

STATE OF THE UNITY

Directors Statement

Our documentary and message of unity came from humble beginnings. It was the fall of 2015 and we had recently moved to NYC from South Bend, Indiana. Shortly after we moved we got a call that Nathaniel's grandfather Charlie Webber had fallen very ill. At that moment we knew we needed to go back to South Bend to say our final goodbyes.

After traveling to South Bend we said our goodbyes to Grandpa Webber and he passed away. Later that night we went out to a family dinner and after dinner Nathaniel and I were sitting in our 2002 station wagon (with 264,000 miles on it) and Nathaniel was struck with the initial idea to unite people. I remember him putting both hands on the steering wheel, looking over at me and saying, "Jillian, I feel like we need to go to all 50 States to unite people."

In that moment I instantly had full body chills. The timing seemed impeccable because on our last tour both of us could feel that polarization was growing in the hearts and minds of our fellow Americans. So for many reasons this idea felt like God was divinely prompting us to go out into America immediately.

A few months later we locked up our Brooklyn Apartment, packed up our station wagon and started the 50 State tour in search of unity.

Each day for eight months straight we would travel from city to city, state to state spreading a message of unity by performing music and inviting the community to sign their message of unity on our station wagon (which became known as The Unity Car).

As people started signing their message of unity on The Unity Car we were able to facilitate deep connections around empathy, peace and unity building. Over time the tour continued and it was evident that the journey would be both beautiful and very challenging as we had very little finances and had many setbacks, breakdowns and break-ins along the way. The journey itself really tested our limits and we had to overcome many adversities.

Yet, our love for each other, God and people we met along the way helped us keep going. Day by day, as America's divide continued to deepen we began realizing how important an honest conversation around unity and peace is in keeping America from a ruinous future.

It can be said that the worst times in human history have happened when humans have forgotten about cultivating love, peace and unity within themselves and towards their neighbors. Because when we forget these important sentiments then we destroy the true essence of what it is to be human and destruction ensues.

Out on the road, we learned unity starts within, in your mirror, at your kitchen table, on your street with your neighbors, in your community, state, country and then in the world.

Each of us play a big role in creating a more unified world or hateful world. We do this through our thoughts, actions and daily choices.

Now, with so much hate it is more important to make thoughtful positive choices that promote peace, love and unity. On the Unity Collective tour we saw a lot of people in pain, living with regret and hate towards themselves and we learned that in order to progress forward towards unity each of us must learn to forgive

ourselves and love ourselves first (in a non-selfish way) before we can create unity and love for our neighbors. As we can only love others as much as we love ourselves. Love is the only way forward as love can overcome hate and division. With love anything is possible and we can learn to cultivate unity in our communities.

At its core The Unity Collective 50 State Tour was a peace tour where Nathaniel and I were in search of unity in a world that is incredibly divided. This journey across America transformed our hearts and changed our lives forever and we hope our documentary, "State of the Unity" can give you a bit of hope and inspiration you can take with you into your daily life.