated response, I finally reached a human being. Sort of. I am assuming it was a human but I can't know for sure because my emails were being forwarded by a trusted colleague to their contact and then they'd forward their response after deleting all contact information. I was eventually told my image was

flagged because it contained nudity. The issue is there was no nudity. FINALLY, I was told my nipple was showing. The problem: it wasn't. A sliver of my areola was showing but that's not a nipple. My basic anatomy lesson got me nowhere and the final word was "This ad does show more nudity than we allow in advertising. Even with ads that promote breastfeeding, which we aim to support, we have to draw a line on nudity. Given that we serve ads to other users and make a profit from them, we have more conservative standards with regard to ads."

It remains clear that the US has a long way to go when it comes to truly supporting women and families. You cannot promote breastfeeding with one hand but attempt to censor it with another. It is these false correlations that end many breastfeeding journeys far too soon. Breastfeeding is already difficult enough, added societal pressure adds a burden no parent should bare. Some people believe that I'm just simply creating a swimsuit brand but I'm not. I'm doing so much more than that. I'm building a movement dedicated to normalizing bodies and breastfeeding and I couldn't be more excited.



## Ana Rojas Bastidas

I'm bringing dignity and empowerment back to the swimsuit buying experience for breastfeeding mothers and beyond by starting Orolait. Orolait is a body positive line of breastfeeding friendly bikinis and swimwear. The lack of self-esteem I had impacted every part of my life until I decided to take control and I've been blogging about this as PowerToPrevail since 2015.

Follow Ana on Facebook

[@PowerToPrevail](#)

and on Instagram

[@powertoprevail](#)

# THE BIAS PLAYLIST



## Accidental Racist - Brad Paisley and LL Cool J

Feel like a new fangled Django, dodgin' invisible white hoods  
So when I see that white cowboy hat, I'm thinkin' it's not all good  
I guess we're both guilty of judgin' the cover not the book  
I'd love to buy you a beer, conversate and clear the air  
But I see that red flag and I think you wish I wasn't here

## Free Your Mind - EnVogue

Oh please forgive me, for having straight hair  
It doesn't mean there's another blood in my heirs  
I might date another race or color  
Doesn't mean I don't like my strong black brothers  
Why oh why must it be this way  
Before you can read me you gotta learn how to see me, I said  
Free your mind and the rest will follow



## Same Love - Macklemore & Ryan Lewis

When everyone else is more comfortable remaining voiceless  
Rather than fighting for humans, that have had their rights stolen  
I might not be the same  
But that's not important  
No freedom 'til we're equal

# But I'm a good person!

We like to think that we are fair judges of people and situations. After all, we've evolved and have a new spiritual mindset that sees only souls. How can we possibly be racist, homophobic or sexist?

The real world paints a much different picture.

A Canadian study showed that people with Chinese, Indian or Pakistani last names were at a 28% disadvantage in the hiring process, while in the US, resumes with "black" sounding names were more likely to be discarded. 45% of Americans are not ok with having an LGBTQ coworker, and, regardless of the hiring manager's gender, men are twice as likely to be hired for any position, according to a 2014 study.

## **Why is that?**

It's a little something called unconscious bias. An unconscious bias is a prejudice against a certain type of person, based on cultural assumptions and personal interactions, that the holder is unaware of. We all have them. I am aware of my unconscious bias against cheerleaders, people who have "Live, Laugh, Love" artwork hung unironically in their home, people who use Velcro wallets, people who wear sports jerseys to semi-formal occasions, and lots of other associations that make no real sense.

These biases have real world implications that go beyond the workplace. Studies show that unconscious bias affects your friendships, who you date and where you live. These biases have also crept into artificial intelligence, creating discriminatory systems where none were ever intended. People are being denied credit and loans for homes and colleges, based on racial profiling. Even more shocking is the risk assessment software endorsed by the Department of Justice, which has shown a strong bias for giving white offenders much shorter sentence recommendations than African American offenders.

## **What do we do about this?**

The first step is to acknowledge your own unconscious biases and understand that you are not an inherently bad person for having them. We all do. Sometimes, this involves serious soul searching and contemplation. If you would prefer a more efficient option, Harvard University has a battery of bias tests that explore many of the most common biases.

After you've acknowledged the areas you need to work on, begin working your way through understanding why you have them and taking steps to manage them. For example, I associate cheerleaders with people who were mean to me in high school. Is it reasonable for me to assume that all cheerleaders will be mean to a 39-year-old woman? Obviously not. Therefore, when I have a negative reaction to someone who was a cheerleader in the past, I need to ask myself if it is only coming from my bias.

You can change what feelings and emotions you associate with a certain type of person. Surrounding yourself with imagery of people doing things that counter that bias, interacting with them on social media and in real life, or something as simple as changing how you refer to groups of people can have a big impact. Look Different offers a 7-day bias cleanse that sends you daily tasks to help you change your associations.

While it seems that ending prejudice is an impossible task, it starts with changing individuals. The work we do on ourselves has long-term implications, by exposing our friends, family and coworkers to new ways of thinking and being.



## Elizabeth Hamilton

I help people tell stories through social media and internet marketing.

Follow Elizabeth on Instagram

@pookiegalore

and on Facebook

@anotherbigproduction

Check out her podcast

Weirdo on Anchor

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# POETRY SLAM

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF BARBIE RHETORIC

Sir, spare me the Barbie Theory.  
Little girls don't measure our idols  
for dimensions. The dolls are promises  
of a red corvette and dream house  
if you're blond, big-boobed, small-waisted,  
and date Ken.

Don't blah, blah about beauty being subjective  
because well-meaning men  
subjected this beauty to cat calls  
and I jogged around the gym  
until I fainted  
because Exercise Barbie never eats or tires,  
and when I try to live objectively  
within three days I am kneeling in front of the toilet:

*Forgive me, Calvin Klein,  
for I have eaten Rocky Road.*

And again around the gym I run  
caged in my mind by the men I want to please  
while I hate them wanting me  
I want them to, though.



And don't tell me the pink-boxed illusions  
are "clearly fake."

Even now, my credit cards are maxxed out  
from efforts to make my closet  
match my childhood collection  
of Barbie's evening dresses, party clothes,  
and sparking silver  
shoes.

I took out a loan  
on a red Pontiac Firebird  
that cost more than I make a year.

My body's been bruised by Kens who grew up  
watching G.I. Joe and tormenting voiceless frogs,  
and they don't know I'm not a rubber Mattel product  
when I have a hot pink smile  
over chapped, bloody lips that can't speak  
in your Oedipally complex language.

Don't tell me this is all in my head.



**Dr. Cindy Childress**

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# B.O.L.O



Podcast and Book

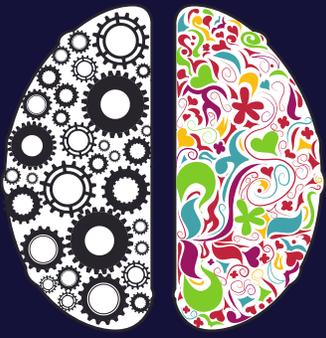
## Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls

This actually started out as a book and has evolved into posters, another book and a podcast. The book is beautifully illustrated and features loads of women in history that we've never heard of...but should have. I enjoy the podcast because you not only learn about amazing women and girls from all over the world but you also get to learn about the narrators. Subscribe to the podcast, grab the books and check out their website [rebelgirls.co](http://rebelgirls.co)

## Good Girls Revolt

Good Girls Revolt has just been added to my Amazon Prime watchlist. It's American period drama inspired by Lynn Povich's 2013 book *The Good Girls Revolt* and based on real-life events. Those real life events being the sex discrimination lawsuit filed on Newsweek in the 1970s. There is controversy surrounding the show not being picked up for a second season.





# Mind Control

Where does much of our thinking, thus our decision making, actually occur? I'm not talking just about life altering major decisions. Although those count too. I'm talking about the thousands of small, quick decisions we make every day.



Ninety-eight percent of those decisions are made in our subconscious mind. It's in the subconscious mind that we do the majority of our thinking. It is in our subconscious mind where our stereotypes...our implicit biases live. It is here where our unintentional actions birth from. We act on these biases often without even realizing it. And here's the real kicker. Many times, these biases run contradictory to what we would say we think and believe. Now there's a kick in the pants!

So if I'm making all these decisions about other people and the world around me without my even being aware of it, how in the world am I supposed to control it?! It's happening in your subconscious mind, so it

is going to be hard to spot. But like Elizabeth stated in her earlier article, it's as simple as being aware of the biases and then taking a moment to reflect honestly on our thoughts and actions. With that in mind, I thought I'd do some research on what implicit bias is and what the different kinds are. I found that there are quite a few. I've listed only a few. Some you've probably heard of.

## Implicit Bias

It's simply the assumptions and unintentional actions we make towards others based on identity labels of race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or ability. Implicit biases aren't only negative. They can be positive as well. We gain our implicit biases over the course of our lifetime. They come from our personal experiences, family, the media and pop culture.

## Affinity Bias

This is when you unconsciously prefer people who share qualities with you or someone like you. Your brain sees them as familiar and relatable. Everyone naturally wants to be around people they can relate to.

## Beauty Bias

You've heard the saying "You can never make a first impression again". We unconsciously take note of a person's outward appearance and make a judgement regarding their personality based on it. Some of us can judge others too harshly based on their physical attractiveness.

## Conformity Bias

This happens when your views are swayed too much by other people. We want to be accepted by those around us. It's natural. There is at least a part of you that wants to hold the opinions and views that your

community accepts.

## Gender Bias

This one is pretty much like it sounds. Preferring one gender over another. This one is often ingrained due to our upbringings and thus beliefs about gender roles. Want to see if you have a bias when it comes to gender and leadership? Take this Harvard quiz:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/Study?tid=-1>

## Halo Effect

Have you ever accused someone (or been accused yourself) of thinking someone in your life could do no wrong? That you just couldn't see their negative personality attributes or behaviors? Then you might have been applying the halo effect. This happens when we focus on one great feature about someone to the point we overlook other information, including negative information.

## Horns Effect

This would be the opposite. That person who you can only think of negatively to the point that your judgement of them is clouded and you exclude any positive feature they may possess.

There is a great deal more written on implicit bias and the different types. It can even be overwhelming and may even leave you questioning yourself. Remember, everyone has these implicit biases. You've experienced being on the receiving end of them. Perhaps without ever realizing it. The point of this article and this issue is there are so many people saying that they wish the world were a more compassionate place. That we need more understanding. That's true. The best place to start is with understanding ourselves.

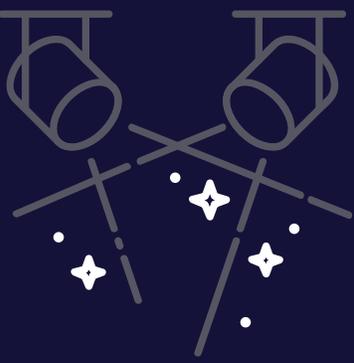
*I'm starting with the man in the mirror  
I'm asking him to change his ways  
And no message could have been any clearer  
If you want to make the world a better place  
Take a look at yourself, and then make a change  
Michael Jackson ~ Man in the Mirror*

Okay, corny I know to add those lyrics. Corny but true. There is a great article that has questions you can use to help you recognize areas of bias and understand how they might affect our relationships.  
<https://lovehasnolabels.com/resources/questions-to-self-reflect>.



**Christina Meade**

Executive Director of Nerdy Girl Success  
Nerd Girl | Coffee Lover | All things 80's fan  
Follow Christina on Facebook and Instagram  
[@nerdygirlsuccess](#)



# Spotlight



Jordan Teel - Author of *Dragon's Prophecy* & Student.

Tell our readers a little bit about yourself

Right now I attend Texas State University at the Round Rock campus, a little north of Austin. I am majoring in communication disorders. I'll eventually become a speech therapist of some kind. Maybe working with younger kids or older adults like stroke patients. There's lots of different kind of patients involved with that. I

am working at a restaurant part time to save up some money before I get out of school. I visit home when I can. I have a dog named Cooper (a Golden Doodle) and we go on lots of dog park trips.

What is your book, *Dragon's Prophecy* about?

It's about two siblings, a boy and a girl. The brother is older. They're pretty much orphans when we first meet them. They have a caretaker but she just passed away and now they're on their own. They are trying to make it. Eventually they discover this portal in their house that they fall into. All of a sudden they're in this crazy land and now they're learning all of these new things and meeting all these new people. They're discovering who they were supposed to be. It's a world of dragons with two different countries that are in a war. The siblings become torn. Do we stay and help this place and learn about who we were supposed to be, who are parents were or do we go back home because we don't really belong here.

Where did you come up with the idea for the book?

I'm not exactly sure lol! I was really young. I think I was in 7th grade. I do remember loving dragons and being amazed by them. I just kind of wrote what I wanted them to be. In movies, they're usually scary creatures and creatures of power. I knew I wanted them to be friends and like a team with people. I was really impressed by the Aragon series and how the character and his dragon were really close.

Was this a book that has been in the works for years?

It was actually finished back in 2011 but it just sat on my computer. I shared it with various family members including my dad. For my birthday, my dad surprise published it for me. He said he always believed in me and wanted it to be published so he did it and now it's out there!

Do you think you'll write more books?

I don't know. I mean, the possibilities are endless. I think I may want to rewrite it. For the same preteen audience but from an older perspective. But I've had a lot of people tell me I should write a sequel from the brother's perspective since this one is from the sister's. It's not on my To Do List right now but who knows! Maybe ask me in a couple months.

It was a while ago when you wrote it and you were younger. Can you share what was the easiest part of the writing process?

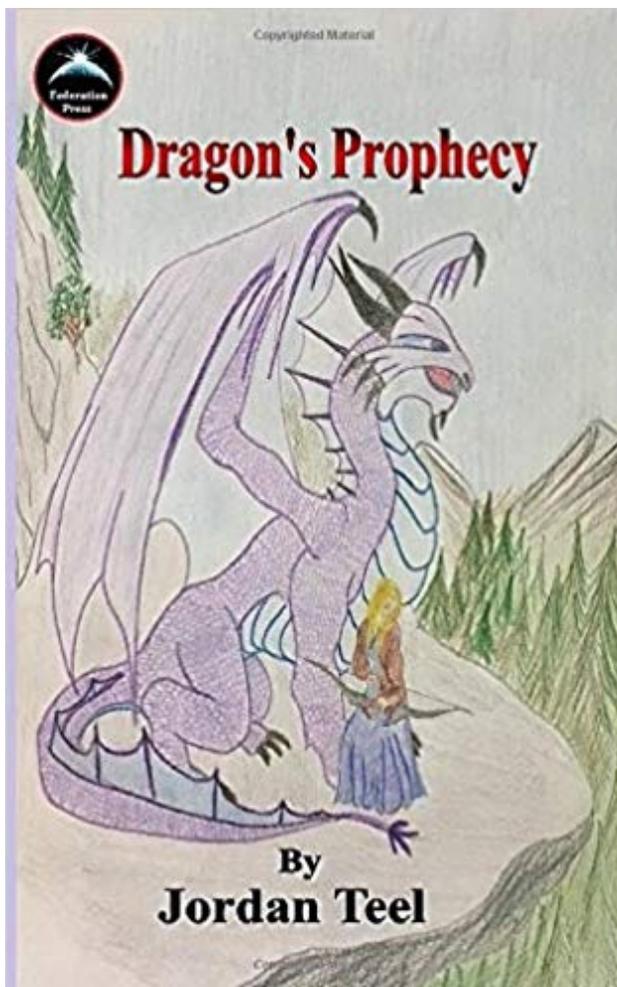
I think the easiest part was probably getting the plan in my head. From there it was just working out the details. I already knew where I wanted the story to go so I just kept writing. Then I would go back, looking it over and fixing things that didn't make sense.

## What was the most challenging part of it?

Keeping it consistent. When you're 12 and you're writing longer books than 10 pages, you tend to forget some details as you go along. The dragons couldn't do this but now all of a sudden they can so I need to make sure this stays the same throughout the story.

## Where can people purchase your book?

You can go to Amazon and search my name and the book should show up. (we have provided a short link where you can find Jordan's book <https://amzn.to/2KTrgO1> )



Available in paper back and Kindle

Miranda and her older brother, Myth, were ordinary orphans. Or so they thought. They were a part of a secret that even they didn't know. Donalia was a fantastical land of dragons and magic and Miranda was destined to be more than the younger sister of a moody older brother. She was destined to become the savior of a land she had never known due to the words in a prophecy passed down by, of all people, her mother who had died too young and left her with few memories of who or what she was. As she struggles to remain free of the grasp of the evil queen, Mirani, and the true source of her power, her dragon, Manai, Miranda must learn about the prophecy, learn the secrets of the land she is destined to fight for, as she learns to use her newest friend and ally, Sayla, a newly hatched Windzipper Dragon. Secrets, betrayal, love and heartache will face our young heroine as she learns her fate and unravels the truth contained in the Dragon's Prophecy.

## Contributors Call

Winter 2019, Issue 4: Change



**Change:** the act or instance of making or becoming different.

This time of year is when most of us are all thinking about change. We are assessing our businesses, ourselves, our lives. What goals did we achieve and which ones were missed.

We are entering a new election cycle and many of us are craving change within our communities.

Many of us embrace change while others avoid it at all costs.

In this issue, we'll examine change. Why it happens, who sets the standards and more.

**We are looking for  
your submissions!**

Professional and amateur

\* photographers \* artists \* poets \* writers \* journalists

Send your idea and questions to [christina@nerdygirlsuccess.com](mailto:christina@nerdygirlsuccess.com)