

How Designing a Fan Site for Fantasia Helped Save a Baby

In 2004 when Fantasia was on American Idol, I was living with my ex, and he was doing everything for me. He worked while I stayed home taking care of the house, and he provided whenever our family needed something. The arrangement was something that he preferred.

Around that time, I joined an online community. It was a social site that was created by a man. I forgot his name. That's where I met another man (one of the members) who ran his own website—a very simple site where people could join to cheat or hook up for casual encounters. (I was not a member of that site. He explained it to me.) Because I had a background in graphics and web design, he asked me to redesign his site. Even though his site at the time was basic, he got paid a lot just for letting people join.

I thought, “I can do a better site and get paid for the same thing.” I was ready—to get paid. So, I sat down at my computer to start designing an adult site for myself. But suddenly, there was something in my spirit that said, “Don't do it.” The message I got was that I would gain more by designing a site for someone else than making my own like that. I wanted my own money, sure, but I was told I had skills—I'm self-taught—and I should use them for good. So, I didn't do that site.

Not long after, I got other spiritual messages, telling me I was meant to be somewhere else, doing something else. Hearing that voice scared me so much I curled up on the couch in the dark. When my ex came home from work, he thought I was mad at him, but I was mad at myself—I couldn't figure out what I was supposed to be or where I was to do it.

One day, I was watching American Idol and saw Fantasia. I searched the internet for fan sites but barely found any. At that moment, I got another spiritual message to design a fan site for her. It all connected with what I was told before about not building that other site.

So, I built her fan site. When the voting controversy hit, I added a petition link that someone else who had a fan site as well provided. That got me a call from *People* magazine. The reporter asked if Fantasia's family knew about my site. I said probably not. She said it was nice and that they should probably know. That call inspired me to call Pastor Collins, Fantasia's late

grandmother, for the first time. I was nervous—not knowing how she’d react—but there was something in my spirit that kept urging me to call.

Fantasia’s granddad, Paw Paw, answered first. Then Pastor Collins came on the phone. To my surprise, she was warm and kind. I told her who I was and why I called, and she was excited. Tasia’s stardom was still fresh then. Pastor Collins shared things about me during that first talk that there was no way for her to really know. It felt like I’d known her for years. At that point, it wasn’t even about Tasia anymore. Pastor Collins and I clicked, and something inside me stirred. I laughed and cried in the same conversation.

I promised myself I had to meet Pastor Collins before I died—even if it meant flying, which scared me so much. (I have since taken multiple flights.) But that’s how strong my spirit was moving—the entire experience, from start to finish, was amazing.

I was led to go to North Carolina. I told my ex, and he said, “Nope.” He wasn’t ready. So, I stayed. But about a month later, the same spiritual message came back, saying I had to go. It felt like if I didn’t, I’d be punished. I was just learning to obey God’s instructions, and when He said “go,” I had to.

I brought it up again to my ex, and again he said no. I told him I’d have to leave him behind. I was so nervous—I can’t even explain it. He didn’t like it at all. I tried explaining that God wanted me to see and do something there, but I didn’t know what until I got there.

I was so scared at times I felt like I couldn’t breathe. But I knew what was coming would change my life forever—and it did.

I left my kids with my mom and got on the Greyhound headed to North Carolina. Before I left, I didn’t know where I’d stay. I just had to go, no matter how crazy it sounded to anyone—and it was crazy.

There was a Fantasia fan who I will call “K” that I met online. She told me I could stay with her, but the night before I left, she said it probably wasn’t a good idea. Anyway, I made it to North Carolina—but in Atlanta, the bus I was on hit an 18-wheeler about ten minutes from the terminal. The truck kept going, and thankfully no one was injured. I felt like something was trying to stop me from reaching my destined place.

When I finally got to North Carolina, I stayed at a motel. The next day, “K” took me to Fantasia’s family church where they were having prayer. That night was my first time there. We sat in the back until the service ended, then I went up and introduced myself to Pastor Collins and some others. I told her I was Ayana, the one from she’d talked to. We had spoken many times by then. Pastor Collins hugged me so tightly and it was such a beautiful, confirming welcome. I knew right then that was where I was supposed to be.

Pastor Collins asked where I was staying. I told her about the motel, but she said I didn’t have to stay there. I insisted I was okay. I knew God was telling me to see something, and I couldn’t if I stayed with her.

During our talk, Paw Paw said Spirit was telling him there was something they were supposed to do for me—not money, but something else—which he couldn’t explain.

Eventually, I went to a shelter (getting the last bed they had that day) because I didn’t want to spend all my money on a room. That experience taught me so much.

On my second day at the shelter, I went to a department store with a lady from there to fill out job applications. She couldn’t find work, but somehow, I was hired on the spot. It felt like that spot was saved for me because others had been searching for months.

Then came the time I met Fantasia’s mother, Diane. I hadn’t been to church in years; I didn’t grow up in it. Sometimes I went with friends or family, but that day at the church, I had no idea Diane and Tasia would be there. I wasn’t into altar calls—I feared what someone would say—but I was told to go up. I procrastinated until I finally got up to head to the front of the church.

When Diane called people for the altar call, I felt broken because my past is stained and ugly. I stood there crying—happy, hurting, confused all at once. She told me something that I have kept in my heart since. I was excited about what God had in store and overjoyed.

At no point did I have to be at a shelter; Pastor Collins didn’t really like me staying in one, but I assured her I was okay. Many things were revealed to me through the time I was there.

I ended up leaving North Carolina. There is more that I will share at a later time.

On March 23, 2005—almost a year after Fantasia won Season 3 of *American Idol*—I received an email at the fan site email address from someone who was also a fan of hers. The message read, “I just want to know how Fantasia did it. I’m 17 and I’m about to have a baby. I have no stable home. I don’t want to be on the street. What should I do? I’m all alone.”

I felt bad reading it and responded by asking where she was located because I wanted to look up some resources for her. I also asked when her baby was due and told her I understood how she felt. I was a teen mom myself and related to some of the emotions she was experiencing. I told her to let me know if I could help in any way and that I would do what I could.

The next day, she wrote again. The subject of the email said, “Thanks for caring.” She explained that her baby wasn’t due until September, but she feared that once her mom found out, she would be kicked out. She described her family’s living situation and said someone in her family wanted her to tell her mom, but she didn’t want to because her mom had already told her she would kick her out if she ever got pregnant.

She had just been accepted into college and felt depressed because she was unable to live a normal life due to her decisions. She couldn’t go to prom or take the senior trip to the amusement park.

Toward the end of her message, she wrote, “Thanks for caring, there's not too much of that around. I wish I had a family like Fantasia's.”

We exchanged several more messages.

I reassured her that everything would be fine. She considered all her options. For personal reasons, she did not want to give her baby up for adoption. She asked me how I told my mom when I got pregnant at 14. She said she was afraid to tell her mom about the pregnancy, fearing her mom might force her to get an abortion. Her email continued, “At this point, my baby has a heartbeat and fingers and feet. I couldn’t do it. Did you contemplate abortion?”

She expressed that she wanted me to keep talking to her, and I continued doing so.

I shared my abortion story with her. After my abortion, I started looking online for other girls who had gone through the same thing. I came across a very disturbing site that showed babies

after their mothers had aborted. That's when I really started to regret having the abortion because I hadn't known much about the procedure before I had it done. I have since shared my abortion story on the Abort73 site and am working on a short film about it.

In the email where I shared my story with her, I also gave her a link to an organization's website that helped moms through pregnancy and up to a year after giving birth. She replied, "Thanks, Ayana. I'm going to check out the website and then email you back. You know, I never expected anyone to write me back. I just wrote your site because I was stressed."

Days later, she told me about the negative things her child's father had said about her. He told her he believed she trapped him. She began to feel even more alone.

A few days after that, she wrote to me saying her mom had found out and that she was going ahead with an abortion. She believed it would be best because there was so much that she wanted to do with her life and didn't see that happening with a baby. She continued, "This is a decision that I might regret for the rest of my life, but I don't know. My appointment is for tomorrow."

I panicked typing my response. I pleaded with her not to go through with it. I wanted her to give me a couple of days to find a family for her baby. I really didn't want her to have an abortion. I told her that I had never met her, but I cared deeply about both her and the baby. I shared more of my life with her, still pleading with her not to go through with it.

The next day, I received an email saying she had gone to the abortion clinic that morning and found out she was four months pregnant. She said she didn't want to go through with the abortion because it felt wrong to her. She also said her boyfriend's mom wanted her to keep the baby and would help her.

She told me she would write later because she had school the next morning and was tired. She wrote, "I'm getting so thick. I can't fit my clothes anymore."

I told her I was happy to hear from her. I had prayed to God that morning, asking Him to touch her heart so she would not go through with the abortion.

Our emails continued.

On April 21st, she had an ultrasound, and on the 22nd she wrote, "It's a boy!"

Ayana Elon | ayana@inlifewoman.com

A month later, although she had faced some very tragic challenges, she was still pressing forward, and I continued to pray for her. I reached out to some women that were connected to my fan site for Fantasia to send her supportive messages.

At one point in July, I hadn't heard from her for a month. She had still been going through difficult times. I was glad she kept pushing through.

On September 9, 2005, she wrote to give me an update. At the end of the email, she said she would write again when the baby arrived. She had finally settled on a name she was happy with.

On September 16th, she sent me a message to let me know her baby had arrived three days earlier. She said, "I look at him and imagine if I had aborted him, what would my life be like."

I am very glad she had her baby, and we have continued to communicate. We are still connected now. Her son will turn 20 next month.

He has been raised with love, and his mom treats his life as a gift. Every year on his birthday, she writes very encouraging messages for him. He is very talented—he plays the violin and piano. He is respectful and not a troublemaker.

He carries a light that people notice when they meet him. His mom has told me many times how much she appreciates what I did for her.

I still love them both.

I went through my pain and shared my story with her. She chose life for her son instead of living with his abortion story. He will be one to carry his light and do many great things in this world. I am so very glad to know him. It is a blessing to witness it.

All of this started with a fan site for Fantasia. Obedience connected us.

God was able to use it for His glory.

Ayana Elon

My abortion story can be read at www.inlifewoman.com.

Ayana Elon | ayana@inlifewoman.com