

# Talii's journey of self-confidence and worth is a celebration of "Thickness"

By **Murjani Rawls** - Oct 30, 2019



*Photo Credit: Graham Oakley*

Everybody has a personal journey where they have to climb an emotional mountain to arrive at who they really are. Life is full of peaks and valleys, some of which take a little bit longer to climb than others. When I spoke to singer-songwriter Talii, I got a real sense of peace. It's the peace that you have when you've been through the worst and come out the other side an even better person than you were before.

If you take the time to listen to Talii's acoustic songs to the sensual R&B flavor of "Thickness," it's an upward incline of personal awareness. "Thickness" is not only a celebration of Talii's continuation evolution of a strong woman and artist, but it's a pull-away ticket of inspiration to anybody who needs it.

I wanted to touch on "Mouth" and the visual performance of your video. The song has a certain sexiness to it. From listening to your music, from your acoustic songs until now, there's a journey

of self-assurance and confidence that radiates off of you in this video. How did you arrive at doing this particular style of video for "Mouth?" It really shows not only the personality of the song, but your personality as well.

It's funny because the song and the video all came together very naturally and almost spur of the moment. There really wasn't very much premeditation behind it. For the song, it happened in the studio very fast and I just wanted to do something funky and I told [producer] G Blitz that's what I want to do. He started making the track and just had a basic drumbeat. I started writing the lyrics on top of the tempo that he had. Once he started playing the chords, the melody I had in my head took about 40 minutes to put together.

For the video, we were on set taking pictures for content to put out around the song. We had our videographer, Hector there. He was just like going around to different rooms and gathering an idea of what to do because he knew he wanted to shoot every single element. We didn't want it to be like a music video with any kind of storyline or anything like that. Just something fun and playful. He was like, "Okay, let's cut over here. Let's turn over there." Different things came together so quickly and naturally. I like the fact that it was I was able to be fun and playful.

With self-esteem and confidence, that's something that definitely came with me as I grew older. In my mid-20s, I didn't always have that confidence. I feel like I'm just now really starting to find myself. Feeling proud of who I am, my body, and where I am in life. Being a woman and just embracing my not feeling like I need to be a certain way or set a certain box. I just want to feel good within myself. I feel like that little visual, even though it's simple, and it came together very quickly. It portrays those sides of me.

**Talk a little bit about that. About your personal journey and feeling comfortable in your own skin. We're all human and we all have the insecurities that we have to fight through. One thing that I find about your music your fans are very thankful that you share your journey. You embrace a mantra of self-confidence, being who you are, and being proud of it. Tell me about how you got to that point and what obstacles you have to overcome.**

I feel like I'm starting to come into this space of loving and embracing myself more. I went through so much of my life coming from hating myself, not liking myself, and who I was. Judging every aspect of me. I also have struggled with depression and I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder a year ago. Dealing with that for the majority of your life and looking at yourself

in the mirror and constantly being like “you’re not good enough. You’re this, you’re that, you’re too emotional or too sensitive.” Then, you start judging every aspect of your appearance and how you prepare yourself. My voice. I couldn’t stand to listen to my own songs for so long.

So, I went through such a period of time of disliking the person that I am and the body that I live in. It got to a point where it was like, “I don’t want to live like this anymore. I don’t want to live, disliking, literally the shell that I was born into.” I didn’t want to live like that anymore. I realized it was too easy for me to love other people, but it was not easy enough for me to love myself at all. That was affecting my life and affecting my relationships. It was just affecting literally everything. So, I went on a spiritual journey. This inner journey because of so much like sadness and pain that I went through. That really changed everything for me.

I went on this inner journey and sat with my own darkness, so to speak to understand and heal myself. That just brought so much light into my life. I started to see my strength and see what I was overcoming. I started looking at the mirror and would be like, “Wow, girl, you’re doing this and I’m proud of you! I’m proud of where you went, where you came from, and where you’re going.” Everything shifted my whole perspective of myself. I’m thankful for what I went through because it led me to where I am now. Lead me to do all that inner work. Now I feel I genuinely do love myself, my body, and my mind.

I still struggle. It’s definitely still not easy some days, but I’m so much better than I was. I just want to inspire more people to love themselves because it’s so important. We can’t live life to the fullest if we don’t truly love who we are. With everything that we’ve been through. All this pain and darkness and things you may not like about ourselves, those are the things that make us beautiful and that makes the light shine even brighter. We have to love all those parts of us and take time to understand those in terms of those still. So I’m thankful that people resonate with my music and they listen to it and they feel confident because I’ve been through you know, a lot to get to this point and like, it makes me the happiest to be able to inspire people to love themselves.

I wanted to talk about “Front Seat” and how there’s a duality to it. It could be a love song for somebody else. You also say the lyric, “my soul was falling for me.” I also took it as a self-love song as well. Then there’s “In Stone” which you did a live performance of. That’s a beautiful, mid-tempo song that you haven’t officially released yet. It also touches on that subject of love. I get

the sense that this love that you are speaking about is balanced. I think that's the best kind, right? A equals exchange from person to person.

Absolutely, I totally agree with that. Balance is a huge theme in my life. It's always been like a huge theme because I feel like I deal with duality a lot on the inside. So I was trying to find balance in myself and in my life as well. So, I definitely do use those things a lot in my music. Frankly, it came together so beautifully in the studio and everybody had a part in writing the song which is amazing. You talked about the feeling. I play the track, I like to go based on how I feel and how I feel about the vibration of the music. Sometimes, it'll bring pictures or images in my mind. That's kind of what I like to write off as the feeling and what it invokes.

It made me feel like this feeling of just what I was going through at the time. Really looking back and seeing all these things that I have gone through and then looking forward and seeing where I'm going. Also, I feel like I want to become. I was in this weird space of being right in the middle of those two. I was feeling so much heaviness and turmoil still. Going through what I went through and that heaviness is still there. There was also feeling just like excitement for life and this and seeing that "okay, even though I'm still feeling like this, I made it through and now I'm stronger. I'm doing the things that I always wanted to do." Maybe I thought that I couldn't do it. Just feeling the space of both of those energies.

I expressed that to everybody in the studio that I was working with, and producers were expressing or feeling the same way. Kind of on that same energy. Then Tony [Berly] and Dustin [Anderson], the guys at DNA, they also expressed the same thing. We were all in the same vibration the same way. When I started writing it and throwing them the lyrics, Dustin actually came up with "my soul is falling for me." It tied together both of the verses that I had written so perfectly. It was beautiful that it was a collaboration of energy that we're all experiencing at the time. That was that balance, that duality of where we were and where we're going. Feeling like "okay, I'm good in that."

I'm falling in love with myself and maybe I'm not there yet, but I'm falling. I still very much resonate with it and I love that song so much. It is very much about both self-love, but also creating it as well. With "In Stone," I actually wrote that song in 2016. I didn't even think it we're going to do anything with it, but it was such a beautiful song. The lyrics again came from an

image in the picture and evolved from there. I just like how it kind of paints that duality like you were saying of love. It's like should "I take this next or should we not?"

We're right on that fine line of making this into something concrete and building something or just remaining friends are not designed to get that final step. So yeah, I thought it was a cool way of portraying that kind of emotion that I feel like a lot of people experience.

**So, I wanted to talk about "Thickness," but I also wanted to start at the beginning at first. So I'm going to rope "Light" in here. "Light" was one of the first songs that you posted on YouTube. It's such an empowering song. We've touched on a lot of spirituality in this interview already. I feel that going through your journey of learning to love rediscovering yourself, you end up right at "Thickness." That's the victory lap right there. I think this is a great thing that's being celebrated in music or any creative medium. No matter what size or what shape you come in, you're still beautiful. Was that song something that just came to you in the spur of the moment? What's the journey from "Light" to "Thickness", which the well-deserved celebration of who you are and what you've become?**

With "Light," I just wanted to write a spiritual song. I wrote that a while ago. It was portraying the fact that I felt this pull of this negative energy from living in a very heavy time of trying to better ourselves, There's a lot of long going on in the world, you know, and we see it everywhere. A lot of people sometimes get trapped in that mindset of feeling like "oh my gosh, the world is horrible. Everything is going to shit." I feel like a lot of people get stuck in that mindset of "this is the way it's going to be and it's going to be bad." That's drawing negative energy to manifest a negative outcome.

I truly believe that we're all growing and evolving and we all have the opportunity to make the human mind and consciousness a better place. That will, in turn, make the world a better place. We're all evolving and everything and I feel like that the polarity again. and where we can go into the darkness if we choose. Or we can go it into the light. I feel like we always have that choice. Everybody has a choice within themselves to change, to grow, and evolve.

That's where I was at the time. I was going through a really dark place. Seeing that I can make it through and there's a light that can bring us even though there's a lot of darkness surrounding it. There's always going to be light. The only way that we even experience light is to know that there's a dark side. I feel like that was an experience that showed me beginning to speak and

what I was going through emotionally what I was going. Then, I feel 'Thickness' is like "I found myself." I feel like it definitely is like a celebration. A celebratory laugh and celebration of myself. As a 26-year-old adult. I'm a mom. I went through weight fluctuations and again, like just not really liking my body or where I was. I just feel like my life is starting to align and that definitely was just an expression of me feeling good within myself and I want to stress that. I want to shake what my momma gave me a little.

## **Murjani Rawls**

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Journalist, Self-published author of five books, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls has been stretching his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed over 200+ artists spanning many genres, written over 600 articles ranging displaying his passionate aspirations to keep evolving as his years in media continue.

