

BLACK & FEMALE: WHAT IS THE REALITY?®

Frequently Asked Questions

A Weekend Celebration and Training Retreat | September 17–20, 2026

Below are answers to the questions we hear most often about *Black & Female: What is the Reality?®*. If you don't see your question here, we'd love to hear from you! Feel free to reach out anytime at info@bepresent.org.

ABOUT THE TRAINING RETREAT

What is Black & Female: What is the Reality®?

It's an annual celebration and training retreat for people who identify as Black women and girls, hosted by Be Present, Inc. It began in 1983, when Lillie P. Allen gathered over 1,000 Black women and girls in Atlanta, and has continued ever since, grounded in the belief that Black women and girls, gathered in truth, can change the world. The weekend brings participants together to practice the Be Present Empowerment Model®, build authentic relationships, and lead from a place of self-knowledge.

Who is hosting the training retreat?

Black & Female: What is the Reality® is hosted by Be Present, Inc., a national nonprofit that teaches people the tools to know themselves, build authentic relationships, and lead more effectively in their communities and movements. For more than 30 years, Be Present has developed leaders across the country through the Be Present Empowerment Model®, a proven framework for personal and collective transformation. Black women and girls have always been at the heart of this work, and this retreat is one of the ways that work comes alive.

Why is it called “Black & Female”?

The name carries an important history. When Lillie P. Allen first convened *Black & Female: What is the Reality?®* in 1983 at Spelman College, the usage of the term "female" to describe Black women was a newly debated topic, one that would persist for many years to come. Understanding that the language around Black women's identity was itself a site of struggle, naming our reality plainly was an act of truth-telling and resistance. The name honors that legacy and the generations of Black women and girls who have gathered under this name. It is a legacy name and a living movement, and we hold it with intention.

When and where is the 2026 retreat?

September 17–20, 2026, at Forrest Hills Resort in the North Georgia mountains, approximately 1.5 hours from Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport.

Who is this retreat for?

Black & Female: What is the Reality?® is for all who identify as Black women and girls across every background, generation, and walk of life. Whether this is your first retreat or a long-awaited return, there is a place for you here.

I'm nonbinary — can I attend?

Yes. Black & Female is a space for all who identify as Black women and girls, including those whose relationship to that identity is expansive or nonbinary. If this is a community you feel called to, you belong here.

Do I need prior experience with Be Present to attend?

No. The training retreat welcomes both longtime community members and people encountering this work for the very first time. The weekend is designed to meet you wherever you are.

What is the Be Present Empowerment Model®?

Developed by Lillie P. Allen, it's a proven framework for personal and collective transformation built on three practices: knowing yourself outside the distress of oppression, listening in a conscious and present state, and building effective relationships that sustain true alliances. At the retreat, you'll be trained in the Model and have space to practice it. This is why the weekend is called a “training retreat.”

What will I actually do during the weekend?

Over four days, you'll take part in facilitated sessions and small-group work, share lived realities across generations, build relationships with other Black women and girls, and explore how race, gender, class, and power shape leadership. There's also rest, celebration, and joy woven throughout. Here's how the weekend unfolds:

Thursday, September 17

Create a sacred container for the work and play we will do together.

Friday, September 18

Explore how using the Be Present Empowerment Model® can effect positive change in our work, our families, and in our communities.

Saturday, September 19

Share lessons learned and stories, from this retreat or years of practice, about the impact of the Model on ourselves and in our lives. Celebrate ourselves!

Sunday, September 20

Closing Circle. How do we put into practice what we've learned and experienced?

REGISTRATION AND COST

How much does it cost?

The retreat uses a sliding fee scale so that money isn't a barrier to attending. Use the guidelines below to determine your registration cost. You're invited to pay at the highest rate possible for you, which helps make it possible for others to attend across all income levels.

Adult — Individual (per person)

| Annual Income | Total Registration Fee |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Under \$55,000 | \$700 – \$850 |
| \$56,000 – \$69,999 | \$900 – \$1,050 |
| \$70,000 – \$89,999 | \$1,100 – \$1,600 |
| \$90,000 – \$149,000 | \$1,700 – \$2,000 |
| \$150,000 or more | \$2,100+ |

Adult — Organization (per person)

| Annual Income | Total Registration Fee |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Under \$99,000 | \$1,600 |
| \$100,000 – \$499,999 | \$2,000 |
| \$500,000 – \$1,999,999 | \$2,700 |
| \$2 million – \$4,999,999 | \$3,500 |

Children and Youth

Children ages 4–12 and full-time students attend for \$450. Children 3 years old and younger attend for free. Please note that children and youth must attend with a registered adult.

Why a sliding scale?

Be Present is committed to having participants who represent a broad spectrum of the community. The scale offers guidelines to help you pay what you can; you're invited to pay at the highest rate possible for you, which helps make it possible for others to attend across all income levels.

What's included in the registration fee?

Registration includes the training, overnight accommodations, and meals.

How do I hold my spot?

A \$50 non-refundable commitment fee reserves your place and is applied toward your total registration cost.

Can I pay in installments?

Yes. After paying the \$50 commitment fee, you can pay your balance in installments, with full payment due on or before September 1, 2026.

Is there a deadline or limited space?

Yes, space is limited to 50 participants, so early registration is encouraged.

Are the fees refundable?

All fees are non-refundable.

LOGISTICS AND SAFETY

Is it safe to travel to the North Georgia mountains?

We understand this question, and we take it seriously. Be Present has held our training retreat at Forrest Hills Resort for 30 years. We have a longstanding relationship with the venue and its owner, who personally welcomes our group each year. This is a place where Black women and girls have gathered, rested, and celebrated safely for three decades. You will be among community the entire weekend, and our team is present and reachable throughout. If you have specific concerns or needs around travel or safety, please reach out to us at info@bepresent.org — we're glad to talk them through.

What are the lodging arrangements?

Rooms are double occupancy. If you need a single room, there's an additional \$200 (per person, per night) single-room fee, payable at registration. Room assignments are final once made.

Can I bring my children or family?

Yes. Children and youth are welcome and attend at reduced rates, and children age 3 and under are Be Present's guests. Please note that children and youth must attend with a registered adult.

How do I get there?

Forrest Hills Resort is about 1.5 hours from Atlanta's airport.

By Car: Please use your favorite GPS navigation tool to map your driving route. Please plan to arrive at Forrest Hills by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 17. Dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m.

By Air: Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL). Forrest Hills is a 1 ½ to 2 ½ hour drive north, depending on traffic. Please make flight arrangements so that you can arrive at Forrest Hills by 4:00 p.m. Please schedule your departure flight for 6:00 p.m. ET or after to allow you sufficient travel time to the ATL airport.

Who do I contact with questions?

Email info@bepresent.org and the team can help with registration, the sliding scale, or logistics.

FOR DONORS AND PARTNERS

How can I support the retreat?

There are several ways: attend as a participant, donate to support scholarships and programming, or partner with us. We welcome individual supporters, faith communities, foundations, organizations, and movement allies.

Where does my donation go?

Contributions help make the training retreat accessible to more participants, supporting scholarships, programming, facilitation, materials, and participant support, so the most marginalized participants can be fully present.

Why does this work matter right now?

Black women and girls are already leading, organizing, and building movements. Sustaining that leadership over the long term requires self-knowledge, authentic relationships, and spaces to be fully seen and supported. The training retreat builds exactly that capacity, and the impact ripples outward into families, organizations, communities, and movements.

How can I help beyond giving?

Share the training retreat with your network, connect Be Present to aligned funders and partners, and help make this work visible. Making the leadership of Black women and girls visible is part of the work itself.

Still have a question?

We'd love to hear from you. Reach out at info@bepresent.org and we'll help however we can.
There is a place for you here.

Be Present, Inc. | www.bepresent.org | info@bepresent.org

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