




you?

determine

your
WORTH

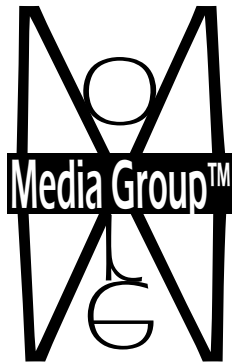


BREAK THE CHAIN
NOW

by Candi
Meridith, MPH

you determine
your WORTH

by Candi Meridith, MPH
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Introduction

Don't let your circumstance determine your destiny

Teaching me to live the above statement is the greatest gift my mother has ever given me. Growing up in a home of domestic violence can easily make you think that mistreatment is all your life will have receive. But that world, my mother always made sure her daughters knew that they didn't have to live like her and her son knew he didn't have to become his father.

Domestic violence is the monster under-the-bed that I ran from for two decades. But, I'm running no more. I have turned the power it had against me into something good for others. Now, I speak to young women about not becoming a victim and talk with mothers about speaking out & getting out. Over time, I realized something really important and broke my family's chains of bondage: *People who mistreat and hurt you, don't care, don't remember, or don't care to remember the pain they've caused. You are walking around with this hurt and they are living. To be of true service and good for others, you must learn to be good for yourself.*

You can also break the chains of bondage in your family's history and build a new chain of love, growth, prosperity, spirit, and hope. And you can do this by learning that where you are from, who you have been, who your family is, doesn't have to dictate where you go and who you become. Choose to be happy and use your past experiences to build your character.

Self-worth

Self-worth is seeing yourself as having value. Whereas self-esteem is how you are feeling about yourself. Before self-esteem comes self-worth. If you don't see yourself as valuable, you will never feel great about who you are.

Your self-worth affects every aspect of your life. It determines whether you will lead or follow. Whether you have sex before you want or wait until it's your time. Whether you will strike out with your own business as an or continue to work in a job that you hate. Whether you will be content and happy with four excellent friends or "fake" happy with 40. And whether you will be the girl with the guy who calls you bitch and hits you.

I have been depressed and it made me forget that I was worthy of everything God had placed on this Earth for me. I almost killed myself, but I cried out for help—for God to help me, because I knew that His presence was always there. It was painful, and I hurt. But life is about pain and hurt. So don't give up, don't give in. Just grit your teeth, hold on and know that you are worthy.

Avoiding fragile self-worth **Stay away from criticism**

Negative messages and thoughts about yourself can make your self-worth fragile. So instead of kicking yourself for a mistake you've made, it is healthier to accept that humans make mistakes. Then learn what you can from the mistake and resolve not to repeat the same mistake again.

Take care of yourself

Don't always try to please others over yourself. While it is considerate to pay attention to and care about other people's feelings, our own feelings and needs are just as important. Don't neglect yourself.

Keep it real by being who you are

Don't try to be like someone else. Trying to be someone we're not can lead to a lack of self-worth and confidence. Understand that we are all unique in our own ways and we cannot be someone else. It is alright to strive to be better but don't criticize yourself for not being as successful or as popular as someone else.

If you take life too seriously, you won't get out alive

Don't take life or yourself too seriously. It is common to make mistakes. Failure just means that we are not successful yet. Everyone of us fails on our way to success. We can see this as a means of learning. Obstacles and problems can make us stronger if we strive to overcome them.

Build-up your self-worth

Self-worth is an attitude which allows us to have positive yet realistic views of ourselves and our situations. Those of us with high self-worth tend to trust in our own abilities. You need to get of control of your life and set real expectations from yourself.

Steps to improvement

Make a list of things that you like about yourself

This list can help you find likeable qualities about yourselves that you often take for granted.

Do something nice for yourself

You can take the time to treat yourself with love and kindness doing the things you find enjoyment in.

Remind yourself of things that you value in yourself

It is important to keep in mind the values that you genuinely appreciate in yourself. Like your great personality.

Talk over your feelings of discouragement

Sometimes it helps to talk to a family member or a trusted friend about your feelings of discouragement. In the process of talking with someone else, you may begin to recall the valuable things about yourself or be reminded of them by your friends.

Try doing things that you've never tried before

It is always a bit of a challenge to try new things and the act of accepting these challenges can sometimes affirm your sense of worth (as long as you don't expect perfection the first time).

Temporary fluctuations in your feelings of self-worth are fairly common and they happen to most of us. However, if your self-worth is fragile for a long period of time or your mood shifts quite often, it may be important to seek help.

Influences on your self-worth

In a competitive world, it is easy to base your self-worth on materialistic items or financial gains. This can lead to unrealistic expectations of yourself, or high debt because you are borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, just to "look" happy. When the world judges you based on your possessions, your self-worth will get you through. Having a strong self-worth is based on who you are, not what you do for a living or what you have.

It is important to have goals and to see yourself as an exceptional person. But you can still be worthy and feel good about yourself even when you are making mistakes or haven't reached all of those goals yet. I have been working for several years to really get my business off the ground. And although that hasn't fully happened, I am still doing the work and making a difference. When I look back at this time last year or two years ago, I see a completely different woman, running a completely different business. This time

has allowed me to mature. In the case of reaching your goals, don't lose sight of how important time is. See the extra time as a positive, keep preparing and growing. One of my favorite quotes is, "Luck is the moment preparation meets opportunity."

Don't allow your self-worth to be based on the opinions of others. There will always be people who don't understand and won't believe in you. These are the times for you to be strong in who you are and believe in yourself. This isn't easy either, but it is necessary for you to forge ahead. Now don't get me wrong, you will need to get advice and feedback from others. This advice and feedback may not be what you wanted to hear, but it is another part of growing. Here's a tip to knowing when to accept someone's advice and when not to: If the advice is given in a way that cuts you down or degrades you, don't take it. Real friends and those with your best interest at heart will give you constructive criticism without making you feel like jumping from a bridge (you may not agree with them, but you can tell the advice is given with your best interest at heart).

Your self-worth is based on:

- Your value as a person
- Your purpose in life
- Your position in the world
- Your strengths and weaknesses
- How you relate to others
- Your independence and ability to stand on your own two feet

With a stronger self-worth, you will find yourself more happy, healthy, confident, steadfast, and motivated. If you have a fragile self-worth you may find yourself in the position I was in—depressed, unhappy, sad, and in a long-standing bad mood with no self-confidence.

Your focus for your life can't be what friends, family, employers, and significant others have as standards. You must have your own standards. Again, it is OK to solicit advice from others in your life, but you can't allow their expectations to consume and control your life's choices. When you do that, you give the other person(s) power over your life. Don't allow your worth to be placed in the hands of others. You determine your worth.

Here is a little **self-worth quiz** that I found on-line. For each of the 10 statements below, assign a number from 1 to 5 that best indicates how the statement describes you.

1 - Not at all true 2 - Slightly true 3 - Unsure 4 - Mostly true 5 - True	
Statement	Number
1. I behave the way others expect me to so that they will like me.	
2. I don't think I'm on equal grounds with others and have difficulties developing positive relationships.	
3. I rarely trust myself nor feel strong enough to handle things on my own.	
4. I don't take compliments very well because I think the person isn't being truthful.	
5. I am afraid of being judged by others.	
6. I often feel inferior to others.	
7. I let other people set the standards for my life.	
8. I find it hard to forgive myself for making mistakes.	
9. I feel a sense of failure when my grades are lower than those of my peers.	
10. I wish I was more like other people—I feel so different.	
Add up your score: _____	

What do your scores mean?

41-50 You have very fragile self-worth. Find out more about some of the things that may be causing you to feel poorly about yourself.

31-40 Your somewhat fragile self-worth is holding you back. You may want to learn some strategies that will prevent your self-worth from plunging further.

21-30 You have a fairly strong self-worth, but there is room for improvement. Check out some ways to improve your self-worth.

< 20 You have a strong self-worth. You should still review ways to maintain your sense of personal value.

Keep working to build your self-worth. To start growing into the person you were meant to be, I suggest you begin by looking within to find your creative niche—the one thing that you feel sets you apart from everyone else. Don't start dying your hair yellow or orange, just ask yourself, "What interests me? What is in me that I haven't developed, because it's not what people think I should do or because I don't have any support?" Then I want you to take that thought, put it on paper, and expand it. Expand that possibilities of it. Expand the purpose of it. Expand the you that is in it. Become multi-dimensional. Live outside of the box. Or, redefine what living inside the box means.

Self-help resources

National Mental Health Association

CALL: 1-800-969-6642

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

CALL: 1-800-273-8255

Action, Parent and Teen Support

CALL: 1-800-367-8336 (24 hr)

KID SAVE

CALL: 1-800-543-7283/CALL: 1-800-334-4543 (24 hr)

NineLine

CALL: 1-800-999-9999 (24 hr)

Girl's and Boy's Town National

CALL: 1-800-448-3000 (24 hr)/TDD: 1-800-448-1833

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress

www.ncptsd.org

National Mental Health Information Center

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

www.samhsa.gov

Stop Bullying Now

www.stopbullyingnow.com

TeensHealth

www.teenshealth.com

Relationship violence

We all know it. We see it everyday on the news and we read about it in the paper. Then we see talk shows of various couples that think relationships with violence equate to relationships with love. WRONG. Relationship violence is the same a domestic violence, the only difference is, that the couple isn't married.

Contrary to popular belief, both men and women are involved in relationship violence. In addition, both genders are perpetrators of physical, emotional, and psychological violence and abuse. No one should aspire to be in a relationship like these, and should you come across a person that is displaying the type of characteristics that suggest violent tendencies—get out immediately. WHEN PEOPLE SHOW YOU WHO THEY ARE, ACCEPT IT AND MOVE ON. This is how they behave. We all have our moments of insanity, but usually people show their true self, over 90% of the time. This is not some Internet statistic; this is my own observation of the human being and its behavior. So, when it looks like a duck, and it walks like a duck, I can say with 90% certainty, it's a duck.

HERE'S A LITTLE STORY FOR YOU:

I dated this guy, who I didn't think was a good fit for me. After telling him several times that I didn't think we would be a good couple, he refused to accept it. So, after talking to my therapist, I realized that in order to end it for the last time with this guy, I had to have notes written, with specific incidences or reasons why I did not care to see him anymore. Needless to say, I went home from my therapy appointment, and began typing my reasons for not wanting to date him. I then gave him a call at work and began citing the list. After going over my list, which was about ten or eleven items, this guy began to go over his list of reasons why we should continue to see each other. Well, as you can imagine, I was at a crossroads. I expected him to refute my list, but I didn't expect him to have **his own list**. So, a conversation that should have taken approximately 15 minutes, was well on its way to 35 to 45 minutes. He proceeded to tell me that he "can fix" anything that I had a problem with. Why, because he saw my list as a communication tool. I was "communicating" what I wanted and needed from him. According to him, he "knows what I want and what he needs to change so that he could be who I wanted him to be." As flattering as this may seem, it's not. I told him he was perfect the way he was, for someone else.

I don't care to be with anyone who feels the need to change themselves to be who they aren't. We as individuals travel through life trying to "find" ourselves, trying to know who we are. And in many instances, some of us will never know. I am not going through my journey to be with someone who knows so little about the importance of being who they are.

Let me tell you something: if you are with someone who insists on changing themselves to be with you, be wary. Be wary, because at some point, they will realize that they are not being true to self, and it may get ugly for you. My fear is that you or I would be blamed for their piss-poor decision.

Additionally, if you are with someone who wants you to change yourself to be with them, RUN! Run from them as fast as you can, because they are trying to control who you are.

You must be careful not to romanticize violence. You can't view violence as a one-time thing or by having that "Love conquers all..." mentality. Know this, not everything can be fixed. Don't be the martyr, there is no need for it, too many have died and many others are scared for their lives—don't add to the statistics.

Five factors of relationship violence

- ⌘ Partners who must be in control all of the time are prone to be abusive
- ⌘ Partners who are very dependent, and afraid of losing or being left alone, are prone to violence
- ⌘ Men who have more traditional gender role expectations are more likely to condone violence in a relationship
- ⌘ In general, men are more likely to misread sexual cues from women—she's flirting to imply she's interested in hanging out later, he takes it as she wants to have sex tonight
- ⌘ The above statement just adds to the notion that, in general, men think that women are more interested in sex than they admit

Watch out, it's ugly out there. Be careful of the motives of others and watch your projections. One of my friends once said, "It's not your intention that's important, what's important is the other person's perception of your intention." It's how you are read by others that makes the difference, you could do everything "right" or "by the book," but if the other person is delusional or simply stupid, their perception will be skewed.



against **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Renaissance Woman Inc is proud to take a stand against the negative spirit of domestic violence with its "SPEAK OUT against DOMESTIC VIOLENCE" campaign. Domestic violence can happen to any of us at any point in time. It has no respect of age, race, gender, social status, religious, or financial or educational level.

We encourage you to be strong and take a stand to protect the most important thing in this world—YOU. Don't continue to sit back, lie down and allow domestic violence to rob you of your future. Rob you of your purpose. Rob you of your promise. SPEAK OUT—whether you are the victim or you know someone who is a victim—SPEAK OUT.

According to the Department of Justice there are five basic types of domestic violence. They are used to get and keep power over you. These types of abuse can bully, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, force, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound you (and sometimes others).

Physical Abuse: Hitting, slapping, pushing, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, and the list goes on. Physical abuse also includes stopping you from getting medical care or forcing you to drink or do drugs.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or trying to force any sexual contact or behavior without your say-so. Sexual abuse includes, but is surely not limited to marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually shameful manner.

Emotional Abuse: Putting you down and reducing your sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem. This may include, but is not limited to constant criticism, lessening your

abilities, name-calling, or damaging your relationship with your children.

Economic Abuse: Making or attempting to make you depend on them for money. Taking and keeping total control over your (and their) finances, withholding your contact to money, or forbidding your attendance at church, school or work.

Psychological Abuse: Causing fear by bullying. Threatening to physically harm them, you, your children, or your family or friends. Damage of your pets and property; and forcing your loneliness from family, friends, church, school and/or work.

Domestic Violence resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.ndvh.org

1-800-799-7233

TTY: 1-800-787-3224

Family Violence Prevention Fund

www.endabuse.org

Men Stopping Violence (for batterers)

www.menstoppingviolence.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

www.ncadv.org

State Domestic Violence Coalitions

www.usdoj.gov/ovw/statedomestic.htm

Teen Relationships Web Site

www.teenrelationships.org

US Department of Justice

www.usdoj.gov/ovw/domviolence.htm

Domestic Violence Safety Plan

1. CALL 911 if you are in immediate danger.
2. TALK to someone you trust. Ask for help in case you need to leave.
3. CALL the National Domestic Violence Hotline number on this sheet. You can get help in planning ways to stay safe.
4. PACK a bag or suitcase that won't be missed. Hide the packed bag or keep it with someone you trust. Put the following items in your bag:
 - Cash (to buy a prepaid cell phone or make phone calls) and checks
 - Clothes and personal articles for you and your children
 - Medications
 - House and car keys
 - Important phone numbers
 - Copies of important papers: driver's license/picture ID, birth certificates, passports, health insurance papers, foodstamps, house and car titles, rent receipts, marriage license, immunization records
 - Special toy or book for your child or children
5. PLAN exactly where you will go and how to get there. Locate the nearest safe phones (police or fire station, hospital, stores). Remember, you might need to leave in the middle of the night.
6. TEACH your children how to call 911 in an emergency.

**THIS SAFETY PLAN IS FOR ADULTS.
IF YOU ARE A TEEN
WHO NEEDS HELP CALL:**

**National Youth Crisis Hotline
CALL: 1-800-448-4663
(call 24-hours a day/7 days a week)**

Your space

Quick quotes to help get you through your day

Spiritual

"May we so lose ourselves in service to others that we forget about being saved and receive salvation"

"Go forth and love with the Spirit of the Lord"

"If you are going to worry, why pray? If you are going to pray, why worry?"

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. Psalms 32:8

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. John 14:1

Growth

"Luck is the moment when preparation meets opportunity"

"To know and not to do, is not to know"

"Fashion can be bought / style one must possess"

"Watch your thoughts; they become your words. Watch your words; they become your actions. Watch your actions; they become your habits. Watch your habits; they become your character. Watch your character for it will become your destiny"

"The price of greatness is responsibility"

"A lie leaves a jagged wound that cannot heal, but the truth, even though it may leave a wound, leaves a clean wound. And clean wounds heal"

"I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again"

"Show me your friends and I will show you WHO you are"

"You are judged by the character of the company you keep"

Happiness

"When you die, God and the angels will hold you accountable for all the pleasures you were allowed in life that you denied yourself"

"I gave myself up so completely to present desires and pleasures that I had no energy to waste on mere wishful thinking"

"The moment you allow your history to hold your mind hostage, you rob your future of its breath"

"Be transparent. Strip your soul naked of fears and facades. Then and only then will you be free to live"

"You teach people how to treat you. Learn to treat yourself better"

Love

"We love because it is the only true adventure"

"A woman who is loved always has success"

"Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss and ends with a teardrop"

"Love is like pi--natural, irrational, and very important"

Growth words

Here are some positive words that you need to start adding to your personal vocabulary. Learn what they mean and apply them to your life. Make it a point to speak positively about yourself, your life and your family. To start growing, start speaking positive things into existence.

Adorn	Heart	Relax
Angel	Honor	Restore
Beauty	Hope	Rise
Believe	Humility	Self-control
Blessings	Joy	Sincerity
Breathe	Kind	Spirit
Build	Laugh	Splendor
Calm	Life	Stand
Care	Love	Steadfast
Cheerful	Majestic	Strength
Comfort	Marvelous	Strong
Compassion	Meditate	Succeed
Courage	Meek	Sustain
Dedicate	Mercy	Thanksgiving
Delight	Miracle	Thrive
Dream	Patient	Triumph
Encourage	Peace	Trust
Endure	Power	Truth
Enjoy	Precious	Unity
Esteem	Prevail	Upright
Faith	Prosper	Valiant
Forgive	Pure	Victorious
Fruitful	Purify	Vigor
Goodness	Queen	Worthy
Heal	Rejoice	

Closing

In my new book, **from sneakers & jeans: THE TEEN GIRLS' GUIDE TO GETTING AROUND**, I remind teen girls of these 9 important safety points:

1. **YOU DETERMINE YOUR WORTH**
2. Making yourself feel good shouldn't come at the price of making others feel small.
3. Marijuana (weed/blunts) is an illegal drug.
4. If you, your friends or family members are using and abusing alcohol and/or drugs, please call NineLine at 1-800-999-9999 (available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week), and speak with a counselor.
5. who already know each other
6. **DO NOT** give your real name, phone number, social security number, or other personal information to people you have met online.
7. The six types of abuse are physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, and spiritual.
8. Abuse is used to bully, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, force, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound you (and sometimes others).
9. **WHEN PEOPLE SHOW YOU WHO THEY ARE, ACCEPT IT AND MOVE ON.**

Always Remember—

**LIFE IS
WHAT IT IS**

**IT HAS BEEN
WHAT IT HAS BEEN**

**WHAT IT BECOMES
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU DO
TODAY**

ON SALE NOW

**CLICK HERE TO GET A COPY
FOR THE TEEN IN YOUR LIFE**

**from
& sneakers
jeans**

THE TEEN GIRLS' GUIDE TO GETTING AROUND



by Candi Meridith, MPH

**TO
ORDER**

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authorhouse.com/BookStore/
itemDetail~bookid~45117.aspx](http://www.authorhouse.com/BookStore/itemDetail~bookid~45117.aspx)

from sneakers & jeans...

is a beginner's guide for teen girls, filled with the health and life information they need to take them from sneakers and jeans to a healthy life. This guide was written with teens and their needs in mind.

from sneakers & jeans...topics

**LEARN TO PUT A
VALUE ON YOUR
LIFE AND YOUR
BODY.**



SELF-WORTH



POSITUDE



ETIQUETTE



HEALTH and HYGIENE



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
and NUTRITION



YOUR BODY



DATING and SEX



SAFETY

"I LOVE this book. Usually when you read books like this, it sounds like it's written by old people. But this one isn't like that. I REALLY enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun to read."

—Marisol, 7th grader



BE GOOD FOR YOURSELF®

To learn more about
Candi Meridith and her
organization visit

www.GoodForYourself.com

Candi Meridith,
MPH is a motivational speaker and public health educator. She has been in the fields of health education and public speaking for over 14 years. With a Master of Public Health degree in Health Promotion and Disease



Prevention and a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, Candi believes that having the conversation is the first step toward growing into a better person. She invites you to talk.

I have **three fundamental beliefs** that have gotten me through some rough patches and I think they will be good for you also.

1. BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF THE POSSIBILITY.™

If you give a person the option to change, they just might.

2. DON'T LET YOUR CIRCUMSTANCE DETERMINE YOUR DESTINY.™

Where you are from, who you have been doesn't have to dictate where you go and who you become.

3. BE GOOD FOR YOURSELF.™

When you are good for yourself, you and your life becomes an example of encouragement for your family, friends and countless others. Being good for yourself is about being whole and taking care of you or you won't be able to take care of others.