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# Timberly Whitfield

TALKS TO LIFESCAPE ABOUT HER LOVE OF LIFE

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# 'There's so much good happening in the world

From missionary's daughter to rocking the media world as a host on a daily show: Timberly Whitfield talks to Alexia Weeks

**T**he energy and enthusiasm that spills over when Timberly calls from America is unmistakable. Her friendly accent is coupled with words that speak of truth, compassion and a desire to do more in this world than just work her way up the celebrity ladder.

Timberly has hosted and produced a variety of American television shows but today hosts an inspirational daily programme that hears from 'ordinary people doing extraordinary things'. New Morning has been running on the Hallmark Channel since 2002 and Timberly is proud of its magazine-style series. As she explains: "There is so much good happening in the world, it's nice to be able to wake up to an inspirational show and not focus on the negative news as soon as you turn on your TV." This ritzy, glitzy celebrity lifestyle hasn't been handed to her on a plate however and I begin to understand why she hosts such an upbeat and supportive show. "I spent most of my youth living in Tanzania and Nigeria as my parents were lay missionaries with the United Methodist Church. They weren't the preaching type though; they actually went out there to help people learn about agriculture and organic food," she says. "Of course back then we didn't know that it was organic, it was just what happened naturally. I must say, though, 'missionary' is such an antiquated term, you think of someone with a cross standing over a starving child. It wasn't like that."

## GOING VEGGIE

A vegan now, Timberly grew up on a meat and veg diet but the market meat for sale over there

was beginning to make everybody sick. So her father resorted to hunting for deer, until they realised that a vegetarian diet would be much easier, healthier and compassionate.

"When we came back from Africa, people thought we were nuts for being vegetarian as our Western culture was so geared towards meat in those days," she laughs.

"I like to do my bit for the environment - it's ingrained in me from growing up over there so there's no way I could eat meat. It causes so much pollution, more so than cars." Living as a missionary's daughter, Timberly was living a naturally environmentally conscious lifestyle without knowing it. Reduce, reuse, recycle was a mantra to live by if they wanted to survive. "We only had three hours of electricity a day," she tells me, "so we'd have to crank up the generator which was hard work. But then it would get into

**"...SO THERE'S NO WAY I COULD EAT MEAT. IT CAUSES SO MUCH POLLUTION, MORE SO THAN CARS" TIMBERLY WHITFIELD**

motion and go round so fast! It was very scary.

"Most of the time we lived by candlelight so I had very poor eyesight. We also collected rainwater for cooking and bathing, which would be filtered by a hand pump, and gathered branches for the fire to cook food."

## REALLY MAKING A DIFFERENCE...

I ask her if she believes the media are jumping on the eco-bandwagon or if she thinks they are genuinely concerned for our environment. "I

will be speaking at the Washington DC Green Festival in a few days and this is something I will cover, actually. I do think that some are green by association and that the issue could get dropped by a few outlets in time, but in the meantime it's getting some great coverage and making everyone more conscious of the situation. The thing is, this is a problem that won't go away. Our planet is talking to us and we need to sit up and listen." I tell her more about Lifescape and how we are branching into America even more in 2008, and she's excited!

Timberly talks of her life with her husband and her five year old daughter Raina who is learning about responsibility by watching her family. Timberly proudly describes how every year Raina's grandparents, now retired lay missionaries, take her unwanted toys and package them off to Africa where they are cherished again. "She then gets sent a picture of the children using her toys and it makes a real connection for her," explains Timberly. We both agree that many Western kids and teenagers in affluent areas need a good wake-

up call and that a volunteering trip to a developing country would help them become more aware.

"I want to start a programme for 16-17 year olds just like that. It would really change their world view. I know it would work, I've seen it in the eyes of young people who came on my show and told me about their experiences in Ghana." This chat-show host clearly stands apart from aggressively led shows like Jerry Springer. Her desire to make a difference has very deep, strong roots. ♣



\* You can learn more about  
Timberly and her show  
New Morning at [www.newmorningtv.tv](http://www.newmorningtv.tv) and [www.timberlywhitfield.com](http://www.timberlywhitfield.com)