

Discovering Diamonds...

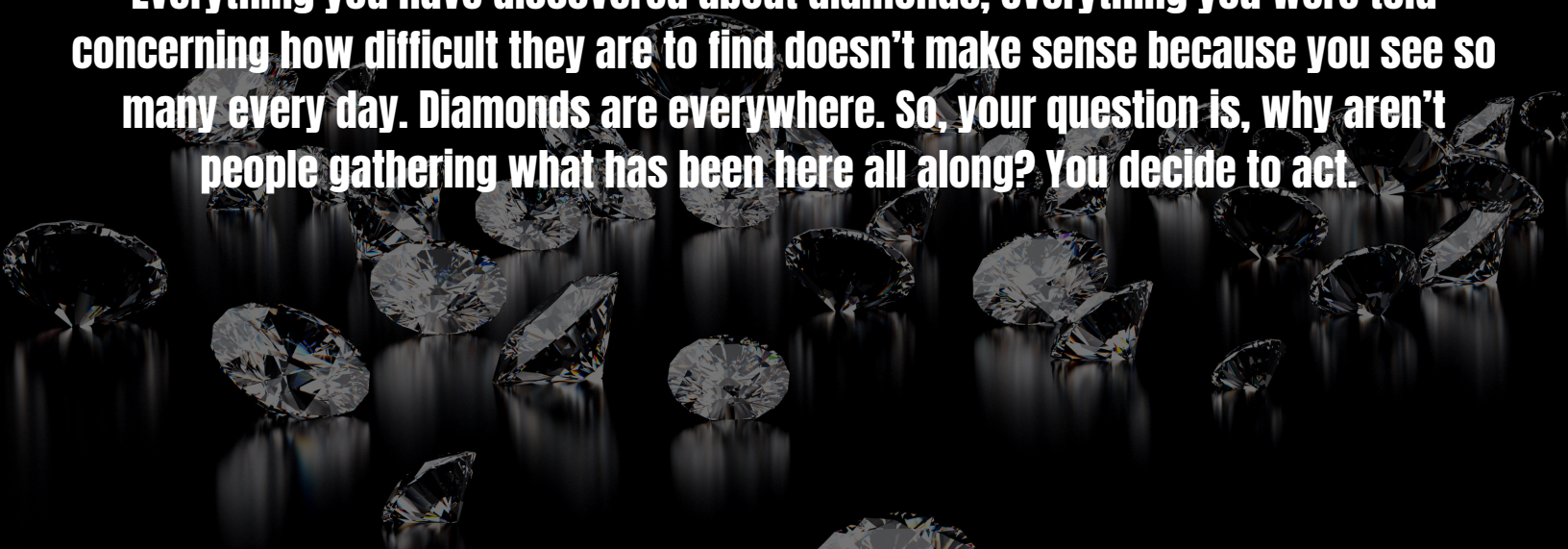
Imagine driving to church early one Wednesday evening, only to see diamonds lying on the sidewalks and piled high in the grass—yet, you keep driving.

At the very next corner, your headlights illuminate even more precious gems that have gathered near store fronts—you keep driving. You don't stop because you have somewhere important to go. You shouldn't be late.

This night is special. Special because, you and your fellow church members are coming together to learn a skill. You are going to learn how to scout for, dig, and excavate diamonds.

In the first class, you are taught how to estimate the value of each diamond based on cut, color and clarity. You also learn that finding diamonds is hard work. Diamonds are rare because they represent the value of being hidden, the value of being buried deep in dark places for years and years. Diamonds prove there is value in pressure.

On your way home, you think about all you learned, but you are confused. Everything you have discovered about diamonds, everything you were told concerning how difficult they are to find doesn't make sense because you see so many every day. Diamonds are everywhere. So, your question is, why aren't people gathering what has been here all along? You decide to act.



This metaphor highlights how MAN UP came to be. One evening, Pastor Thomas Brown of Redeeming Light Center Church noticed how many young people were hanging out in the streets of Eatonville, Florida as they drove by on their way to church. Chris realized his worship coupled with his upbringing equipped him to reach the very people he was passing by—the lost and broken hearted. Chris decided to act. He decided to gather the diamonds around him.

Chris worked alongside his mentor Pastor Brown. Together they began digging in the grounds of Eatonville and gathering young people from the streets. Youth who longed to be loved and valued; but lived with a broken spirit. They discovered young people with gifts and talents who had simply lost hope.

They found bright teenagers, who had given up on life because so many people had given up on them. But to their surprise these young people were just as willing to believe in themselves again the moment they found someone who didn't view them as a lost cause.

Today, MAN UP Mentoring exists to turn hopelessness into hope. To help young people see the best of themselves. To create stability and develop bonds over family-style dinners. To expose them to educational opportunities. To empower them to excel.

Economic poverty breeds poverty of the mind and spirit. But the community-based organization is seeing the results of reversing this trend by showing young people their true value and introducing them to the best version of themselves.

We need your hands. We need your hearts. We need your resources to turn the tide in our communities and beyond. Join us today. Help young people realize their value, because when they do, they will shine bright—bright like a diamond.

