

A close-up photograph of a white ceramic coffee cup filled with a latte, showing a golden-brown foam with small bubbles. A silver spoon rests on a white saucer next to the cup. A round, golden-brown cookie is partially visible in the foreground. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

alljoy.com presents...

Girl Got Game

Destiny's found a new child.
(You, you, it's YOU!)

Hi, Hello, Howdie

It's 2014. Sayyyy whaat!? Seriously? Where has the time gone? It feels like only yesterday that I was riding the bus with a pocket full of coupons and a head full of dreams. Wait a tick, that *was* yesterday.

But in all seriousness, it's amazing what a year can bring. Last year I was in a really dark place. Literally. My London bedroom didn't have a window! I had very little money, no job and no safety net. And I never had a doubt that this was exactly where I was supposed to be.

I don't know where you are at, at this moment in time. If you are in a season of trial, transition or triumph. You might be reading this at your desk, on your smart phone, in a cafe in the big city or in an igloo in the arctic. I don't know whether you are single or in a relationship. Sweet sixteen or ninety-two. You might be a guy reading this - welcome to our hood - *sisterhood* that is!

Do I have it all figured out yet? Nope. Do I know what the future has in store? Not a chance. But I do know one thing: where you will be in twelve months time will be the result and product of the action and decisions you make now. Not tomorrow. NOW!

Why 'Girl Got Game'?

Everyone needs a game plan. A starting point. A direction. And of course, as the year progresses you will need to be flexible and adapt to your personal circumstances. But we, at aliljoy.com, want to encourage you to start your journey with high expectations, enthusiasm, focus and passion.

I started aliljoy.com because life is not easy. I'm sorry, but it's not. It's a massive ball-ache and it's full of challenges, pain, disappointment, heart-break, tears, PMT, failure and assholes.

But don't let the bastards get you down! There is creativity, colour, light, beauty, inspiration and love too. And when you know where to look, believe me, you will begin to see it EVERYWHERE.

We are all average girls aspiring to lead beyond average lives, so let's inspire each other and step into the new year with **JOY**ful embrace.

Yaz x

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Girl Got Attitude

'2014 is the year I remember who I am and realise who I can be.' - Beth aka Tev

A **positive attitude** that is!

Passion combined with action is a powerful weapon. With it, you are like Katniss with her bow and arrow, like Kylie in gold hot pants, Thor with his crazy-ass hammer.

When you have a positive outlook on life you will be amazed at the progress you will make in you work, career and relationships.

'If you go to work happier, you'll create success. In studies, happy employees were 40% more likely to receive a promotion.' - Shawn Achor, *Before Happiness*

According to UK *Glamour* Magazine, it was reported that dating sites were seeing a trend in how positivity was more attractive to potential partners.

Translation: if you are single and miserable, you are limiting your own chances of meeting the hunk of your dreams. Fo' REAL!

'We're drawn to people who create happiness for themselves.' - Shawn Achor

Enthusiasm sets you apart from everyone else. It gives you edge and that lil' je ne sais quoi. When you have a positive attitude people will want to be around you, work with you and party with you. Woohoo!

I am not suggesting you act repulsively positive ALL the time, strutting down the high street singing *I'm walkin' on sunshine wooo oohh!* because you might just get a slap. Instead DO be real, address things that matter to you and strive to be a part of the solution.

'Enthusiasm moves the world.' - Arthur Balfour

Being happy is a decision. Make a promise to yourself RIGHT NOW to live a life of positivity, and I promise you, that gradually this internal change will spark real transformation in your life.

Being a happy person is about your attitude.



(Olive from *Little Miss Sunshine* shows us how it's done.)

If your happiness hinges on a relationship, or accumulating 'stuff', or gaining other people's approval then I am afraid that your mood is going to go up and down like a yoyo and you will never find long-term peace and joyfulness. Sometimes I really struggle with this. But I have come to understand with time that:

YOU need to be the source of your own happiness.



So ask yourself: how do I look at the world? How do I react to people who try and pull me down?

Be a person who sees opportunity when everyone else sees a dead-end, and with time you will see major transformation all around you.

Let's spread a lil joy together ...

Girl Got Focus

'2014 is the year I decide upon a career and go for it!'
Daisy aka DJ

Ready. Set. Goal!

You ready sister? You got your trainers on?

John Maxwell says, quite accurately I think, that life is not one race but a series of many short races. So pace yourself. We've got one life so let's try and to do everything with purpose and conviction.

Made mistakes last year?

I made loads. I made a stripping joke in a job interview, got mugged because I was walking in a dodgy part of town with my iPhone out AND I made sweeping statements about UK tax...



What did I learn?

It's OKAY TO MAKE MISTAKES. The world will NOT END if you fuck up from time to time.

As a result, I was forced to get better, develop my skills and become more streetwise. (You wouldn't want to bump into me in a dark ally! Kapow!) I now make more of an effort to read up on current affairs. And incase you're wondering, I got the job!

If there is one thing I learnt this year it's that failure is your friend.

'I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.' - Michael Jordan

Here's to mistakes! I can't wait to find new things I suck at. Seriously. Because every time you find trial, you learn and adapt then you become a child of destiny.

So don't let mistakes distract you - instead let them create focus in your life.



(Aim high Katniss! AIM HIGH!)

FOCUS EXERCISE: 'Compelling Outcomes'

By life coach and aliljoy.com writer Zoe McCarthy

Your unconscious mind does not differentiate between what is real and what is imagined. So by visualising yourself having already achieved your desired outcome your unconscious mind believes you already have and acts accordingly. (Pretty cool yeah?!)

Once you have established what your outcome is, whether it's losing weight, being more confident when giving presentations or winning gold at the Olympics, just follow these steps:-

- 1) Sit or lie comfortably, close your eyes, become aware of your breathing, and how the air you breathe in circulates around your body.
Taking time to really relax.
- 2) Now begin to **observe yourself**, having already achieved this outcome. Watch yourself. How do you look? What are you wearing? What's your facial expression? How are you moving and interacting? How are other people reacting to you? Notice all the details.
- 3) Step into the **you that has achieved the outcome**. What are you feeling and where are you feeling it? Look around you, what do you see? Listen to the compliments from others? What are you saying to yourself? Be aware of all that you can see, hear, touch, taste and feel.
- 4) Absorb that moment, that feeling of having achieved your outcome, celebrate and enjoy it fully. When you're ready to leave, and in your own time, just open your eyes.

Remember: like any muscle, the more you exercise it, the stronger it becomes!

Girl Got Shameless

'2014 is the year I conquer my fears.'
- Ria aka Ri

I went out for dinner with my good friend (and alljoy writer) Beth the other night. One of Beth's friends worked at the restaurant, and we were told that we could get 20% off our meal. However, when we arrived at the restaurant her friend wasn't there.

Now I don't know about you, but I hate asking for stuff. I always feel super awkward and think I look like a moron. But Beth spoke up:

'You know what, I'm going to be shameless.'

Before I could say anything she marched up to the waiter and explained the situation. A few minutes later, after a lot of expressive arm gestures, she returned with the news: the restaurant had agreed to take 20% off the bill.

Now don't get me wrong, this wasn't about entitlement. We were prepared to pay full price, and were happy to, but what was the harm in asking?

Here's my New Year's resolution: **be shameless and ask for what you want.**

'You get in life what you have the courage to ask for.' -
- Oprah Winfrey

You have worked your ass off and want a promotion? Ask for it. You want that window seat at the restaurant? Ask. You want to attend that awesome gig all your mates are going to, but you heard they were sold out? I'll tell you what, just ask and they might just let you in. Or at least put you on the reserve list.

MOST of the time people will probably say no. But if there is a chance they will say yes, what have you got to lose?

Be Miss Ask-Dot-Com. Be SHAMELESS.

Psssst: for a crash course on how to be shameless check out [Shameless Maya](#) at her website shamelessmaya.com. This girl is AWESOME!!!

Girl Got Creativity

'2014 is the year I am going to sort my life out!' - Poppy
aka Pollyanna

If there is one thing I believe in with all my heart and soul, it's the power and influence of art in the world, and the impact of creativity on the spirit.

Everyone can be creative. There is no right and wrong way to producing creative work. Whether it's writing music, fine art, putting together a cool outfit, knitting a scarf, taking a photograph, creating a scrapbook or making sandcastles at the beach. Creativity is about YOU!



(Sandra Bullock in *Miss Congeniality*.)

If you are an artist:

Don't be afraid to unleash your creativity to the world. Don't hold on to one great idea because you are afraid you will never have a great idea again.

'You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.' Maya Angelou.

If you are naturally creative, I very strongly believe that this is a gift that you must share. Creativity isn't a dam, that you store up and then unleash in one big whoooooosh. Instead, it's like a river, it flows and grows and often springs from the most unlikely places. The nature of creativity is not a single event but a process and rhythm - creativity is about having floowwww girl!

Girl Got Talent

'2014 is the year I beat my personal bests.'
- Ilona aka IJ

Everyone has a talent. And if you are reading this thinking, 'I have no talent', I am here to tell you that you absolutely DO.

If you are struggling to find out what your talent is, then your job over the next 12 months is to find out what your gift is.

When I was a kid I thought talent was only present in those people who got straight As at school, or those who passed their grade 8 oboe exam, or the person who could speak in a convincing Scottish accent or win the 100 metre sprint at sports day. I couldn't have been more wrong.

What I have come to learn is that **there are different kinds of talent.**

Some people are incredibly gifted in communicating with people. Others come up with the most incredible ideas and business strategies. Some have the gift of compassion - they are caring and give hope to others through their actions. Another might be exceptional at channeling other people's gifts so they fulfill their dreams. Yes, all these are talents too!

Your talent might even be the fact that you are multi-talented. You can do many things well - but when all your gifts combined you are a force to be reckoned with. Look at Madonna!

I know what my talent is Yaz, but what do I do now?

If you know what your talent is, then your mission is find out how to use your talent to achieve your dreams and get ahead.

The truth is, **talent isn't enough** to achieve great things. There are many talented singers in the world but in order for you to achieve your dreams of getting that killer record deal you need motivation, tenacity, inner-strength and adaptability. You also need the right people in your life to help you get to the next stage.

Girl Got Influence

'2014 is the year I will redefine people's understanding of global affairs.' - Erin aka Rina

Did you know that you are a role model?

You might not realise it, but people watch and observe your actions. You might be a sister, a friend, a leader, a colleague, an employee, an artist, a team player, a stay-at-home mum or an adventurer... I guarantee that someone out there looks up to you. That's quite a responsibility, hey?

But don't feel burdened, this is incredibly liberating. Just think about it for a minute: YOU matter sister!

YOU have purpose.

You don't have a responsibility to be perfect but you do have an opportunity to be the kinda woman people look at and go 'Damn... she got that vibe!' And not in a weird R-Kelly kinda way...



(Legally Blonde's Elle Woods causing a stir at Harvard Law.)

Girl Got Wisdom

'2014 is the year I love completely.' - Zoe aka Z-Bird

At alljoy our mission is to inspire and be inspired. With this in mind I asked the writers team what advice they would give themselves if they could go back to this time last year...

'Don't let others put pressure on you and be confident in speaking out against things you feel are not just.' Daisy

'No matter what life throws at you, you are better equipped to deal with it if you remain positive and trust it will be OK.'
Ilona

'It gets better. In fact, it gets incredible. This time in a year you'll look back and not even recognise the shell of a human being you are right now. Do not give up, stand up for yourself and believe that much greater things lie ahead of you than any you leave behind.' Lauren

'Don't create such strict definitions of "success" and "failure"... because your successes can leave you miserable and your failures can pave the way for liberation.' Erin

'Listen to your gut instinct; if it's telling you something isn't right it's for a reason!' Ria

'Don't worry... trust that everything will work out.' Zoe

Wisdom is something we exchange and share.

If I was to advise one thing to you for the coming year, it would be to never stop learning. Reading is a great way of gaining wisdom through others.

***'Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world.'* - Nelson Mandela**

It is NEVER a waste to invest in good books. If you have limited money and you are umming and ahhing whether to invest in some self-development literature then I will make the decision for you. DO IT.

I have read some amaze-balls books this year that have truly inspired me. If you are looking for some reading inspiration to get you started check out my lit picks...

Reading Recommendations:

If You Want to Achieve your Dreams but Need a Kick Up the Arse:

Talent is Never Enough by John C. Maxwell

If you want to get clued up on social media and take your business to the next level:

Platform by Micheal Hyatt

If You Want to Climb the Career Ladder:

Promote Yourself by Dan Schawbel

If You Don't Understand Guys in the Dating Game:

He's Just Not That Into You by Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo

If You Want to Nurture Your Creativity:

The Key to Yourself by Dr. Venice Bloodworth

If You Want Positivity in Small Doses:

Chicken Soup for the Soul series, created by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen

If You're Scared to Call Yourself a Feminist Because You Think It's Fuddy-Duddy (this will rock your world):

How to Be a Woman by Caitlin Moran

I love recommendations so why not share your most influential books with us too? Tweet [@aliljoy](https://twitter.com/aliljoy).

Girl Got Game

'2014 is the year I live what I preach and get out and enjoy every little drop of life.' - Lauren aka Loz, Lozzie, Noise



(M.I.A. in the 2012 music video 'Bad Girls'.)

We can not predict what the next twelve months will bring but we can make sure we are equipped with the best tools and shameless attitude to ensure when we look back at 2014, we tell ourselves... that was the year shit got real!

Question Time

We're almost up, but before you go do us one favour: go make yourself a nice cuppa, find a quiet spot where no-one is going to disturb you and check out our questionnaire on the next page.

You might want to copy it out somewhere safe. This questionnaire is all about YOU. Be **honest**, be **real** and be **shameless**. ;-)
Go girl!



15 Questions to Start my Year of Awesomeness!

Name:

My friends call me:

1) Three things I am passionate about:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2) What failure/mistakes did I make this year?

3) What advice would I give myself if I could go back to this time last year?

4) What's the biggest lesson I learnt in 2013?

5) Who is my hero?

6) Why do I look up to that person?

7) I am now (three words to describe yourself):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

8) I aspire to be:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

9) Three goals I wish to achieve by the end of 2014:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 10) What challenges do I face in the new year?
- 11) How do I plan to deal with these challenges?
- 12) What habit do I need to change?
- 13) What steps am I going to make in order to change this habit?
- 14) What brings me joy?
- 15) Finish this sentence:

2014 is the year I _____.

You're finished!

Now put this bad boy somewhere safe. Pin it next to your bed, keep it in your diary or tuck it into your bedside cabinet. When you feel lost or confused or in a state of indecision take this out and remind yourself who you are and where you're going.

No matter what life is going to throw at you just remember:

Girl Got Game.

What now? I hear you ask. Why not send this to a friend?
Let's spread the joy together!