Nicole D. Vick’s debut book, “Pushing Through: Finding Light in Every Lesson,” gives readers an intimate look into the highs and lows of her life while exploring serious concepts like public health, economic equity and structural racism.

The book follows Vick’s life from her childhood days in the neglected community of South Central Los Angeles, through her years at a prestigious university as a teen mother, to her adult life as a health professional working in underserved communities throughout Los Angeles County. In Pushing Through, Vick shares both the heartbreaking pain and the extraordinary triumphs that led her to advocacy and social justice work. As a health educator, she wants readers to understand how growing up in poor neighborhoods, attending underfunded schools and having limited access to healthy foods and quality healthcare can impact your life trajectory.

“I want readers to see how abstract public health concepts such as health equity and the social determinants of health play out in real time,” Vick said. But she also wants to emphasize that someone’s past does not dictate their future. Her perspective is unique: she has experienced some compelling public health risk factors (teen pregnancy), extensive public health expertise (20 years), and a significant body of community service.

In the foreword, then California Senator Holly J. Mitchell praised Vick for her vulnerability and transparency. “Not every autobiography will include such honesty and grit,” she wrote.

Los Angeles Councilmember Marqueece Harris Dawson was also impressed with Vick’s poignant story. “This is a bare-knuckles honest appraisal of personal and familial triumphs and failures in the context of deeply problematic social systems including education, economy, and most pointedly, health,” he wrote.

Sonya Young Aadam, Chief Executive Officer of California Black Women’s Health Project wrote, “I found myself nostalgically reliving my own past as Nicole recalled the colorful sights, myriad of smells, cross-cultural tastes, and soulful sounds while simultaneously bridging the social and system determinants of health that contribute to the regions’ blight, neglect, and historical trauma. Kudos to *Pushing Through* for uplifting truth, perseverance, and the power of a Black woman to live through and ultimately serve through the pain with purpose.”