



MONICA LEWINSKY

Social activist, Writer, Public Speaker



Monica Lewinsky is a public speaker, writer, contributor to Vanity Fair magazine and social activist in the battle against online harassment - advocating for a safer social media environment. She addresses such topics as survival, resilience, digital reputation and equality in both her public speaking and writing.

Monica's lens for these societal issues is focused by her myriad unique and profound experiences: working in government - both in the White House and the Pentagon; the investigation that resulted from her time in Washington, D.C.; involvement in media projects as both producer and subject; as an entrepreneur and designer; and lastly, education. She graduated with a degree in Psychology from Lewis & Clark College (Portland, Oregon) and, living abroad for graduate school, earned a Masters degree in Social Psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

In 2014, after a decade long self-imposed retreat from public life, Lewinsky authored an essay, titled "Shame and Survival", for Vanity Fair in which she overlapped personal experiences and cultural observations regarding the shift towards, what Professor Nicholas Mills calls, a "Culture of Humiliation". (June, 2014). The acclaimed piece, which received over two million unique views online, was an entry point for her to begin a process she describes as "taking back my narrative and giving a purpose to my past."

Lewinsky became known to the public in 1998, when it was revealed as part of a federal investigation that she had had an intimate relationship with then President Bill Clinton. Overnight, at just 24 years old, she went unwillingly, from being an entirely private individual to a public figure on the global stage. Being at the centre of a legal, political and media

maelstrom nearly destroyed her; her survival - despite the odds - is a compelling and inspiring story.

The investigation unfolded against a backdrop of a changing media landscape with the advent of both competing 24-hour News Networks and the Internet. With the birth of social media in recent years, Lewinsky saw the increasing proliferation of the perpetuation of shame and humiliation online. As someone who had experienced both, on the widest scale and at a young age, she saw that she could participate in the public discourse about online harassment and work to effect change.

In October, 2014, Lewinsky gave a speech about the Internet's reputation shredder at the Forbes 30 Under 30 Summit where she spoke from the perspective of being Patient Zero - having been the first person to have her reputation completely destroyed online. This well received and widely watched speech launched her present day speaking career.

In March, 2015, she was a speaker at the annual TED Conference, the theme of which was "Truth and Dare". Her speech, "The Price of Shame" was viewed nearly 5 million times in the first month of release. Lewinsky is looking for ways to use her experiences to help transform the culture of shame, as well as to let people who suffer at the hands of humiliation know that they are less alone. She is an authentic voice for anyone who has been marginalized and who has struggled to be seen for his or her true self.

On a personal note, Monica is passionate about art - particularly that of contemporary artist Ed Ruscha, game for traveling to new places, loves to sing show tunes, frequents flea markets and doesn't cook.