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EVOLVE

The writing was on the wall. Funktion, the seven-piece funk rock band I had been a percussionist and rapper with for four years, was coming to an end. Inside of me a voice kept screaming: "YOU ARE A MUSICIAN!" I had no choice other than to go solo. But I had a problem.

When Funktion ended in 2013, I could not sing a song without hitting dozens of wrong notes. I could not play a full tune on guitar without playing a wrong chord, and I had zero experience being a looper. But that did not stop me. I was determined to be a musician traveling the world, inspiring people to live inspired lives. I remember sitting down at my office desk and writing the lyrics to "Evolve." In the first verse I sing

**As I write this rhyme
I begin to see the sign
This is a story to myself
A message to remind
Me of who I'm meant to be
Planted like a little seed
I'm growing like an oak tree
Where the roots are running deep.**

The words poured out of me so naturally. I put the pen to paper and the lyrics wrote themselves. This song has been a staple in my sets for the last four years and always reminds me of the person I want to be. These words are a constant reminder to follow my passions, to remember that I am on the right track, and to know it is a slow journey but so worth it!

I feel as if my journey is one that was always meant to be. This song is about using the journey to be the best version of myself. In the chorus I remind myself that

**The time has come
No longer judge
Spread the love to one another
Be as one
Have some fun
Support your sisters and your brothers.**

**Well, in this spin
Look within
Ask yourself what can be given**

**Time, energy, your money
The more you give the more you're living.**

I desire to be a person who is compassionate, who takes the time to help other people feel good by giving to others with my time, my energy, and my money. Each of us has a different way of giving something of ourselves to the world. As I get older, I realize I am judgmental sometimes, to the point where before I even know a person I am profiling him or her. I create expectations based on the stories I am telling myself about the person. These chorus lyrics help to program myself to be less judgmental and to be the change I wish to see in the world. The time to evolve is not tomorrow or a year from now, but right now.

We are all constantly evolving as individuals and as a species. The second verse talks about learning from our struggles and our mistakes in order to grow into the person we are meant to be.

**And I know we go through things that can be frustrating
If you really pay attention you can see them demonstrating
How to grow up
How to EVOLVE
How to take the past mistakes
Apply to present problems and solve.**

**With this I've been changing my gaze
And letting in rays
Taking a hard look at me and changing my ways
No longer wanna live my life a fighting the haze
I say goodbye to my addictions and vibrations are raised.**

This is the first song I released as brotha *James*. Even today I love singing it. “Evolve” is an affirmation to pay attention to the direction I am headed in, to choose the attitude I have, to consider the habits I adopt, and that, at the end of the day, to realize I am not perfect and can learn from my mistakes.

My highest hope is that the song helps you reflect on the times in your lives where you have learned lessons, become less judgmental, or acted to evolve into the person you want to become.

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