TORONTO'S SEASONAL ENTREPRENHER ONLINE MAGAZINE

HER COLLECTION

COLLECT.CONNECT.CREATE

SUMMER 2026• ISSUE 2 • VOLUME 6

HERSTORY



LIZA SMITH

A LIFE OF YES



editor's note

Six years ago, I had a vision.

Not just for a brand, but for a community that would support women in both their personal and professional lives, because I've never believed we're meant to compartmentalize who we are. I imagined a space where women could grow, build, heal, lead, and evolve… and a vehicle to help us stay connected to each other as we did.

That vision became **HER**COLLECTED.

And if I'm being honest, the only reason it has survived and expanded is because of persistence. Not the cute kind. The real kind.

The kind that asks you to stay the course when the numbers aren't numbering yet, the money's not moneying and the time you've committed can no longer be quantified. It's the kind of resilience that makes you keep showing up when you're tired, when you're unsure, when you're carrying more than you think you can handle. The kind of perseverance that doesn't always look like a highlight reel, but looks like choosing the mission again and again.

This Summer Edition is a celebration of that energy: **The Power of Persistence.** It's an invitation to honour the women who keep going, not because it's easy, but because they feel called to keep going. And in that same spirit of staying true to what matters, I've made a difficult decision to take a step back.

I'm stepping down as Editor-in-Chief so I can concentrate on other aspects of **HER**COLLECTED and the bigger vision we're building. I'll still be right here, as a contributor and as the graphic designer, but I'll be handing over the reins.

You'll have to wait until Fall to meet the incredible woman who will help elevate this magazine to the next level. For the summer, I'm permitting myself to take it easy. To soften. To breathe. To sit in the vibration of joy and invite in some whimsy.

And I want that for you too.

So as you move through these pages, join me in celebrating the women who tap into their power of persistence and show up as every version of themselves. The starter. The builder. The beginner again. The woman who's figuring it out. The woman who's finally letting it be good enough.

Because persistence isn't just about pushing.

Sometimes it's about staying.

Sometimes it's about trusting.

And sometimes it's about knowing when to pass the mic so the mission can keep rising.

Janine

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Table of Contents

introduction

EDITORS NOTE 02

her stories

COVER STORY 04

her life

HER BUSINESS 09

LIFESTYLE 11
MEET LISA ANN

MAKEUP-REVIVAL 12
MISS MEGAN ROBINSON

HEALTH & WELLNESS 14
HERCOLLECTED

TAROTSCOPES 18
THE VIBE CURATOR

COACHING CORNER 21
LET'S GET CONFIDENT

her reviews

THE READING ROOM 20

GOOD EATS 20

WHAT'S NEW WITH **HER** 23

The Power of *Yes*

When I first heard about Liza, I thought her story was going to be a familiar one. A woman gets tired of the rat race, opens a quaint spot in a quiet town outside Toronto, and finally exhales.

Her story is so much more than that. It is a story about allyship, the kind that does not pander to women but opens doors for them. It is about saying yes, even when you are not 100 percent sure you are ready. And it is a story about persistence, the kind that looks like reinvention, humility, and choosing forward - again and again and again.

Because Liza did not just leave corporate, she built a life that required her to step into something new. In the middle of it all, boardrooms, buyouts, culture clashes, imposter syndrome, menopause, and the messy reality of entrepreneurship, she kept choosing the same thing. *Forward movement.*



The Woman Behind Milly's

Liza is the kind of woman who will tell you her story is boring, then casually reveal she spent nearly three decades in a highly specialized industry, rose to executive leadership, and helped multiple companies scale and grow through to major acquisitions. Her skills, leadership, and know-how remain in high demand. She is also the kind of woman who can hand someone a cappuccino and feel more gratification from that one moment than from years of corporate wins.

That contrast is the heartbeat of her story. Not just success, but meaning. If there is one thing you feel immediately when you talk to her, it is this: she is not afraid of work; she is afraid of wasting her life.

Liza has the kind of confidence that is not loud, but lived. She has done enough to know what she can survive. She has seen enough to know what she will no longer tolerate, and she has earned the right to say it plainly.

"Sounds Like a Perfect Fit"

Liza's career did not begin with a perfectly mapped plan. It began the way many real lives do: *through people, timing, and a single sentence that changed everything.*





Before the boardrooms, she was bartending in Mississauga, at a place that transformed from a business lunch spot into a nightlife venue, think Ally McBeal, circa the early 2000s. Suits at noon. Dance floor at night.

Liza was curious about what people did, how they got there, and what industries existed beyond the ones she had been taught to imagine. She had her eyes set on returning to school to study law, but fate had other plans.

One of her regulars offered her an opportunity in an industry she knew nothing about: insurance software.

"Two things I know nothing about. Sounds like a perfect fit."

That line is funny, yes. But it is also the blueprint.

What she did next is what so many women hesitate to do. She said yes, then figured it out. She started as an executive assistant. Within weeks, she was managing due diligence for a confidential acquisition, running documentation, coordinating legal teams, and representing a company in rooms where she was often the only woman at the executive table.

And she loved it.

Not because it was easy. Because it made her feel alive.

The Quiet Truth Beneath Her Success

Liza is honest about the internal battle that followed her achievements: *imposter syndrome.*

Even when she was leading meetings. Even when she was delivering results. Even when she was the one people relied on. She describes those moments vividly, sitting at boardroom tables, looking around, thinking, "*What am I doing here?*" And then doing it anyway.

This is persistence. Not loud. Not pretty. But real. Because imposter syndrome does not always disappear when you reach the next level, sometimes it just changes outfits. Sometimes it shows up in nicer rooms, with higher stakes, and better lighting.
And still, Liza stayed.

Allyship That Changes Outcomes

One of the most powerful threads in Liza's story is this: **many of her mentors were men.**

In a world where we talk so much about inequality and gatekeeping, Liza names something else that is also true. Some leaders step aside. Some leaders make room. Some leaders give women real opportunities, and do not always get their due credit for it.

It is not because women need saving. It is because access is still not equal.

When Liza had the power to hire, she used it intentionally. She built teams that reflected the world, not just the boardroom.
"*You have to have different people sitting at the table.*"
It was not a slogan. It was a leadership decision.

Why You Gotta Be So Mean

Early in her career, Liza was sent into a meeting at a trade show, representing a major product shift that threatened smaller competitors. She did not fully grasp the magnitude of what she was walking into.

She sat down. Like a scene out of *12 Angry Men*, they berated her.

She held it together until she left the room and turned the corner. Then she cried. That's when she did something most people would not dare to do. She called the COO.

When he answered, the only sentence she could get out was, "*They're being mean to me.*"
It sounds almost childlike, but it is one of the most courageous moments in her story. Vulnerability without performance.

The COO flew down immediately to support her. Later, a couple of the men who had been in that room found her, apologized, and went on to become long-term contacts in her career.

But the lesson stayed with her. From that day forward, Liza never walked into anything unprepared again. She learned to look both ways, anticipate the gotchas, and lead with strategy, not just grit.

The Love of Food Was Never Random

When Liza talks about Milly's, she does not talk about it like a business trend. She talks about it like a feeling. She is someone who has spent years moving through the world at a high speed: airports, hotels, boardrooms, trade shows, deadlines - the kind of pace where you can be surrounded by people all day and still feel strangely alone. And in the middle of that kind of life, food becomes more than food. It becomes memory. It becomes comfort. It becomes culture. It becomes a way of marking time.

Liza travelled nonstop for years, often quarterly to Australia, mostly Sydney. And it was there, north of the city, that she found a place that stayed with her. During the day, it was a food market. People browsing. The hum of a community doing its everyday life.

At night, the entire space transformed. Racks pushed aside. Tables pulled out. Red and white checkered tablecloths. An Italian restaurant built from what was already there, made from the same fresh ingredients, the same market energy, the same sense of warmth. It was not just a meal. It was an experience. And when you have eaten in as many restaurants as a person who travels for twenty years does, you do not remember everything. You remember what made you feel something.

She told her brother about it. She held it in her mind as a concept, not a plan, but a possibility. A future version of life that felt more human.

From Corporate Wins to Market Reality

Eventually, Liza did what so many high-achieving women fantasize about. She left corporate and built something different. Not a cute hobby. Not a soft landing. A full-body reinvention.

Milly's is a food market with a café, a concept that carries multiple experiences under one roof: a café, prepared meals, food retail, a cheese counter, and catering.

Liza and her brother found a small place for sale. They bought it for the location, knowing they would change the concept. The original space had been more cooking class-based. Liza and her brother shifted it into something more grab-and-go, with prepared meals, gelato, espresso, and a market experience that felt elevated but welcoming.

When the landlord called, because, after 25 years, the storefront next door gave notice. Liza had first right of refusal. She could see what the town needed. She could see what the space could become, so she said yes again.

Renovating an 1800s building. Thick walls. Old bones. A space that did not make anything easy, but made everything feel real.

She took two different storefronts and renovated the space to house a concept with layers, the kind of place that can hold a quick coffee or a long conversation with a familiar face. She learned quickly that Milly's is not one business. *It is five.*

It is hospitality, operations, staffing, inventory, customer experience, community building, and constant decision-making, all at once.

She laughs when old colleagues tell her that she is living their retirement dream.
"Come work at my place for two weeks," she'll say. *"Get a feel for it."*

The food industry is humbling. The hours are long. The regulations are real. The stress is different. The stakes are immediate. You are not selling an idea. You are selling an experience, one customer at a time, in real time. And still, she kept going.

Persistence Looks Like Menopause, Too

One of the most important parts of Liza's story is not just business. It is womanhood.

She talks about perimenopause and menopause not as a footnote, but as a turning point, a crisis of energy, identity, and confidence. She talks about hot flashes behind the cappuccino machine. About normalizing it out loud. About fighting for HRT. About how women are expected to perform through it quietly, especially in corporate environments.

Getting there is hard.

Getting through it changes you.

And for so many women, it is not just physical. It is emotional. It is mental. It is the moment you stop negotiating your needs down to something more convenient for everyone else.

It is the moment you stop being polite about your own life.

What She Is Building Now

Liza is clear: Milly's is becoming part of the fabric of Port Hope. People stop her on the street to say thank you. The town needed it

And now she is thinking about succession, not just profit. She wants to mentor someone into ownership, to give younger people a chance to build something they never thought they could. She wants to invest in something beyond the numbers. She wants to turn the business into a bridge. Because in the end, her story is not about a woman leaving corporate to open a café.

Her story is about a woman who keeps saying yes, keeps learning, keeps building, and then turns around and makes the path wider for someone else.
That is persistence in practice.

And maybe that is the real power of yes. Not that it makes life easy, but that it keeps life moving. It keeps you in motion long enough to become the kind of woman who can open doors for others, the way someone once opened one for you.
Forward movement - again and again and again.



Liza's Yes List

Yes to a new industry.
Yes to bigger responsibility, fast.
Yes to leadership without the "perfect" path.
Yes to walking away when the culture did not fit.
Yes to building Milly's Market bigger than planned.
Yes to legacy.

If you're ever in Port Hope, make a point to stop by Milly's Market. Come in, say hi, grab a coffee, and take a look around.

Milly's Market
33 Walton St, Port Hope, ON L1A 1M8

Minding *HER* Business

The Power of Persistence

Build the Brave Offer. Then Keep Building.

Spring asked you to be brave enough to begin.

To choose the offer. To launch before you felt ready. To stop waiting for perfect and start moving with purpose.

Summer is where the real work starts.

Because once you put your brave offer in the world, you don't just meet customers; you meet opinions. You meet silence. You meet side-eyes. You meet the people who loved you when you were *"thinking about it,"* but get weird when you actually do it.

This is the season of persistence: the decision to keep building even when the applause is delayed.

1) Understand the Dip (So You Don't Quit In It)

Here's what nobody tells you: the hardest part isn't launching.

The hardest part is the weeks after launching, when you'

That space can make you question everything:

- "Maybe my offer isn't good."
- "Maybe people don't want this."
- "Maybe I'm not cut out for this."

But often what you're in isn't failure. It's the dip, the part where consistency is being built and momentum is still loading.

Persistence is staying long enough for the evidence to show up. It's continuing when the results haven't caught up yet.





2) Handling the Haters: Don't Debate - Deliver

Let's be clear: *"haters"* don't always show up as loud comments.

Sometimes they show up as:

- Passive-aggressive "jokes."
- Backhanded compliments
- People suddenly are "too busy" to support you
- People who watch everything but never celebrate you
- People who only speak up when you make a mistake

This is when you need to be careful; otherwise, you'll start building your business around their reactions.

3) Factor in Jealousy (Without Letting It Poison You)

Jealousy is one of the most misunderstood energies in entrepreneurship.

Sometimes people aren't mad at you.

They're mad at what your consistency is forcing them to face:

- Their procrastination
- Their fear
- Their lack of follow-through
- Their jealousy is not your stop sign. It's proof you're visible.

Instead of dealing with that, they project it onto you. So yes...factor it in. Not to become paranoid or hardened. But to stop being surprised when your growth makes some people uncomfortable.

Their jealousy is not your stop sign. It's proof you're visible.

4) Perseverance Is a System (Not a Personality Trait)

Persistence isn't something you either have or you don't. It's something you build, and women who win long-term are not the loudest. *They're the most consistent.*

Here's a simple system you can use:

The 3-Part Momentum System

- **One Core Offer:** Don't keep changing the product every time you feel insecure. Give your offer time to work.
- **One Visibility Rhythm:** Pick a schedule you can keep even when life is lifing. Consistency beats intensity.
- **One Momentum Metric:** Track what proves progress. Not vanity. Movement.



5) HER Action Plan: Stay the Course

This week, do this:

1. Write your offer in one sentence.
2. Decide your 90-day persistence promise (what you will do weekly no matter what).
3. Choose your one momentum metric.
4. Create a noise boundary:

- *Who gets access to your plans?*
- *Who gets a front-row seat to your process?*

5. Promote your offer again, because repetition is leadership.





THE BOTTOM LINE

Persistence isn't just about pushing. Sometimes it's about staying. Sometimes it's about trusting. And sometimes it's about letting people reveal who they are, while you keep building what you came here to build.

CTA: Minding HER Business Box

If you're ready to stop winging it and start building with structure, the Minding HER Business Box was created for you.

It's a practical, step-by-step resource system designed to help you stay consistent, make aligned decisions, and keep moving... especially when motivation dips and the noise gets loud.

Inside, you'll find tools and prompts that meet you at every stage of the journey, from idea to implementation to launch. If you're in your persistence era, this is your next right step.

THE JEWELRY BOX

Every woman has one.

A box. A drawer. A dish on a bedside table. A place where objects gather long after the occasion has passed. For years, I thought the story was hanging in my closet. The dresses. The shoes. The handbags. I convinced myself they were appreciating assets - purchased for the office, weddings, parties, breakups and makeups, fresh starts, and moments important enough to commemorate with a swipe of a card.

Don't get me wrong. Clothes and shoes have always been my thing. But the real story isn't hanging on a rack. It's sitting on my vanity, in boxes, bowls, pouches, and cabinets.



Jewellery. *Lots of it.*

Some pieces have made it out into the world hundreds of times. Some are still waiting for their turn. Some have been loaned to friends, cousins, or anyone who needed something special—a getaway, a wedding, a day worth marking.

Every piece was purchased to mark an occasion, acquired in a moment of excitement, gifted, or passed down from family. If it has sentimental value, it stays.

My matrimonial earrings should probably be locked away. But why hide beauty? Those earrings need a ray of light to catch that prism every now and again. Most people lock important pieces away. *I lend mine out.*

It isn't meant to sit in a box. It's meant to live. To attend weddings. To celebrate promotions. To accompany someone else's milestone. To create new memories beyond the ones it was purchased for.

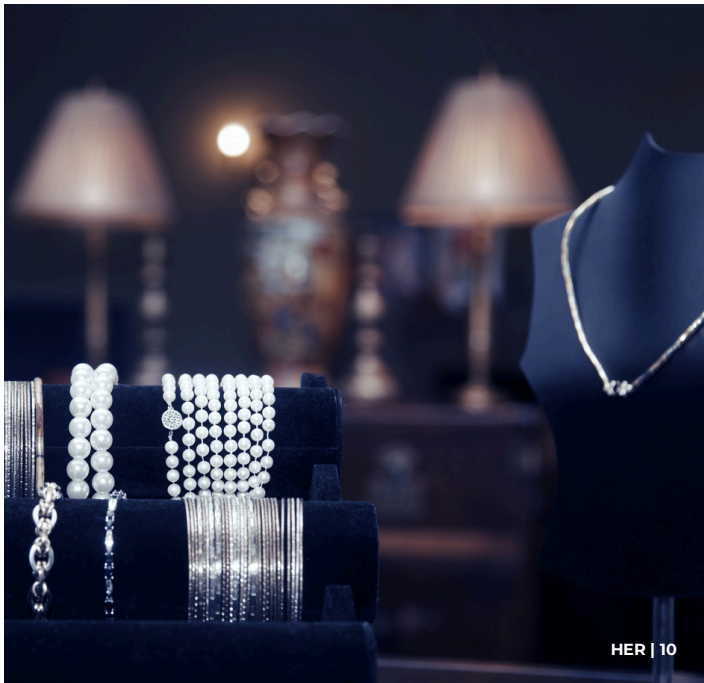
An earring becomes a brooch. A bangle becomes a hair accessory. A necklace becomes an anklet. A broken thing becomes a new thing. *Not every piece survives, though.*

The one piece missing from my collection is a pair of hand-carved wooden bangles from Kenya.

My mother bought them before I moved from across the lakes to the sea. They travelled from Kenya to Toronto to Florida, carrying a story much bigger than the wood they were carved from.

I loaned them to a friend. They never came back.

When I asked, she had no idea where they were.





Losing those bangles taught me something I wasn't expecting. For years, I thought the value was in the brand name and the money spent. *Time corrected that assumption.* The value was never in the swipe of a card or the name on the label.

It was in the story.

The hands that chose them.

The hands that gifted them.

The life they witnessed.

Long before I became a jewellery artist, I was already making pieces, borrowing from my mother's collection, reworking what existed, and finding new ways to make it feel like my own.

Perhaps that's why I believe stories hold a certain power. They allow us to revisit people, places, and moments long after they've passed. These pieces become vessels for them.

As I write this, I think about the doll brooch my mother gave me.

Odd.

Handmade.

Unworn.

She saw its story long before I did. Now it's mine to carry. Its time will come. And perhaps that's what a jewellery box really is.

Not a collection.

An archive.

A record of who loved us.

Of where we've been.

Of what we've celebrated.

Of what we've lost.

Of the versions of ourselves we've carried forward. The pieces may sit quietly.

But the stories never do.



Lisa-Ann Bannis is the Founder & Creative Director of gabo + anicet, a Florida-based Jewellery and handbag studio named after her maternal grandparents. Drawing from her Dominican heritage and lived experiences in Dominica, her work explores memory, materiality, and architectural form through collectible jewellery and handbags released in numbered editions.
Follow: @gaboandanicet

HER BEAUTY REVIVAL

with Miss Megan Robinson

BASES, BRIGHTNESS, AND THE END OF THE CREASE STRUGGLE

Summer is when everybody suddenly wants to do the most. New season, new colours, new shimmer, new "glow." And I love that. I love a summer moment. But at the end of the day, most people do not need more eyeshadow. They need more staying power. a better base and an actual plan.

The same thing happens every summer: you do your makeup, you leave the house, you look cute, and then the temperature goes up. Now your shadow is creasing, fading, and sliding. And you're standing there thinking, what did I do wrong? You're not wrong. You're just missing one thing: the right base.



Why your eyeshadow isn't "working"



When it comes to eyeshadow, a lot of people ask the same questions over and over:
Why doesn't my colour look like it does in the pan? Why does my shimmer look dull? Why does my inner corner never pop? Why does my outer corner get patchy?

And yes, there are answers to that. But it is not to keep packing on more product and hoping for the best. You have to understand what you're putting underneath it.

That's why I teach bases. Not because I expect you to own ten different products or turn your morning makeup into a science experiment, but once you see what a base does, you cannot unsee it.

You start to understand why some looks read as smooth, lifted, and expensive, and why some shadows look like they're just sitting there doing absolutely nothing.

The four bases that change everything

When it comes to eyeshadow, you have a few base options, and each one creates a different effect.

- **MAC 24-Hour Eye Base (the "grip" base)**

This is your everyday base. It helps shadow stick, blend, and last, especially when it's hot out. If you're only going to change one thing this summer, start here.

- **White Base (the brightness booster)**

White makes colour look brighter, bolder, and more "colour true," especially with lighter or neon shades. But it's usually best for accents, like the inner corner or spotlight moments, because it can overpower a full look if you're not careful. It can even change how shimmer reads, sometimes making it look less metallic.

- **Matching Colour Base (the intensity bump)**

A matching base can boost payoff, but if you put it everywhere, you can lose dimension. Everything starts to look like one flat level of the same colour. So yes, use it, but use it with intention.

- **Darker Base (the contrast creator)**

If you want shimmer to pop, you need contrast. A deeper base makes metallics and sparkles stand out the way you want them to. This is why a dark base under glitter is such a power move.

The secret: you don't have to pick one base
Most people think they need one base for the whole eye. You don't.

In fact, when you're working with colour, especially in summer, layering bases is how you get dimension and longevity without fighting your makeup.

Here's the easiest way to think about it:

- MAC 24-hour base all over, so everything has grip
- Matching based on the lid, so the colour hits
- Dark base on the outer corner, so you get depth
- White base in the inner corner, so the bright shade actually pops

Now you're not battling your eyeshadow. You're building it.

The summer mistake that ruins your base
Let me say this clearly: ***stop setting your cream base with powder.***

If you set your base with translucent powder, you're taking away its power. These bases are meant to be a little bit tacky. That "grip" is what holds your shadow. The second you powder it, you lose the stick, and then you're confused why nothing is showing up or staying put.

No white base? Use a pencil

If you don't have a white cream base, white eyeliner works. Warm it up on your hand, pick it up with your brush, press it where you want the pop, and tap out the edges. You don't need a million products. You need the right base.

The bottom line

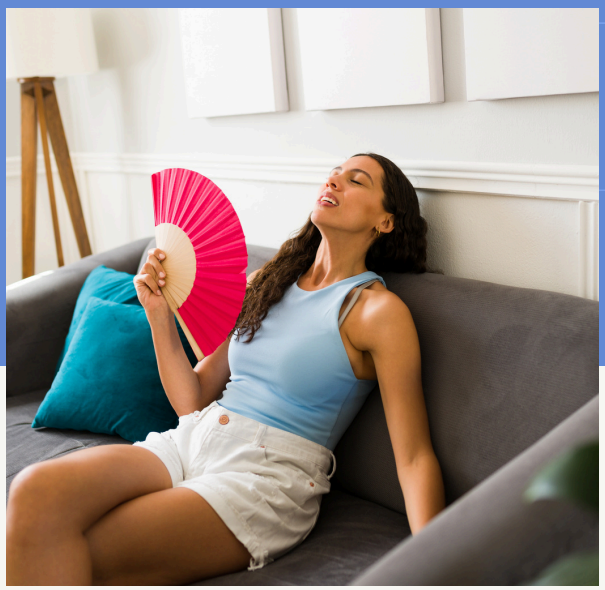
Summer eyeshadow is not about doing more. It's about doing what makes sense. Do you need more grip? More brightness? More contrast? More dimension?
That's where the real glow-up happens.



Megan Robinson, founder of The Makeup Revival.

Not sure how to adjust your makeup? Confused about products, tools, or techniques?
Take week 1 of the revival foundation for free
MISS MAGANS MAKEUP REVIVAL
FOLLOW: TIKTOK/IG @MISSMEGANROBINSON

The Change of Life - Why Nobody Prepared Us



My mother used to call it "*the change of life.*"

She said it like it was a weather system. Like one day it would roll in, do what it came to do, and then pass. What she did not do was explain what *it* meant. *No one really did.*

So a lot of us Gen X women are walking into this season of our lives with the same thought looping in our heads:

What the hell is happening to me?

We feel unprepared. We feel dismayed. We feel like our bodies are changing in ways we did not consent to, and in many cases, our minds are changing too.

The most upsetting part is how quickly it can happen.

One minute, you are managing your life the way you always have. Next, in the middle of the day, you are wondering why you are standing disoriented in a pool of sweat - energy gone, sleep broken, patience thin, anxiety loud, brain foggy, and your body feels unfamiliar. *This is not just about hot flashes.*

This is the full-body, full-mind journey of perimenopause and menopause, and the fact that most of us were never given a real map.

The Part We Were Not Told

We were taught about our period.
We were taught how to manage our period.
We were taught how to push through pain, keep moving, keep smiling, keep performing.
But we were not taught what happens when our period stops and hormones start shifting in a way that affects everything.

Perimenopause can show up years before menopause officially arrives, and it can touch nearly every system:
Your sleep.
Your mood.
Your focus.
Your joints.
Your skin.
Your libido.
Your temperature.
Your sense of self.

And when you do not know what you are looking at, it is easy to assume the worst.
That you are losing it.
That you are failing.
That you are falling apart.
That you are becoming someone you do not recognize.







One of the most under-discussed parts of this season is what happens cognitively.
Brain fog. Forgetfulness. Word searching. A shorter fuse. A nervous system that feels like it is running without brakes.

Some women, like myself, find that their ADHD symptoms intensify. Some realize they actually have ADHD and have been masking for decades and can no longer muscle through.
It is not a weakness. It is biology. It is hormones. It is a nervous system screaming for support.

When Your Mind Changes Too

"Give Me a Second, I'm Having a Hot Flash."

I recently had a full-on hot flash during an interaction with a young man. Rather than pretending, I told him to:
"Give me a moment; I'm having a hot flash."
Pretty sure he was a bit uncomfortable, but that is the point.

We have spent too long suffering quietly to protect other people's comfort. There is something powerful about naming what is happening in your body without apology.
Not as a performance.
As a boundary.
As truth.
As normalization.

The Health Implications We Need to Take Seriously. Menopause is not just a lifestyle inconvenience. It is a health chapter.
Hormonal shifts can impact:

- **Sleep and mental health** (insomnia, anxiety, mood changes)
- **Metabolic health** (weight changes, insulin sensitivity)
- **Cardiovascular health** (risk can change after menopause)
- **Bone density** (increased risk of osteopenia and osteoporosis)
- **Urogenital health** (dryness, discomfort, recurrent UTIs)
- **Cognitive function** (brain fog, memory changes)

You deserve to understand what is happening, and you deserve options.

How to Navigate When You Feel Unprepared

1) Name the season you are in

Track what is changing. Not to obsess over gathering data.

Write down patterns in:

- Sleep
- Mood
- Cycle changes
- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Anxiety
- Focus and memory
- Joint pain
- Energy

This helps you advocate for yourself with clarity.

2) Stop minimizing your symptoms

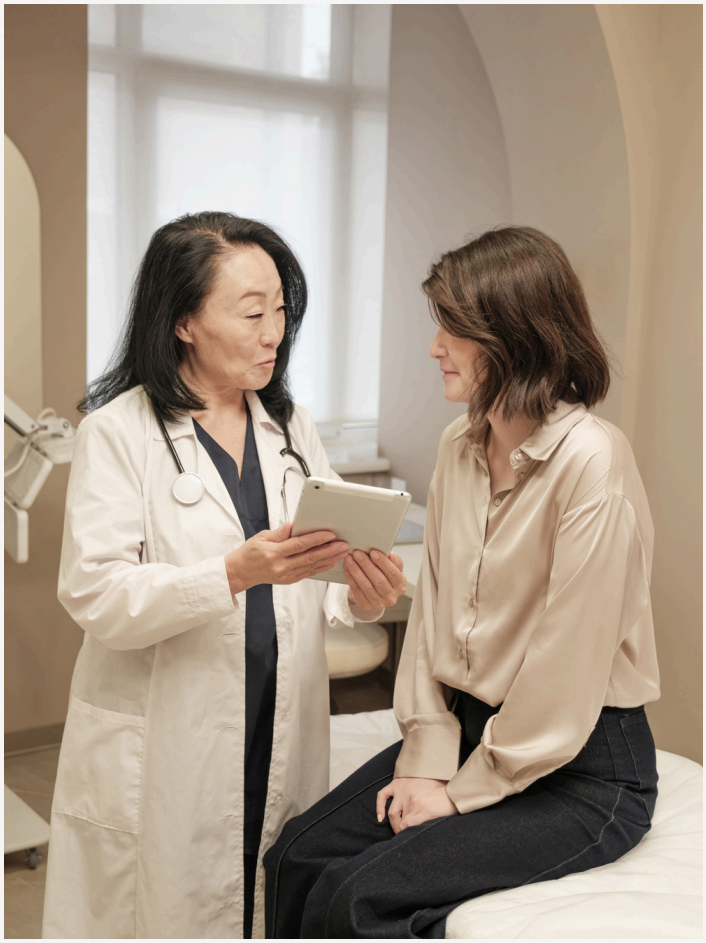
- If you are waking up exhausted, forgetting things that never used to slip, feeling emotionally volatile, or struggling to function the way you used to, it is not "just stress."
- It might be perimenopause.
- And even if it is stress, you still deserve support.

3) Build a care team that takes you seriously

- If your doctor dismisses you, find another.
- If they do not have answers, ask for a referral to someone who specializes in menopause care.
- You are not being dramatic.
- You are being responsible.

4) Consider your options, including HRT

I decided to go the HRT route. Not because I wanted a quick fix. Because I wanted support to protect my quality of life and to feel like myself again.



HRT is not the right choice for everyone, and it is not a decision to make casually. But it is a valid option, and for many women it can be life-changing. If you are considering it, talk to a qualified provider about your personal health history, risks, benefits, and what type of support makes sense for you.

5) Normalize the conversation

We cannot keep treating menopause like a private failure. It is a universal transition.
And the more we talk about it, the less alone we feel. The more we share what is normal, what is not, and what helped, the more we make it easier for the women coming behind us.

I finally understand what my mother meant by *the change of life.* It's not just physical; it touches your emotions, your mind, your confidence, your sense of self. So if you're in this season feeling off, exhausted, or unfamiliar to yourself, please don't shame yourself. You deserve care, education, and community, and we're allowed to ask for all of it out loud.

CHECK THE VIBES

with The vibe curator

Here we are in summer, and it is so easy to get caught up in thinking about everything you haven't done, started, made progress on or finished.

Despite what the calendar says, we have the choice to start every single day anew. Our relationship to ourselves is the longest one we will ever have, and if we betray ourselves, our wants, our wishes, our desires, and what we say we truly want, it is solely our choice to invest in that. To turn the script around, change the story, the energy we are giving toward the life we aspire.

We deserve to be open to receiving. We deserve to define our own versions of success, our aspirations, and what a happy and fulfilled life looks like to our own authentic selves. If you haven't done so already this year, there is no better time to start than now.

The summer solstice is that opportunity to bask in the light, to know the best is yet to come, and we can always choose things that enrich our souls, lives and world. An invitation to commit to living a joy-filled existence regardless of the dark and cold seasons ahead.

The Summer solstice is an energetically charged day and an important one to set intentions. Direct your intentions on the themes of this phase, which are patience, nourishment and trust. Create powerful "I am" statements that reflect these qualities and their development. Include "reception" statements that open you up to receiving the energies available on this day.

Examples are: "I am open to receiving nourishment and growth" or "I can receive the energy needed to develop trust in my life." Set your intentions and continually remind yourself of them all summer long.

ARIES

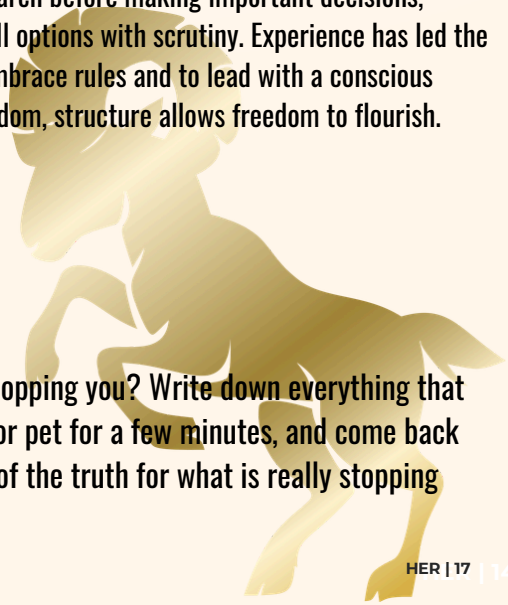
THE HIGH PRIESTESS - A mistress of the subconscious, the High Priestess asks you to listen to your inner voice. She combines serenity, inner knowing, and collective wisdom to guide you toward your intuition. Trust your gut and let it lead you to the right answers. Don't force control. Instead, let situations unfold as they are meant to be. At this time, pay special attention to your dreams, as they may carry subliminal messages that can help you in your waking hours. Looking inward rather than outward, can provide you with the guidance that you seek. Your imagination is ripe with creativity and flow, free from logic and practicality. Embody the divine feminine that exists inside of you to connect back to the fertile life source in all of us. Trust that your expanding intuition is guiding you to where you need to go.

TAURUS

KING OF SWORDS - Power lies in the mind! Intellectual strength gives the King of Swords his edge, ruling with dignity and authority. His judgment is sound, based on objectivity to find the honest truth. He detaches himself from emotions and believes in solving problems using his intellect and fair objectivity. Thriving under structure and rules, the King of Swords can sort through systems and look back at history to find his answers. He asks you to accumulate your wealth of knowledge and detach yourself from your emotions. Research before making important decisions, carefully weighing all options with scrutiny. Experience has led the King of Swords to embrace rules and to lead with a conscious compass. In his kingdom, structure allows freedom to flourish.

JOURNAL PROMPTS

- What areas of your life feel totally right at this moment?
- What does the next level look like for you personally, professionally and relationally?
- **REAL TALK** - What staunch beliefs and ideals are stifling you instead of supporting?
- Where do you need to experience more adventure, joy and fun in your life? What is stopping you? Write down everything that comes to mind. Take a break, listen to your favourite song, cuddle your kids, partner or pet for a few minutes, and come back to the answers you wrote for what's stopping you. Give yourself a no-bullshit version of the truth for what is really stopping you, and if those are factual or excuses





LEO

QUEEN OF PENTACLES - There is nothing in this world like a mother's love. The Queen of Pentacles represents the ultimate Earth Mother, nourishing you with love, comfort, and support. She keeps a balance between her home and work life, creating cozy and warm environments for her loved ones. People feel safe and at home in her presence, trusting her generosity and spirit. She is practical and resourceful in her dealings, knowing how to make a little go a long way. The Queen of Pentacles asks you to invest in yourself to create ultimate freedom, on a financial and spiritual level. The more you have, the more you are able to share and give to others. Root yourself in your desires for independence and financial security with a grounded and down-to-Earth attitude. Allow abundance to flow naturally.

GEMINI

ACE OF PENTACLES - Opportunities are abundantly available to you, especially in the material world. Manifestations are taking form in the financial realm, and you are planting the seeds for further growth. The Earth is fertile, bringing forth fresh energy, new assets, and good fortune. You're rich, not just financially, but in your relationships, career, and family. You're holistically wealthy! Keep on sending the good vibes out there to have them come back to you. Ideas are brewing with potential and possibilities for the future, and you are attracting resources for your new venture. Use common sense and practicality to expand your growth and make a real-world impact. The Universe is supporting you on your expansion in the form of business and investments. Ask, and you shall receive!

VIRGO

QUEEN OF SWORDS - Brains over beauty, the Queen of Swords values intellect above all else. She has no problem telling it like it is, with class and sass. She is direct, witty, honest, and even blunt. Logic rules the land, with the facts being the fairest of them all. She can use her discernment and can see past hidden motives easily. She asks that you cut through the noise and gather information that will point you to a clear-cut solution. Detach yourself from your emotions so that you can use your critical eye with impartiality and clarity. The Queen of Swords likes to get straight to the point and uses tact to get there, preferring to connect on an intellectual level. Sensitive souls may receive her bluntness as cold and dub her the "Ice Queen." It's not that she doesn't care; she just wants to be fair.

CANCER

KING OF CUPS - Mindfulness is key to making an impact. The King of Cups is able to carry emotions with intention, aptitude, and wit, clearly scoring high on the emotional intelligence test. He is a master of emotions and is able to apply humanity in his thinking process and his interaction with others. The level of connection he has with people comes easily, as he is able to relate to different personalities, making him an excellent communicator. The waters are calm, even when turbulence is present. He is able to weather the storms and handle hectic situations with finesse and grace. His gift for guidance can heavily influence people, and he enjoys helping others. The King of Cups is a reflection of you or a man in your life. He reminds you to incorporate compassion, whatever the circumstance may be.

LIBRA

ACE OF WANDS - Go for it! Awaken your unlimited potential and step into your personal power. All signs are clear, and the Ace of Wands encourages you to unapologetically chase your dreams. Take up as much space as you need and allow yourself to expand. You can do anything that you've set your mind to, and there is nothing holding you back! Instincts over intellect, following your gut will serve you the best at this time in your life. Illumination and inspiration surround you, supporting you in this breakthrough moment of personal discovery. Listen to your intuition and what it has to say. Go all in on manifesting your desires so that you can watch it flourish over time. Take it to the next level with your fiery ambition and let it burn! The possibilities are endless and the opportunities bountiful.

SCORPIO

FOUR OF WANDS - Centred and stable, you have built a firm foundation from the ground up and are starting to see your ideas come to fruition. Building stability allows freedom, so you don't have to sweat the small stuff! Enjoy your time with those most near and dear to your heart and share the success and good vibes. Your homebody status of late is allowing you to appreciate your home and how you spend your downtime. Grounded in mind, body, and soul, you are feeling safe and secure inside of yourself and finding a sense of home from within. Your strong sense of self enables you to have peace and acceptance for exactly who you are. Celebrate your wins, no matter how large or small they are. Embrace any mistakes you have made—they are what make you human!

SAGITTARIUS

THE MOON - Abstract and surreal, the Moon illuminates our shadow selves, the parts of us that are ruled by the subconscious. They are brought to light by our dreams and fears, often projecting insecurities onto the people and scenarios in our lives. The more aware we become of our unconscious, the more we are able to identify whether we are acting from our irrational thoughts or our conscious minds. Go beyond the surface and dive deep to resolve your inner issues. Your intuition will guide you, even when it doesn't seem to make any sense. Psychic forces are at play, with illusions unravelling to reveal the truth. It can be hard to decipher between what is real and what is imagination, but it is all connected. Pay close attention to your dreams and listen to your gut instincts. Your weaknesses are also your best strengths.

CAPRIPORN

PAGE OF SWORDS - Sparks fly high, with a twinkle in your eye. There are a million ideas floating around in your head, and you can't wait to tell anyone and everyone about them! Combusting with excitement, your creativity and brilliance cannot be contained. The Princess of Swords urges you to put your ideas into action and to go for it. Young, idealistic truth seeker, you have a gift for gab that has the ability to translate effectively to others. Writing and speaking come easily to you, which will aid you when it comes time to spread your ideas and message. With a thirst to learn, you constantly ask questions and want to know the "why" of how things work. Your high energy and curiosity are endless and feed off of your willingness to find the answers. With time comes experience, and the more you go after what you want, the more wisdom and experience you will gain.

AQUARIOUS

FIVE OF PENTACLES REVERSED - Perseverance through challenging times undoubtedly builds character. The Five of Pentacles Reversed is a sign that the hardship you've encountered is coming to an end! You are on your way to generating a new source of income, whether it be a new job or passive income. You're able to get back on your feet and be independent once again. This test of character shows that you are able to survive through the tough times and come through strong on the other side! Reflect inward and take inventory of the riches that you have, inside and out. If this challenge has taught you anything, it's that money isn't everything and cannot buy your happiness. Release your scarcity and poverty mindset and rebuild your finances, one step at a time.

PISCES

TEN OF CUPS - You've come full circle and are feeling emotionally fulfilled, especially with your relationships and family. The bonds that you share are warm and harmonious, creating a strong foundation. The inner peace you have overflows with clarity and grace, reaching beyond depths, through cells in your body to your soul. Time is in your favour, holding space for you to fully express yourself in relationships. Revel in this beautiful moment; it is here that you can appreciate the connection between your friendships and the relationship you have with yourself. You are very much aligned with your personal values, creating an alluring strength and resilience. Enjoy time with your loved ones, knowing that the wholeness you experience with them reflects the wholeness you've created for yourself.

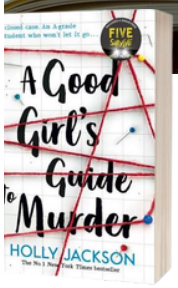


Krista Kayser

Krista Kayser is a multi-passionate creative, intuitive guide, and the visionary behind The Vibe Curator. To book a reading visit: thevibecurator.ca

THE READING ROOM





Good Girls Guide To Murder
-Holly Jackson

Our book reviews usually share our honest take on what's actually worth reading in the self-improvement world.

But here's the thing: you can overdo healing. When healing happens too much on the skin, it can turn into a keloid. And in real life, constantly "working on yourself" can start to feel the same: tight, heavy, and never-ending.

So this summer, we're permitting ourselves to breathe.

We're leaning into reading for fun. A little mystery. A little suspense. A little "just one more chapter" energy. Because rest, joy, and whimsy aren't distractions, they're part of the work too.

Our Summer pick: ***A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson,*** the first book in a three-part trilogy that's fast, twisty, and impossible to put down. It follows Pip, a smart, curious teen who starts investigating a closed murder case for a school project... and quickly realizes the story everyone accepted might not be the truth.

And when you finish the trilogy, you can take it one step further: the series is on Netflix, so you can watch and decide for yourself whether it measures up to the books or whether the books do it better.



GOOD EATS

Old Spagetti Factory
54 The Esplanade

Each month, two of my compadres and I visit restaurants across Toronto. Some are inspired by TikTok, others by friends and family, but this season we plugged into the spirit of whimsy and affordability. The food club decided to revisit old favourites, which is exactly how I ended up at *The Old Spaghetti Factory.* It's one of those places that instantly takes me back to childhood: cozy, a little kitschy in the best way, and full of that "we used to come here for a treat" energy.

Expect classic Italian comfort food in a warm, family-style setting, big plates, familiar flavours, and the kind of meal that feels like a throwback (without the throwback price tag). It's simple, satisfying, and honest. Sometimes that's exactly what summer needs.

If you're craving a low-pressure night out that still feels fun, this is a solid pick.

What's your nostalgic restaurant, the one that always hits, no matter how grown you are?



COACHING CORNER

with Coach Janine

DAYDREAMS TO REALITY

THE PERSISTENCE PLAN FOR THE WOMAN WHO'S TIRED OF CIRCLING THE SAME DESIRE

In the Spring issue, we talked about daydreams. Not as a distraction, laziness, or proof that you're unfocused or unrealistic.

We named the truth: **your daydreams can be information.** They can reveal what's missing. They can point to needs that have been unmet for too long: rest, freedom, support, spaciousness, creativity, peace, alignment, a different pace, a more honest version of your life.

And if that Spring article felt like a deep exhale, I want to offer you the next step for Summer, because awareness is powerful... but persistence is what makes the dream real.

This Summer Edition is about **The Power of Persistence,** the relentless spirit that keeps showing up, even when it's slow, messy, and nobody claps right away.

Let's build on the daydream conversation with one question:

What if your daydream isn't the problem... but your lack of planning is?

STEP 1: PICK ONE DAYDREAM (THE ONE THAT KEEPS COMING BACK)

Most women don't struggle with dreaming. We struggle with choosing. We have ten visions, five tabs open, and a head full of "one day." **Persistence needs focus.**

Pick one daydream to work with this month, the one that keeps tapping you on the shoulder.

- "I keep imagining a slower morning."
- "I keep picturing myself working for myself."
- "I keep daydreaming about being in a room with women who get me."
- "I keep imagining a life where I'm not carrying everything alone."

STEP 2: NAME THE NEED UNDER THE FANTASY

Here's the part that changes everything. A daydream is rarely about the surface details; it's about the feelings underneath. Ask yourself:

- What do I think this daydream would give me?
- What am I craving more of?
- What am I tired of?

QUICK DECODER (USE THIS AS A MIRROR)

If you keep daydreaming about...	>	It may be pointing to a need for...
A slower life	>	Boundaries + a new relationship with time
Starting over somewhere new	>	Freedom + identity renewal
Being alone in peace	>	Rest + nervous-system safety
Being seen and celebrated	>	Visibility + confidence + permission
A supportive circle	>	Community + accountability
A life that feels more "you"	>	Alignment + honesty



Step 3: Choose a 5% step (small enough to repeat)

This is where persistence becomes real. The goal isn't to blow up your life. The goal is to build a bridge from where you are to where you keep imagining yourself, so choose one action that makes the daydream 5% more real this week.
Not 50%.Five.

Five percent is sustainable and repeatable. This is how you stop circling and start moving.

Examples:

- If your daydream is rest: a 10-minute quiet start, three mornings this week.
- If your daydream is freedom: one "time ownership" decision (say no, simplify, delegate).
- If your daydream is support: ask for help once—out loud, directly.
- If your daydream is visibility: post once, pitch once, introduce yourself once.
- If your daydream is alignment: one honest conversation you've been avoiding.

Step 4: Turn it into a 30-day persistence rhythm

Motivation is cute. But it's not reliable. Persistence is.

Choose a rhythm you can keep for 30 days:

- Daily (5–10 minutes)
- 3x per week (simple and steady)
- Weekly (one big move)

Then decide your "minimum." Your minimum is what you do even when you're tired, busy, or not in the mood, becasue the women who change their lives aren't the women who do the most.

They're the women who do the minimum... consistently.

WHAT PERSISTENCE LOOKS LIKE

- **Choosing one dream** instead of entertaining ten
- **5% steps** you can repeat, not 50% leaps you can't sustain
- **A 30-day rhythm** (daily, 3x/week, or weekly)
- **A minimum commitment** for the days you feel tired
- **A momentum metric** (actions, time, check-ins, progress)
- **A boundary** that protects your focus from noise and opinions
- **A return plan** for when you fall off (because you will)



Step 5: Protect your persistence from the noise

When you start taking your daydream seriously, you may meet resistance. Sometimes it's internal: doubt, fear, perfectionism, and sometimes it's external: opinions, side-eyes, people who suddenly have a lot to say.

Other times, like it or not, it's jealousy. Your consistency can be confronting to people who are still negotiating their own courage. So here's your boundary:

Not everyone gets access to your becoming.

Share your plan with people who are safe. Build quietly if you need to. But keep building.

HER SUMMER ASSIGNMENT: THE PERSISTENCE PLAN

Pick one daydream and complete these prompts:

1. My repeated daydream is:
2. The need under it is:
3. My 5% step is:
4. My 30-day rhythm is: (daily / 3x week / weekly)
5. My minimum commitment is:
6. The boundary I'm setting to protect my momentum is:

Spring permitted you to listen to your daydreams. Summer is your invitation to act on them. Not with pressure; with persistence, because the life you keep imagining isn't asking for a perfect version of you. It's asking for a consistent one, and if you keep showing up-5% at a time-your daydream won't stay a daydream.

It will become your reality.



Janine Bowen
Success Coach
Founder of **HERC**OLLECTED
Send your questions/requests to hercollected@gmail.com

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS/REQUESTS TO HERCOLLECTED@GMAIL.COM

What's New With HER

It's Time for a *celebration*

It's time to celebrate. Woo Hoo, we're stepping into our 6th year of HER, and this season feels like a whole new chapter. We've finally decided to bring the vision to life. The Showing will be our inaugural event, launching **HER**COLLECTED INC in a way that's uniquely HER: curated, intentional, elevated, and rooted in community. It's more than an event; it's a moment. A real-life gathering that reflects the art, the beauty, the depth, and the magic we've been building all along.

If you've been watching HER grow from an idea into a movement... this is one you'll want to be in the room for.

Living HER LIFE

Sometimes the best way to strengthen community is simply to help people find each other.

We're so excited to keep the momentum going with our Summer Living HER Life experiences fun, feel-good events designed to get you out of the group chat and into real-life connection. Think: laughter, good vibes, new faces, and the kind of moments that remind you you're not doing life alone.

More connection. More community. More reasons to get dressed, step outside, and step into the life you keep saying you want. And if this season is teaching us anything, it's that one brave "yes" can open the door to a whole new chapter.

Living HER Life experiences, including:

- Living HER Life @ Shakespeare In The Park – Summer Edition
- Living HER Life @ Bata Shoe Museum September Edition
- The Showing (TBC)
- Living HER Life @ Akin – Michelin Star Experience

Explore the full lineup and RSVP here: HER Live Events

Tell us what you want to do this summer:

- What kind of events would you actually show up for?
- What days/times work best for you?
- Do you want something chill and cozy, or a whole vibe?
- Who are you bringing with you (or do you want to come solo and meet people)?

COMING THIS FALL

THE SHOWING

A curated, multi-disciplinary event that brings together artists working with objects, scent, voice, images, and intuition.

It's an intimate, gallery-style experience where each artist shares their work in one shared space built for inspiration, learning, connection, and community. You'll experience jewellery, scent, literature, film, and sensory practices not as "vendors," but as individual pieces that together create one cohesive showing.

ISSUE 02 I VOLUME 6

HER COLLECTION

COLLECT.CONNECT.CREATE

Janine Bowen

Regular Contributors:

Megan Robinson (@missmeganrobinson)

Lisa Ann B. Bannis-Matthew (@labblution)

Krista Kayser (@vibecurator)

CONTACT

hercollected@gmail.com

www.hercollected.com

IG:@hercollected

FOR EXCLUSIVE ONLINE CONTENT VISIT
WWW.HERCOLLECTED. COM