# UCL Remarkable Stories Season 2

# Episode 1 - Shakaila’s fashion journey and social change

# Transcript

**Gia Lulic**

We are UCL and these are our Remarkable Stories. I'm Gia Lulic and I work in the UCL Organisational Development team. In each episode, I will be in conversations with the UCL guests as they share with us their remarkable stories, experiences and life lessons. Today, I'm excited to speak to UCL alumni Shakaila Forbes-Bell who is pioneering an important new stream of psychology in the field of fashion and its social impact. Hi Shakaila, and thank you so much for taking the time to speak to us.

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

Hi, thanks for having me.

**Gia Lulic**

This is such an exciting interview for me, because I love fashion. And I love psychology as well. And the fact that you're pioneering this industry, and it's something that's very new, is really exciting to see how it all came about. So, my first question is, tell us about your journey from where it all started. And, you know, speak to us about the milestones that got you to where you are now.

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

Yeah, so I studied psychology at UCL. Of course, I really loved it, psychology was always something I was super passionate about from A Level. But at the same time, I was always very creative, very into fashion and style. So it was a really weird toss-up between trying to get into Central Saint Martin's and then going to UCL to pursue psychology. But I think at the end, I thought, you know, psychology is a bit more of something I know more of, and I think I'm pretty good at, so let me go for that. But then, when I was doing in the course, I found that there was a big push towards clinical psychology. And I had always thought, Okay, fair enough, I'll try to be, you know, the black female Frasier that was something I thought about from a young age and, you know, go down maybe psychotherapy, or like CBT, or different types of therapy, or different types of clinical. And then the more I got into it, the more I realised that it's not really me, like I kept being pulled towards social psychology, and different research about impression formation. And that was really where my interest laid. And then when it got to the final year, where we can do our own thesis, there were different projects that we could jump on. And something in me just said, do my own project. So I was really passionate about social injustice. At the time, that's when I really started to open my eyes to what was going on in the world. And it was this at the same time as the Trayvon Martin murder. And I remember there was some really horrific reporting in the press talking about his hoodie, and how that can end when they're wearing specific clothing types, how it makes them look fearful in the eyes of some people. And it really shocked me that in this day and age, we're still seeing those reactions. And I really wanted to research further the intersection between race, clothing and impression formation in light of the current socio-political environment. So I went ahead and I found a supervisor who was willing to take on this very random project, Adrian Furnham, who was really supportive of what I was trying to do. And yeah, and I was doing that research and did really well in it. And it's something I wanted to research further, I wanted to find out different ways to incorporate my level of psychology with research into the kind of fashion and styling industry. So I did some research and I tried to find out like, is this a thing does anybody else know about this like, Is this just something that's found within like random, old psychological journals that I have to kind of find the nuance to connect it with fashion. But luckily, I found a woman by the name of Kate Nightingale. She's a style psychologist based in London. And I interned with her for about two years just learning more about how she applies her fashion psychology knowledge into the working world and how she works with brands with visual merchandising, and she had her own clients. And it was just something I found so fascinating. So I decided to start my blog, because I thought, you know, all of this information, it shouldn't be kept within the bounds of academia, like I kind of only have access to all of this knowledge because I'm a student at UCL, like there's so many people who are not aware of the of the impact of their clothes and how they interact with people or the impact of clothes and how they act within themselves or when they go shopping, and how all of these different psychological tricks are being used to impact their consumer behaviour. So I started the blog and I thought, you know what, I really want to take my research further. And then luckily, I found the Master's Course at London College of Fashion and my mom was like, “that is you, just go for it.” Although it was super obscure, and it was the first time the course was ever been run. So we were literally the guinea pigs at the time. I just went at it like full throttle. And I researched multicultural marketing within fashion. So for my thesis, I looked at how black consumers respond to black models and how that actually impacts their willingness to buy a product to buy into a brand and how much they're willing to spend on the product. Because at the time, there was a whole scandal about one of the Vogue editors who came out and said that, you know, black models, they don't sell on the cover of magazine. So I wanted to prove empirically that that wasn't the case. And you know, black brands shouldn't feel that they have to shy away from their culture and their background in order to sell you know, and I'm so happy that since I published that, and even maybe a bit before, like, we really seen change within the industry, and it's coming a lot more inclusive. And said, that was something I was super passionate about. But of course, fashion psychology is such an expansive area and research. So I just really continued with the blog, and it kind of spiralled into people really finding out about it. And then me working with brands like Next and Sainsbury's and afterpay, having clients and giving insights. And yeah, so it's kind of been a bit of a whirlwind. But it really did start from school. Like I always say that my education really helped me get to where I am today. And I wouldn't really be anything without kind of doing the research and doing the studies and kind of piecing it all together.

 **Gia Lulic**

I think it's incredible that you manage to marry like two of your passions, which are psychology and fashion, also with a really important purpose and with a really important cause. I wondered, I went on your blog, just before we did this interview, and I, I saw in the intro that there was a picture that went viral after graduation. Yeah. Well, I wondered what was the picture? And why did you think it had such a massive impact?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

This is such a funny story. So I remember when I graduated, I was just so excited. Something about graduating your Masters, I don't know, it's just it seemed like such a long road when we started the course. So to graduate, it was just a huge deal for me and to be the first cohort to graduate. I think we were all feeling super buzzed and super pumped. And then to be able to graduate with my study that did find empirically that you know, black models, like they do sell. And I just thought it was such an important cause. I said, “Mum, I'm going to throw my fist in the air,” like, you know, obviously, that's such a pivotal pose, within like the Black Panther movement, and within the current week of the Black Lives Matter movement. So yeah, I said, “Mum, I want you to get a good picture of me this and make sure it's good.” And yeah, she got the group picture. And yeah, I was just so proud of myself. And I think I accompanied my post talking about my studies and talking about an incident which actually happened a week prior was when I went to Boots. And I was asking one of the makeup counter girls like, “Oh, do you have the shade?” And she said, “No, we don't. I'm sorry, we only carry this amount of shades. We don't carry darker shades in this store.” And I thought in this day and age, this is still like happening. And I just kind of tied it all together with like all my research I'm doing about the marginalisation of black women, not only obviously within the fashion and beauty industry, but just beyond that. So yeah, I just felt like, you know, I'm gonna do this, not just for me, but for my community and my culture. And people really resonated and responded to it. And yeah, it went absolutely everywhere. Yeah, I couldn't believe we had like, over like 15,000 likes and retweets. And I got a lot of lots of comments from it. Not all nice comments, which was a bit overwhelming. A few people were like, “Oh, that's just like I do, that's not a real thing. She's not going to get a job, she's not going to get anything,” and that was super disheartening. But obviously the good weed out the bad. So it really spurred me on to realise, you know, there is a market for this. And maybe I'm going to have to create that market or create that lane for myself. And that will be challenging, but I'm, I'm happy to take that challenge head on.

**Gia Lulic**

That's amazing. And what were some of the comments that were not so positive that people left on that?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

I think people were really judging the legitimacy of my degree. I obviously it's something very new, and it's super niche, so they didn't really know what it was and what avenue or what money I could make from it, which is something that I had to battle when I was studying, I remembered when I went to London College of Fashion, and there was a job fair, and everybody on the course was super excited because we were like, “yeah, we actually don't know what we're gonna do with this degree. So let's speak to people and find out,” and I was speaking to some brands, some luxury brands came there and telling them about my degree. And they were like, “yeah, so what, what can you do? What's your value?” And I just remember being like, “Oh my god, like, what is within you? Like, what are people thinking?” And then the more I did my research, then what I realised how much fashion psychology applies to almost every area of the fashion industry. And I think it was actually good for me to have that challenge because it made me realise, okay, I need to find practical ways to apply this research, right. If I don't want to be stuck within academia, I need to find ways of communicating how much value is to the industry. So then I looked at how, if I want to apply this to virtual merchandising, I can look at different studies that talk about how people respond to different environments, lighting, displays, etc. Or if I want to go on to like the personal styling side, I can look into how people specifically relate to different styles, how they engage with fashion, how that has an impact on them, how it impacts different cultures, etc. If I want to go into marketing, like, which is kind of what I did, I looked into more consumer behaviour, and like multicultural marketing, which is kind of what I specialise in. And looking at buying patterns and you know, different things like that. Or if I wanted to go into consumer relationship management or more on like the techie side, I can look at, you know, different ways that people interact with like media and how that has an impact on their like decision making, and just analysing a lot of data and looking at trends. And you know, what, there's so many different ways that we can apply psychology with into the fashion and beauty industry. So I think that point in my life really helped me to narrow down what I wanted to do. And yeah, it made me realise the different ways that I can apply it, which is what I have been doing now.

**Gia Lulic**

It's so interesting, I feel that whenever anyone comes out with a new idea, or like a new pathway, there's always like some level of resistance, or, you know, people questioning it. So I think, you know, the fact that you got past that is, you know, really incredible, and it shows a lot of confidence and belief in what you're doing and striving for. So when this whole journey started, did you have a vision of where you wanted to go? Or did things just kind of unfold as you went along?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

Yep. So as much as I was trying to think about the different avenues, I could take it down when the journey started, which kind of started after my picture went viral, I really didn't know what on earth I was going to do with it, I knew that marketing was the safest bet for me. So I did do a lot of marketing internships and pharmac marketing jobs. And that's kind of the avenue I went down. But then, at the same time, I was still creating the blog, still putting up posts and getting really good perception from it. And I kind of, yeah, at some point, I didn't know what to do with all of the reception, I was getting the questions I was being asked, and then I got a lot of interest from press and to do interviews. And then I thought, okay, actually, there is something else I can do with this. And then I got approached by Next and it was my first time with like a big brand. And I did this whole like piece for them about the psychology of work where and how certain clothing styles can really help women feel a lot of confidence and how they can use that to help them battle imposter syndrome in the workplace. And I thought, you know, there's so many different opportunities that I can do and work with different brands as clients to really help them understand the insights that are available, and see like how their consumers are responding to different things and how I can marry my insights and my research to help them you know, push their different campaigns, or help them resonate with clients and their customers on a deeper level. So I think that basically from me pushing out content from of like, of the whole area of fashion psychology as a whole, really made people realise that there was something more to explore here. And then as opportunities came, I kind of just said yes to everything. And then I started to find out what I liked and what I didn't like. And I really just started to do more of what I liked. And it's been weird, like I've been in a very privileged position, which I haven't really pitched to anyone, so to speak, like a lot of brands have found me through my work that I've just been pushing out relentlessly, which I know doesn't work for everyone. But I've been quite lucky in that respect that I've kind of just been hammering home all of the research and just pushing my blog as much as possible. So I'm hoping that, yeah, with all of these new clients who’ve come on board, I could find even more like areas to explore and take it really further. But to say that I had a clear vision of where this will end up and the position I am now, like, absolutely not.

**Gia Lulic**

So, just to go back to the part about the picture coming out and going viral, when went about was that?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

So that was soon after graduation, because this is my graduation picture, I want to say, oh my god, this is long ago, I feel like it was 2016 or 17.

**Gia Lulic**

The reason I'm asking that is because, you know, with the Black Lives Matter movement, it just shows how far you know how long this has been building up? Yes, it was even several years. You know, before this sort actually came out, it just shows that people were feeling this way for a really long time. And you kind of were one of the people that kind of put it out there and you had such a big response. And I wanted have things changed a lot in those three or four years. Do you feel, you know, when you walk into a chemist? Are you still finding that there isn't a shade that you know, is matching to your skin? Or do you feel like things have progressed a little bit in the last three or four years in that in that way?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

Yeah, I think things have progressed definitely a lot. I think with this second wave of the Black Lives Matter movement, I think people are not just thinking about, you know, the basic human rights of black people, I think people are thinking more about the nuances of how they interact with black people and the quality of life that black people need to deserve. So not just on like, a very, like, macro level, but more like yeah, like just the basis of like finding us a certain shade or having certain products for black skin and black hair available in these mainstream stores. Or, you know, like making sure that the way we are treated within workplace is are like the same, and we're not having to deal with microaggressions. And those kinds of conversations are coming more towards the forefront. So I think that's like super important, I think it's not just about black life, just, you know, on like a very literal basis, like actually not like, you know, murdering us in the street. But actually making sure that our quality of lives is fair and equal. And I think Yeah, we're moving towards not just talking about equality, but talking about equity. And I think that's super important. I think there's so many amazing people doing work on the ground level. And I hope that through like my research my blog, I'm shining a light on that. And just talking about how, yeah, fashion is just one area. But, you know, creativity is such a big part of our culture. And it's something that I think black people should be celebrated and a lot more of, and you know, there's some amazing like black designers, black makeup artists, black founders. And yeah, I think that the conversation has really changed towards shining a light on these people or shining light on just every aspect of black people's lives and making sure that you know, everything is fair, and on an even keel.

**Gia Lulic**

And during all those years that you've done the research in this particular field, with that in focus or anything else really to do with fashion psychology. Was there any fact or story or, you know, statistic that you were really shocked by? Is there anything that you learned along the way that you thought that I would have never expected that?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

I'm not sure about- well, there are a few statistics, I guess in my paper, but this is like from a few years back, just talking about the inequality of black people like on screen and in mainstream advertisements. I think we're still having a case where you see a black person in an advert on screen and it stops you in your tracks and like oh, well that's great. And I think we do want to get to a point where we're just thinking of it as normal. I think now with these Christmas adverts with like Sainsbury's and Tesco is I know people have had such a huge backlash towards that. And that just goes to show that we're still in a time where there's still a lot of work to be done. There's still a lot of prejudice going around. But I think if you would do that research today, I think you'll see that there's definitely been an uptake in representation in mainstream media. I think one thing that I really started to wake up to when I was studying was thinking about who is actually taking part in these tests in this research and who is completing the research. So for example, I was looking at the intersection between fashion psychology and race for a piece for the blog. And this is just after George Floyd. And, you know, some people said that talking about the police, like, “Oh, it's not just, it's not a race thing. It's just about police and how they have this level of authority and power.” And you know, power corrupts. And the people kept referencing the famous Zimbardo Prison Experiment, where they had basically a set of participants, and they assign them roles and gave them uniforms, and half of them were guards and half of them were prisoners. And it the results of the study basically found that the guards really mistreated the prisoners, and they abused their authority. And the, the conclusion was just that, you know, if you place anybody in a position of power without any oversight, they are going to act unlawfully. And but when you actually think about it, when you look at the participants, these are all white males, right? And when you look at this, the researchers, they're white males. So I think to look at that kind of study through that very specific lens, it ignores the nuance of the black experience, and how that people in general, they have to go through life with a very different experience. There's a study by DB Dwyer and he talks about the veil of I think it's the veil of racism. And he talks about how that people have to look at life through a very different lens to white people, and ethnic minorities in general. And when placed in that position, you can't really say that ultimate power would corrupt because we're already placed that a very disadvantaged position from the get-go because of systemic inequalities. So it really made me look, take a closer look at all of the research that has been conducted in that area and in psychology in general, and really making sure that I look at it with a critical lens. And understanding that, you know, certain some of these experiences aren't universal, they're very much through like, a white Western viewpoint. And I found that a lot when I get asked about things like colour psychology, I'm like, you know, people would publishing things like, “Oh, this colour means that” and I think, oh god, you're completely ignoring the cultural understanding of these certain colours, like, yes, it might mean this in your Western world. But, you know, in different countries in different continents, it means something completely different. And that is something that, you know, people need to take into consideration. So yeah, that's something I really had to come to terms with, throughout my research, and something I'm making a conscious effort to come to grips with, as well. And I think academia in general needs to be more aware of that, when they're conducting research.

**Gia Lulic**

Absolutely. Shakaila that is so mind blowing for me, because I actually know that experiment, and I never, that never even occurred to me. But not only does that, you know, what you just said, not only does that ignore race, it also ignores cultural factors that other races bring along which, you know, the experiment could have been had an entirely different outcome, had you, you know, include a different cultures within that in different ways of life. So that is so incredibly significant. When people say things like, “I don't know what this is really about. I don't know how it's systematic,” that shows that it goes right to the actual, you know, right to the very core of how we base our rules, and, you know, the structure in which we make our society, it's based on a white person's perspective, and, you know, the ways of the West entirely in that way. So I think that's incredibly important. And that, you know, I would have never looked at it that way, if you hadn't pointed it out. So just to elaborate a little bit more on that, I wondered, I know that you did a dissertation after your masters and that rose questions and had an impact. And I wondered what that impact was and how it shaped your focus for what you wanted to do in the future.

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

Yes, so that I told, like I mentioned earlier that was exploring what you got your marketing and looking at how consumers respond to models of different ethnicities. And yeah, so that really, I guess, it opened my eyes to the fact that marketing was something I was really passionate about. And I wanted to make sure that I was putting myself in a position where I can actively make sure that there are there is more representation and more inclusion in media. I think that that is so important for like this self concept for younger generations looking up, you know, see someone that looks like you being held as a pillar of beauty. I think that does so much for how you think about yourself, and making sure that you're not confining your idea of beauty to something which doesn't look like you, which can in turn, obviously have damaging effects. So, yeah, that is something I guess, which shaped my career path. And, you know, I've been in a position where, sadly, almost every job I've been in, I've been the only black person and I have faced discrimination. I mean, one time, I remember, I was in a meeting with one of my CEOs, and she just stopped the meeting, midway through just to touch my hair, because she's never experienced, like someone's hair texture before. And it was just super disheartening. And it just made me feel like wow, like people are experiencing behind the scenes, and what I only have a limited position, and I'm already being put in this like, difficult position as well. So what can I do to kind of make things better. So I made sure every time there was a campaign or there was like some sort of imagery or any piece of research, like I would really push for there to be a black or ethnic minority person, like at the front of it. And my current job now I'm like a marketing manager at an influencer, marketing software company. And I pushed for there to be filters that can help brands easily locate black and ethnic minority, and LGBTQ and disabled influencers. So you know, I think a lot of the times brands were like, “Oh, we can't find these people.” So I wanted to make sure that you know, with one click of a button, you can, you can find these people. So I'm pushing for that. I just tried to find different ways that I can, like, push, make things easier for people coming up. And, you know, really making sure that there is like diversity and representation in the things that we're seeing, because I think it does have, it does have a massive impact, whether people are aware of it or not.

**Gia Lulic**

Absolutely. I just love how, you know, confidently you're, you know, pushing for what you believe in and, you know, pushing for all these super important changes that are, you know, going to impact so many people. And not just in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement, but all these other minorities and kind of marginalised people as well. I think you're so incredibly well spoken and confident to kind of go for all of this, because I really don't know if I would have, you know, I would have the confidence… Do you feel like there's somebody along your journey that helped you to keep pushing and keep, you know, keep going despite people questioning it and despite all the resistance that you've you know, faced?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

Yeah, I think, obviously, beyond my family and friends who have always been like, incredibly supportive, like my mom and dad, like, they have always like really, really, really pushed me my late sister as well was one of my biggest champions when I was doubting this random degree that I was doing, like, you know, she always supported me throughout the throughout my journey. But yeah, aside from family and friends, I would say agent, foreigner, my supervisor at UCL, when I was saw the master's degree, I was super scared to even apply, like, everybody was applying for clinical and I was like, Oh, I'm going to go to London College of Fashion, like, after UCL how random and I asked him about and he was like, just go for it. Like, he was like, “just go for it, ir sounds okay, like, what do you have to lose?” That really, like, really gave me that push that I needed. So I was really grateful for him of course, Kate Nightingale for taking the time as an intern. And just like, like taking me around to really shadow her and learn how you the different ways that you can apply this, this field to the actual working world. So I really appreciate her for that. And then Aurore Bardey who was a lecturer, the course leader of the fashion psychology course at London College of Fashion. She's since left but I've she helped me actually get my thesis published and she has been a very strong supporter of mine like we've worked on loads of different things together and I actually consider her a mentor. And I always like run things through her and her and Kate they do like if they can't, if they're given opportunities and they maybe they can't fulfil that they'll put people in touch with me and then I them. I think when people are looking for like mentors, I think it's important not to just have someone as a sounding board but as someone who people who can really put you in front of opportunities and open doors for you as well. I think that's a huge part is not just mentorship is sponsorship, which is somewhat similar quota. And I think that's really important. And I'm very, very lucky to have those women to be part of my journey.

**Gia Lulic**

So I know that you hold fashion psychology workshops, I'm not sure if you were doing that, or are planning to do that? But tell us a little bit about that and what that's about.

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

So I haven't held fashion psychology workshops so to speak, I have done a few webinars about like, what it means and how I can get into and what you need to know about it. So we have one up on YouTube it’s called the live Q&A. I think I have just been giving people the nitty gritty about how I got into it, and my top tips for anyone like wanting to get into it. So that's up on YouTube, but I am hoping to start some proper workshops and hosting them on our blog as well, I get so many DMs from students, and I try my best to get all of them, but I can't possibly and I just I'm grateful that people are really interested in getting into the field. And I guess people just really want to know the practical applications of all of this research. So I'm hoping I can provide that. And then next year, so I guess, stay tuned. But for now, the blog has so much content on it. Like honestly, like there's every aspect of fashion psychology you could think about I'm sure we've written about it on the blog. So they are the resources there for people to use, we always make sure we target like the papers and studies where they came from. So if people want to read more, they can read the papers. And yeah, so I am hoping that next year, we'll have more, more workshops and classes and just a lot more available.

**Gia Lulic**

Amazing. And what would you say you're most proud of to date?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

Oh, my gosh, what am I proud of today? Do you know what having my paper published and being a published fashion psychologist was always like a super big goal of mine. And getting it published anybody is in academia knows that that can be such a long process, I think it took me maybe two years to get it published to get it past all of the different editors and having to make adjustments. So that was super hard. And again, I had to thank Aurore Bardey for really pushing me and when I wanted to give up when I got some nice comments from some of the editors. But in the end, we ended up getting it published in the International Journal of Market Research. And yeah, I'm just very proud of that, especially on the subject matter, which was super, super close to my heart. So I think I will always cherish that.

**Gia Lulic**

And I wondered in light of that, what's your vision for the future? And what's the impact that you want to have, if you could have any level of impact that you can think of?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

I think just genuinely getting people to understand the impact of clothing and beauty and what it has from them. I think some people think of fashion and beauty industry as like super vapid, and you know, a polluter of the wild way, I think if people realise that the impact that clothing and beauty can have on you and how you can use it as a tool to express your identity or to express your culture or to make you feel good generally, or to help you even, you know, connect to people that have gone by like, for example, my sister passed a few years ago and sometimes even being with her possessions or wearing her clothing like that something that can help me stay grounded and connected. And you know, clothing can be very impactful if you're aware of its powers and if you utilise them. And then if you do that you'll have a stronger relationship with the with your clothes, and you'll be more thoughtful about the things that you buy. And you'll be think twice about throwing things away and contributing to waste and contribution to your carbon footprint. So you know, it has a very big and lasting impact. And I hope people I hope through my work and through my research, I can get people to understand that and for fashion brands to understand that too, if they want to help their consumers understand and enable them to develop a closer connections with the work that purchases.

**Gia Lulic**

And just to touch on the sustainability piece as well. Because I know you're quite passionate about that. Is there anything that you've you know, is there anything that you're doing in the field at the moment or anything that you see happening because that's also like a very big interest of mine with fast fashion kind of taking over? Are you seeing you know, from your perspective, being like an expert in this field, do you see a shift with where that's going?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

So I think when I was starting my work into fashion psychology, sustainability was like nothing on my radar at all, but I really learned a lot about it at London College of Fashion and then the way people who are like knee deep within this like sustainability movement, were really resonating with my work, and one of my peers on the course she just published an amazing paper about clothing and attachment. And she's just done like so much amazing research. Her name is Rebecca Fleetwood Smith, if anybody wants to check out her work, and I just think that people are really understanding the importance of attachment to clothing, and how that is impacting sustainable initiatives. So not just about chastising people for buying fast fashion, or not imploring people to buy like more sustainable, but making people aware of the relationship with their clothing, as I mentioned earlier, I'm still someone that still, you know, on my sustainability journey, like trying actively not to buy from fast fashion brands, and being a more conscious consumer and thinking about, you know, like packaging and everything, like everything to do sustainability. But I think I'm looking at it from a different angle. And I think people are starting to realise that angle as well, that attachment angle. And I think, you know, I'm currently working with afterpay and clearpay. And their data was looking at Christmas shopping, and it found that people are looking at more personalised gifts this year. And I think, again, people are really trying to place more consideration into things that they're buying. Again, like I said, if you're think taking something into consideration, is less likely to be like a cheap throwaway purchase that you're not going to be within the next six months. And it's again, it's going to go into another big landfill. So people are moving away from purely aesthetic shopping and more about shopping with a purpose and thinking about how things make them feel rather than just how they look. So I think we're seeing maybe, indirectly, how people's relationships with their clothing is positively impacting sustainability. And I'm hoping Yeah, to just keep driving that conversation forward and getting more insights from the people who are really on the forefront of the sustainability movement.

**Gia Lulic**

Yes, I feel like, just from a completely intuitive and uneducated point of view, I feel like just how much people are, you know, more likely to go to secondhand shops and get their little pieces from there, I feel like there is a real shift happening. So it's really nice to know that that is actually you know, happening. So I wanted, um, the question that we ask everyone in the in the podcast is, what would you have told a younger version of you or when you were just starting out that might have helped you?

**Shakaila Forbes-Bell**

I think to not be scared. I think they can be super debilitating, especially when you're starting something new and when you don't really have a blueprint to look at. So when I was starting this I yeah, there wasn't any, like, major fashion psychologist or like a club or fashion psychologist I can look at and be like, okay, that doesn't work. I can do this. Like I didn't have that many people to look up to and I didn't really I was so unsure and I let fear kind of, maybe stop me from pushing things earlier or maybe pushing putting myself out there for fear of not being understood. So yeah, I would tell my younger self, you know, don't be fearful and just trying something new is always going to be difficult but you know, rise up to the challenge. You'll see positive results.