

## African American woman shows girls they are positively perfect with doll line

Written by Chida R. Warren-Darby, Special to the NNPA from The San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Newspaper  
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Dr. Lisa Williams is a petite, beautiful brown skinned woman, with a broad endearing smile. She's genuine, compassionate, soulful, and is the creator of Positively Perfect Dolls. No this isn't a story about a woman who all her life desired to make dolls and sell them to little girls, and this isn't a story about a woman seeking fortune and fame. This is a story about a woman who had the greater desire to fill a need. "I don't create dolls. I show the beauty in our children. I see myself as healing generations," says Williams.

A visionary leader, award winning speaker and author, Dr. Lisa (as she is affectionately known) is the CEO of the World Of Entertainment, Publishing and Inspiration (World of EPI), LLC. The World of EPI was formed with the mission to be an expression of joy. Williams is also known for her ability to motivate executives, future leaders and audiences of all sizes. In addition to winning numerous teaching awards from major universities such as Penn State, Ohio State and the University of Arkansas, Williams is the first female to hold a multimillion dollar endowed chair in her field, the first African American female to graduate from the Ohio State University's Marketing and Logistics Department, and the second woman in her discipline to become a full

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professor.

Williams has dedicated her life to educating and developing future and current leaders. Major corporations and President Clinton's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection have sought her advice. Williams' research has practical and global implications and as such she has spoken to audiences in the United States, Belgium, Austria, Canada, London and Australia.

With numerous accolades under her wings, Williams has triumphantly created a flight path to success. But while on her journey of enlightening people through education, she realized that God yet required more of her. After publishing her book "Leading Beyond Excellence," Williams developed a partnership with Walmart, in which her books sold extremely well. It was something in her book that showed Walmart, she could offer something to their customers that they had been longing to do, which was to sell children's books that reflected multiculturalism. Williams believed she could tackle the job and was successful at helping to produce "Brandon's Really Bad, Really Good Day," and "Amelia Asks Why?," both books depicting African American children in a manner that young children of color could relate to. In a review of "Amelia Asks Why?," one parent wrote *"This book is perfect for my African-American daughter named Amelia. However not only does it work for her because of her name, she enjoys the story. She is learning about her surroundings and this book has encouraged her curiosity. In addition it gets her to clean her room."*

Another parent wrote *"The topic is appreciated and timely. My 2 year old daughter loves this book. We have read it often over the last year and at this point, we are using tape to keep it intact. I personally love the illustrations."*

After great sales, and tremendous feedback at this level, Walmart decided to throw Williams another challenge, and that was to create dolls! "Walmart understands and is sensitive to the needs in our community," she said. When beginning the process to create the dolls, Williams said that she wanted to find value in the project for our community. "I wanted to do something that was respectful to our community and our race. [Walmart] was saying 'We think you understand the community, and we want you to do a line of multicultural dolls'." Williams believes that this venture was an avenue to promote a ministry of positive self esteem.

From concept to production, Positively Perfect Dolls took approximately a year to complete. While the process was extraordinary, Williams shared that by no means was it effortless: "When I tell the story it sounds like it was easy. It wasn't easy." Williams didn't have distribution, and she didn't have experience. "I had to create a learning curve overnight. There was no other company I could go to, to get help," she said. Williams had to negotiate with suppliers which proved difficult because she didn't have a reputation or any years in the business. She also learned that Walmart doesn't do business with every supplier, so qualifying a supplier also proved arduous. While maintaining her residency in San Diego, Williams set out to develop a relationship with manufacturers in China. "I don't speak the language, and I got no support from banks," she said, even though she could prove she had Walmart's support. "I had to use all of my personal resources," but finance are not her driving force. Through it all, Williams said it was a labor of love. While birthing this product, Williams shared that the biggest change she has encountered was having to grow more spiritually.

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