

PRAISE FOR PREPPING FOR THE REAL WORLD

This book gives personalised support to young people searching for ways of succeeding in today's hectic world. We have been waiting for such support for a very long time... now it is here! Cel has opened up avenues for success for young adults in a compelling way.

— *Professor Gloria Agyemang, Professor of Accounting,
Executive Dean of School of Business and Management
at Royal Holloway University of London*

Chapter 7 is my favourite. It inspires me every single time without fail. Seeing how Cel unravels all her experiences makes me appreciate my little achievements even more.

— *Khadija Mussa, BSc Management with Accounting
Student at Royal Holloway University of London*

Cel has captured moments which are so relatable to people all over the UK. It's a thoroughly enjoyable read.

— *Polly Dhaliwal, Head of Product at Enterprise Nation
and Founder of Girls in Movement Podcast*

Cel shares concise and encouraging advice on how to prepare yourself for success. Her book takes you through a journey of self-discovery, allowing you to be your best self and uncover your full potential. Her words are inspiring, instructive, and insightful. Great read!

— *Garri Davis, Entrepreneur and Best-Selling Author*

This book is like having an honest conversation with a trusted friend, philosopher and guide. It takes you on an eye-opening and transformative journey towards the fulfilment of your aspirations. Cel holds an honest and insightful mirror that reveals your inner strengths and areas of improvement and then takes you gently yet firmly by the hand leading you towards your desired destination whilst unveiling a better version of yourself.

— *Professor Sukanya Sen Gupta, Professor of Management at Royal Holloway University, University of London Director of MSc Human Resource Management*

Cel takes you on a journey of self-discovery and inspires you to live your truth and love your brilliance!

— *Marianne Cadet, Attorney, Public Defender*

This book provides a practical approach to achieve any goal. Definitely a must read!

— *Jackie Harden, Best-Selling Author, Life Coach and Speaker*

This is a lucid and candid book that Millennials and Gen Z's in particular will love. It encapsulates Cel's wisdom gleaned from her early career as an entrepreneur trying to find her place in the world. Using copious, relatable examples from her own life, "Prepping for the Real World" is a concise and very readable, reflective, and empowering reader that is loaded up with actionable takeaways.

— *Professor Justin O'Brien, National Teaching Fellow,
Executive Director for Postgraduate Programmes
at the University of Surrey*

Cel's talent of storytelling gives you the gentle but firm push to start designing your life and own career. There are 14 key questions that will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of your own self and thus take charge of your world.

— *Konstantina Dee, Careers & Employability Officer at
WMG, University of Warwick*

Cel has touched the core of what so many of us experience as we attempt to live the life expected of us. Thank you so much for this reminder of how strong we are at our core. Thank you for reminding us that the innermost and truest version of ourselves is what is required to live out our highest potential. This book is the formula to create your dream life. Can we make this book a required reading for our youth? I surely wish I had this book on my journey to self-discovery.

— *Michelle Johnson, MHS, PA-C, The Pain Free PA,
Certified Life Coach & Stress Specialist*

With this book, Cel is making her formula for successfully designing your own world more widely available than to the countless organisations and individuals that she has worked with. It is an easy read that nevertheless asks challenging questions to find out where the gaps are between where I am now and where I want to be. Peppered with her own personal experience, this book is a great starting point for anyone who wants to take the next step but isn't sure how to go about being more true to yourself, whether you want to become an entrepreneur, a leader in your field or step up in your organisation.

— *Dr. Sigrun Wagner, Head of Department
and Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Management,
Royal Holloway, University of London*

It is often said that when you're looking to contribute to the world, you should contribute something that you would have found useful before you knew what you now know. This is exactly what Cel has done. She has used her personal experience to create a masterpiece which will help, not just students and young people but anyone who wants to better take control of the circumstances of their life and create a future they desire. Cel openly describes her personal experience, displaying her strength, authenticity and vulnerability as she shares her Formula. A formula that I wish I'd been aware of when I was going through my journey of designing my own world. This Formula is a game changer! It is the secret to a life of being fully, totally and awesomely YOU.

— *Ene Obi, Founder of Ziano Mind Spa
and Best-Selling Author of Your Life is Calling*

Cel's transparency in the book is a breath of fresh air. This book will give the readers a proved Formula that will bring results in their lives. It will ignite you and place you on the path of moving forward in your life. This is a must read!

— *Esther V. Graham, Founder and CEO
of Festa Della Donna LLC, Neuro-Transformational Coach*

This book is a true treasure and great guide to help young adults prepare for shifting into adulthood. By following Cel's journey you learn how to get clear on your purpose. Cel's formula works and will guide you and many others to feel more confident in yourself as you create your own business or gain employment for a corporation.

— **Joy LaBelle Clark**, *International Mindfulness
Personal Development Coach (IMTA), Fortune 500
Senior Corporate Leader with over 20 years of experience.*

PREPPING FOR THE REAL WORLD

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STUDENT AND GRADUATE SUCCESS SECRETS

Cel Amade

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INTRODUCTION

I've always wondered how some people could be so gifted and talented at such a young age. As a child, I watched young athletes, actors, singers, performers and dancers in awe — silently thinking how lucky they were to be great at something at such a young age. For years, I didn't know what I was great at, and I didn't know what my gift was. To be quite frank, I didn't even think I had a talent. I thought talents were God-given gifts for the selected few — that some people are born talented, and others are born normal.

Since I believed I had no unique talents, I convinced myself that I had to learn new skills and be good at everything. In school, I lived by the ethic to study hard, get top grades and be the best in all subjects. Because I had no talents to share with the world, being the best student was at the top of my agenda! That strategy worked well

for a few years... During my school years, parents looked up to me like the perfect child they never had — wishing deep down inside that their child was as dedicated to learning and studying as I was.

But those parents didn't see that all my efforts to study hard and be good at everything was a loud cry to feel 'gifted'. My dedication to my studies was an attempt to look talented! But unless I was planning to stay in school and study for the rest of my life, without ever stepping into the real world, this strategy couldn't last forever. And sure enough, it didn't last!

I graduated second in a class of three hundred students in a leading UK university, only to realise that I had no clue what I was truly great at. I studied all kinds of books and theories about business management, and I gathered the knowledge, but a piece of the puzzle seemed to be missing when it came to applying that knowledge in the real world. All jobs are respectable if they honour who you truly are. The trouble is, finding that job that honours who you truly are becomes an even more complicated task when you don't know who you truly are in the first place.

Do you know how frustrating it is to look at yourself in the mirror and not recognise your own reflection — to look at your life and know for a fact

that this is not how you imagined your twenty-five-year-old self when you were younger — and not know how to shift your life for the better? Have you ever found a job and pretended to enjoy it so that you could feel less like a burden to your friends and family and finally look like a success?

I've done many things to look successful, and I've drained myself and my finances chasing success. I was fixated on the idea of having to learn more, do more and try new things in order to be successful. Each time I tried to be successful, I fell flat on my face! And worst of all, I just couldn't understand why I was not being rewarded for trying. I couldn't understand why life was refusing to reward my new ideas and my learning abilities — because, in school, I was rewarded.

Search and you will find — they say... I searched for success for a long time, and I didn't find it. I searched for new ideas. I tried to improve existing ideas. I searched everywhere! Everywhere, except deep inside my heart and my soul.

This book is the guidance I needed when I was growing up, and it brings me so much joy to share it with you, wherever you are in your life right now... Whether you're just starting university, graduating next year, looking for your first 'real' job, switching

careers or trying to find your way — I've written this book with you in mind. If I sound repetitive at times, that's my way of saying pay close attention to this message. Within this book is a formula to help you design your own world. This book is the dose of personal development I wished I had access to ten years ago, and it is my honour that this book has made its way to you.

I celebrate you. I appreciate you. And I encourage you to apply the principles in this book. Thank you for taking a step forward to design your own world! I'm excited for you.

CHAPTER 1

THE JOURNEY BACK TO YOURSELF

If you don't know who you are, how can you design your own world?

- ▶ When did you first feel like it wasn't okay to be you?

I was eleven years old, and I remember the moment when I felt like it was not okay to be me. You see, I was that skinny kid who didn't wear the latest fashion, travel on every holiday or watch cable TV — yet I was attending a private school with all these well-dressed, multilingual, cool kids. I was the odd, smart little girl who loved to study because my books made me feel understood. When I read my books, I felt powerful and happy. My books never asked me difficult questions — like

where my family was planning to go on holiday next term or what I thought about the latest Nickelodeon series. My books knew I could learn something from them, so they were patient enough to teach me what knowledge they contained. My books were happy to summarise all I had just read at the end of every chapter.

On the other hand, my schoolmates assumed I had cable TV at home and that I watched Nickelodeon. When I told them I didn't watch the latest Nickelodeon or Disney series, they had no patience or interest in telling me all about it. Unlike my books, my schoolmates kept the exciting conversations going (without me).

Perhaps that explains why my books felt like better company. As a child, I preferred reading instead of watching cartoons. And every time I earned good grades, I got excited! I got this thrill that filled my heart with joy, and I secretly loved it when teachers read the highest grades aloud. My schoolmates noticed the joy I felt when I earned high grades, and they didn't quite like it. They didn't think that was normal, and because of that, they looked at me differently.

I wasn't the type of girl who boys wanted to hang out with (let alone date), so they avoided me.

The trouble was, the more boys avoided me, the harder I worked to be liked by everyone around me. In order to be friends with the cool girls and accepted by the sporty guys, I concluded that it was not okay to be me.

I tried to gain some weight so I wouldn't be known as the 'skinniest girl in class'. I wanted to look normal in my school uniform dress instead of wearing my school dress paired with trousers to cover my super skinny legs. I tried to gain weight so I could ditch the long sleeves I wore under my school shirt to hide my tiny arms. I changed my hairstyle to look cooler, and I also upgraded my wardrobe and started watching the TV channels other kids liked to watch in an attempt to fit in.

When I was eleven, I didn't feel like it was okay to be me — to show that nerdy part of me. When I was eleven, I was afraid of missing out, of not being invited to the birthday parties and not being a part of the dance performances. I was also afraid of having no one to share a meal with or hang out with after school if I continued to be that nerdy kid.

During the day, I tried to look cooler; but as soon as I arrived home, I removed that entire facade and went running back to my books. At home, I continued to secretly love my schoolbooks.

Sometimes I stayed after school to hang out with the cool kids the day before a test to prove to them that I was as cool as they were — and that I didn't care much about books. But those 'cool' afternoons often cost me some sleep... I would have to stay up that night studying for all I didn't read during the afternoon because, secretly, I still wanted the thrill of getting high grades.

The studious person in me was alive and well — well-hidden, that is... I was living a double life, and it was exhausting. Eventually, I mastered reflecting the values and behaviours of the cool kids in my day-to-day life so that I could be accepted. Disconnecting and reconnecting to my true identity was exhausting, but that was all I knew for a moment.

At one point, being liked became more important than being me. But I can tell you from experience that nobody can sustain a double life forever. Everyone seemed to admire me, *except me* (and that's not a very pleasant position to be in). At one point, the weight of disconnecting from my true identity became heavier and harder to bear than my desire to be liked by others.

By then, I had forgotten who I was. So, I had to peel off the layers that covered who I truly was.

As I began to peel off some layers, I felt some relief. As the layers started to show, not everyone was happy, but I continued to search for myself. Underneath those layers, I was searching for the me that was truly me — not the me that was perfect for others.

The truest version of ourselves lives somewhere within us. Some of our past choices may have caused us to put different types of wallpaper on ourselves to please those around us. As the years go by, we end up putting so many different layers of wallpaper on ourselves in order to keep up with everyone's latest expectations of us — only to find out that we have forgotten what our bare wall looks like. When you decide to take the journey back to yourself, you'll discover there isn't just one layer to peel off. There are many layers. And not everyone will like the raw and unpolished you. Yet, it is vital for you to see that raw and unpolished version of yourself.

To make sense of your world, you need to first meet the rawest and purest version of yourself — to see its beauty as well as its power — and be okay with it. I saw that version of myself on 2 November 2019; I accepted and embodied the rawest and purest version of myself without worrying about

what others around me thought of it. After a series of exercises facilitated by one of my coaches, I stood on a chair in a country I had never been to. During an event I was attending for the first time, I used my voice to say something that was buried deep inside my heart. And from the depths of my heart and soul, I made this bold declaration:

'I'm ready to live in my brilliance'.

I stood in my power for the first time in a long time, unrecognisable to many but feeling totally like myself. I was comfortable in my own skin — for the first time in a long time.

You see, for years, I was afraid to express who I was. I was fearful of expressing who and what I longed to become. I was scared of being judged, and I was afraid of being excluded. With time, I've come to realise that our natural talents and gifts are best expressed when we live in our truths. When we allow our true selves to shine through, we begin moving towards living our truths. Lean into the possibility of travelling the journey back to yourself and watch the transformation that comes with your decision. Success loves to partner with the uniqueness that's inside of you, not what you think you should be to please others.

Opportunity to write

Below are some questions to help you take the first step towards the journey back to yourself. Grab a pen and paper and find a quiet spot. Ask your heart the following questions, and then journal your heart's answers.

- ▶ *What were you so afraid of that caused you to run away from yourself?*
- ▶ *Why were you so afraid to be yourself and live your truth?*
- ▶ *What did that fear lead to?*
- ▶ *Why are you still afraid today?*
- ▶ *What is it costing you to not be yourself?*
- ▶ *How do you wish to see yourself?*
- ▶ *How do you want others to see you?*
- ▶ *How can you reconnect with your true identity?*

Scan the QR code below
if you need to hear some words of encouragement:

