can you hear me now?

a journal

created by central's women's leadership initiative collaboration

my name:

_____

dates:

_____

You are invited in the pages of this journal to write down thoughts, ideas, and feelings about who you are. You can share it with friends or family or just keep it for yourself.

can you hear me now?

I have a story. It is being written every day. In the choices I make and the choices I have no control over. In the ways I express myself and the ways I'm asked to conform. In the work that I choose to create and the work I am obligated to perform. In the friends I choose and the family chosen for me. In the way I view the world and the way the world views me.

...through tears, laughter, boredom, dreams, hard work, occasional luck, support and resilience, I am writing my story and it is a masterpiece. Do you see me? Do you know me? Listen up. This is me. Who I am, my heritage, my beliefs, my ideas, my vision—they matter. So I need you to ask, to care, to show up, to know, to listen. I am telling you my story.

can you hear me now?

"As long as we are not ourselves, we will try to be what other people are." - Malidoma Patrice Somé (Of Water and the Spirit)

Section One: Hear Who I Am

- *What do I love most about my life? What is hard or challenging?*

- *What brings me joy?*

- *What do my friends say are my best qualities?*

- *What do I wish people knew about me?*

"When you know your name, you should hang on to it, for unless it is noted down and remembered, it will die when you do." -Toni Morrison (Song of Solomon)

Section Two: Hear My Heritage

- Is *there a meaning or story related to my name?* How *do* I *feel about my name?*

- *Who are my heroes? Why?*

"Oh God, help our children to feel love and appreciation for all Your gifts of life. Grant each of them a passion for peace and for justice. Kindness for those who are weak and needy and sad and afraid. Courage to stand up for right and to struggle against wrong. Friendship and Kinship with all who share the world You have created." –Marian Wright Edelman

Section Three: Hear My Beliefs

- *What or who do I trust and believe in?*

- *What are three values I wish everyone possessed?*

- *What am I unsure of?*

- *What gives me hope?*

Section Four: Hear My Ideas

- If I had the super power to change one thing to make the world a better place, what would I change?

- What am I passionate about?

- *What have we not invented yet that humans still need?*

- *What can people do to get along better? Or What part can I play in ending racism? Poverty? Injustices?*

- *You've lived through a pandemic. That's a pretty big deal. Imagine another student your age will face the same thing in fifty years. What do you want to tell them about your experience? What do they need to know?*

When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it. - Amanda Gorman

Section Five: Hear My Vision

- *When I was a kid, I wanted to be what when I grew up? How has that changed?*

- *What does success look like to me?*

- *What will I contribute to the world to make it better?*

- *What do I hope my legacy will be?*

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