



JUST KEEP PUSHING ON

A Book of Encouragement
for people ages 11-17
(and the adults who love them)

L. MORGAN SCOTT

Just Keep Pushing On:
A Book of Encouragement for Young People Ages 11-17

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Other books by L. Morgan Scott:

1. Loving Myself First: Overcoming Life's Obstacles (Past, Present, and Future) (hardcover and e-book)
2. 12 Easy Ways to Tame Your Stress Monster (e-book)
3. The College Student's Cookbook (e-book)
4. Beauty Secrets You Can Use at Home (spiral book)

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To make this book available to every person who would like to read it, the author has made this book available as a free download available on www.PepTalkPublishing.com.

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You all are so appreciated!

"We're all supposed to be different. I want so badly to encourage everyone to say, 'Who am I and how do I want to live my life'" — Ellen Degeneres

This book is dedicated to You - the reader - may it help you become all you were created to become, and to the children who were not able to "Just Keep Pushing On."

This book is not a replacement for licensed professional counseling or psychological therapy. If you, the reader, feel threatened, have emotions of an extreme or uncontrolled nature, or fear for your safety—please contact a trusted adult, school personnel, clergy, or Child Protection Services.

So many people care about YOU.

You are not alone.



Index

Topic	Page
Pushing On	6
Your Vision	8
Cryptogram Puzzle	13
Positive Mindset Sentences	14
Vision Board	15
Word Scramble	17
Action Plan/Blueprint	19/23
Break Time Bamboozle	25
What You Say About Yourself Matters!	26
Word Search	29
Pleasing Others and Self-Compassion	32
Take a Break: Riddles and Sequence	38
Strategies to Talk to Adults	41
Unique? Different? Original?	49
Perseverance and Determination	51
Pictogram	52
Honeycomb puzzle	58
Labels	61
Mind Benders	65
Changing Your Mood	66
Watch What Your Mind Takes In	68
Maze/ Popularity	74 / 75
Crossword Puzzle	80
Don't Hurt Yourself and Don't Hurt Others	83
Anger, Revenge, Choices, and Hotline #'s	96
Affirmations in Verse/Forgiveness	98
Some Things You Should Know as a Teen	101

“Do you ever just sit back and think about all the things that led up to this moment? You are here with a purpose.”
—Caitlin Carmichael

Hey! This book *wasn't created* to tell you not to smoke, drink, do drugs, skip school, or have sex – okay . . . well . . . don't do any of those things (there, I DID say it!)

No, this book is really about:

- * Finding a way to be true to who you are – just as you are.
- * Figuring out what you want from life.
- * Figuring out what type of person you want to become.
- * Finding ways to set yourself up for achieving your goals.
- * Figuring out that YOU are the person responsible for the definition of your dreams and what happiness is.
- * Figuring out ways to push on through the tough times in your life and overcome the challenges that pop up.

I believe this book can help you in each of those points.

“Today is a good day to have a good day.”
—Johnny Orlando

Tip: Consider having a notepad, phone, or tablet nearby to write down the answers you give to questions throughout the book.

Then in a few months or so, look at what you wrote. Have you grown? Do you have greater understanding into what you think? This book can be used as a tool for reflection, too.

Pushing On

Do you realize how important you are?

Yes, you! You may not know this, or maybe no one has ever told you, or maybe you don't believe it's possible . . . because you're "just" you, right. But here's the thing. Maybe you're the person who solves the problem of hunger or housing in your community, or maybe even the person who brings world peace. Heck, maybe you'll be the one who finds life on another planet.



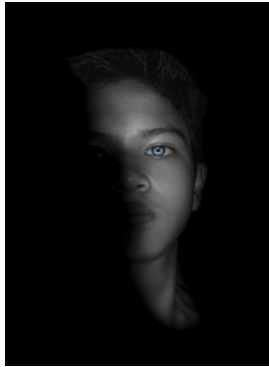
You have so many “maybes” up ahead of you, it’s best for all of us if you acknowledge this potential position you’re in and just plan now—to keep pushing on through the mud and rivers life may drag you through.

You are important, and your life – your future (and ours) – depends on you reaching your potential and becoming (and doing) everything you were created to be and do.

Regardless of your age or the maturity of your thinking, there are areas of your life you can control— and the most important area is — your happiness.

Yes, within these pages I’ll show you how you *can* have control of your happiness, and how you can Just Keep Pushing On through the ups and downs of life.

Something to remember as you navigate each day of your life, is that there is often more than one solution to any challenge and that talking with a trusted person can be helpful, even if it’s just for moral support or an opinion.



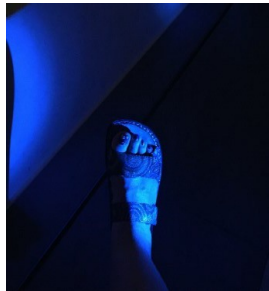
We all have ups and downs, and nearly everyone experiences challenges as well as disappointment multiple times in their life. That's life, and surprisingly, it's often the bad times that make us truly appreciate the good times.

It's my belief, that it's *how* we react to the challenges and ups and downs in life that is important when thinking about our character – and how we grow as people. If we each can learn to act and react with kindness, patience, and empathy, we could be truly awesome.

Learning how to handle challenge unfortunately often requires facing challenges time and again. Sometimes not.

Example. Think of the first time you had something scary or unusual happen in your life. Can't think of one? Consider this example. Let's say you were seven and you were watching TV just before bedtime. You were in the room alone.

Suddenly, you were enveloped in complete darkness. You don't know what happened, but the lights went off and so did the TV. Your imagination races. Maybe there's a robber who cut off your power, or space invaders, or too many birds on the wire. The first time the electricity goes off, or you're pitched into darkness can be frightening.



But, if the electricity should ever go off again –it probably wouldn't be as scary. And likewise, for problems or challenges that happened a second time, they wouldn't be as scary either. You would be able to use how you felt in previous situations, recall how you overcame, and be strengthened by those past experiences. You'll gain confidence as well.

Your Vision is a Road Map

To have *any* measure of control of yourself and your life, there are some strategies you need. First, you need an understanding of who you are “*and who you are becoming.*”



Next, you'll need an idea of what you want “your life to look like” (a vision). Then, you need a plan to get you “from your plan to your vision.” Finally, you need belief in yourself and belief you can achieve your vision.

Maybe you already have a vision for your life (or at least the next few years) or maybe you don't. No worries—this book will help you either create or define your vision, and even help you figure out a few steps toward making your vision your reality.



Use the questions in the book to push on, move forward, make a plan, set goals, and overcome the challenges that arise as you achieve each milestone on your journey to achieving your vision.

Here's the question. Who are you becoming and what is it you want for yourself in the next two-to-four years? As a young person, this may be the first time you've asked your Self “What do I want?” It's a difficult question.

Consider this: What are your current dreams and desires? Are they inline with what you see for yourself when you're older? What kind of person have you become? What is important to you? What are your passions? Yes, those are all “deep” questions to ask your young Self.



However, when you know who and what you want to become, then you'll be better prepared to make the choices that lead you in that direction.

Thinking about your whole life or everything you might want can be a bit overwhelming, right? So maybe it's easier to think about what you don't want.

I'm sure that many things popped in your head right after reading that—we know instantly what we don't want, so why is thinking about what we *do* want so much more difficult? Hmm, my guess is because we've been conditioned (since birth, many of us)to not want things and not be selfish. In my opinion, it's not selfish to want a healthy, good life. *Why would you not want that?*



“Strategy is Key” says Carson Leuders.

So I say, let's start developing your strategy!

What do you want?
What don't you want?
Who do you want to become?

If it's easier for you, start your list (or thinking) with what you want in life (overall) or be more specific, such as a type of job, level of education, degree of relationship (such as single or married), or area of living (such as where do you want to live - Alaska?).



Or try starting your list with what you don't want.

Here's an example of what I don't want: I don't want to be hateful, or racist, mean or cruel. I don't want to be jealous of what others have or work in a hostile environment. I don't want to be sick, or have severe health issues brought on by my actions. I don't want to live surrounded by concrete. See what I mean by listing things you know you don't want? After you know what you don't want, it's probably easier to concentrate on what you do want.

Consider using the format of *Be/Have/Do*. The example I'll share is kind of narrow-focused, but you can expand it and use this format for every area of your life: education, career, place you want to live, how you want to look or dress, or even how you want to eat. Each area of use will provide clarity in what you truly want your life to look or feel like. Here's an example:

Be: A singer.

Have: A platform that is socially responsible, health-conscious, and prosperous.



Do: I want to tour the world, create songs and music videos.

See? Simple, really, when you take just one focus, like in the example, it's singing, and then decide what kind of singer I want to be. This is enough information with which to move forward.

Use the chart on the next page to jot down one or two word ideas under the applicable column headings (Be / Have / Do).

Try to write what comes to your mind without censorship – just straight subconscious thought. If you think too long (even moments) about an answer – then you’re sure to write what you think you want to say (or read) instead of what you truly feel.

Be	Have	Do

“Pursue the things you want, not what others want for you.” — Connor Finnerity

How did you do answering those questions? I want you to know that it takes courage to be honest—especially with yourself.

If you found that you wrote things that you thought you wanted to see instead of what is really what you want to Be / Have or Do — then start afresh.





*“I think anyone can do anything they dream of if they put their mind to it and put in the work.”
— Shawn Mendes*

When you dream, dream big! Get a concrete image of what that dream looks like so much so that you could close your eyes and see it, feel it, or smell it.

You know, it’s easy to pass the previous section by without thinking and writing something. Or, to view it as useless and write something like I want new shoes or to lose weight. That’s fluff.

Fluff, when you are creating a vision or when you are soul searching (or thinking) is inconsequential and won’t help you.

“Dig deep. Find your way to your soul.” — Kami Garcia

If you’re going to take the time to read this book, then do yourself a favor and let yourself get something from it.

With that said, as you page through this book, attempt to relate everything to YOU and try and keep the internal conversation going. Keep asking yourself questions.

Have fun completing the activities.

The activities were created for your enjoyment but also for your personal growth. You may be surprised of the positive effect they have on you.



Give yourself a chance to “push on and move forward.”

You *are* here for a purpose. You *are* needed in this life.

Never let anyone tell you differently.

“Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.” — Mark Twain

Having a vision helps you become the person you want to become, but also achieve the dreams you want to achieve. Without a vision, how can you guide yourself?

Believe in yourself. Having others believe in you, too, is nice and also very helpful. But you first must look within.

If you didn’t complete the Be—Have—Do activity, please consider doing it now. And then, how about a break.

Like puzzles? Solve these cryptograms to learn (or recall) important concepts. Hint, on #1, OP is really the word NO. See the trick? So, O=N and P=O (the letter of the alphabet before the one shown). **Answers are on page 109.**

OP POF DBO CF B CFUUF S ZPV - UIBO ZPV.

NO _____

The next puzzle has a different trick, and is a little bit more difficult. No hints though:).

GND OI TAWH SI THRIG SI TON SYALWA YSEA.

Positive Mindset Sentences:

I love myself when things are going smoothly.

I am worthy of the good things life has to offer.

I forgive myself and others for their mistakes.

I study hard, but also include fun in my day.

I love myself even though I sometimes fail.

I am awesome and perfect the way I am.

I am gentle with people and animals.

I am smart, and learning more daily.

I can be whatever I put my mind to.

I love myself during challenges.

I have a beautiful imagination.

I am great at solving problems.

I am joyful, patient, and brave.

I am a good friend to myself.

I accomplish great results.

I make good decisions.

I have faith in myself.

I approve of myself.

I am important.





Let's make a splash! Or, at least let's recap what we've discussed thus far.

First, we talked about who you are and who you want to become as you get older. I also asked you to identify your dreams and vision for your life, I do hope you took the time to do that.

One tool we use (even as adults) is a vision board.

A vision board is something you create to use as a visual reminder. Material, size, or shape used for the vision board is not important. What's important is creating one, and adding all the details that portray each area of your life.







As you start your vision board, you may feel a little overwhelmed. Don't give in to that feeling! A vision board is a "living" tool. As life events occur, you can keep updating it. Example:

- ◆ You achieve a milestone
- ◆ Your vision takes a new path
- ◆ Your dream broadens or narrows

On the next page, I've given a sample of what a vision board can look like at the start. My example, once again is a narrow-focused example. I would think yours will be much more detailed.

The beauty of the tool is that it is solely based on you and your wants, needs, and desires.

Create your vision board any way you'd like. Websites like Pixabay.com (super helpful) have images you can use to capture your vision in a visual manner. I expanded on the Be/Do/Have example from page 10. As you go through the book, expect that more vision ideas will come to you.

<p>I want to Be:</p> 	<p>My Vision Board</p>		<p>I want to Have:</p> 
<p>a nice person</p>  <p>a dancer</p>  <p>a singer</p>			<p>I want to Do:</p> <p>Graduate</p>   <p>Travel the World</p>

Unscramble These Words:

eoseawm	love
anotelpai	healthy
eileveb	joyful
nirligoa	awesome
ucruogaseo	hugger
velo	potential
nerpstices	courageous
cfsuclesu	persistence
nenfodice	believe
hetlayh	successful
eimredntanoit	confidence
fojuyl	compassion
scimnopsaon	determination
ghgrue	original
inkd	kind

Answers are on page 110.

How do the words above describe you on any normal day? I believe our thoughts or a positive outlook on life affect how you feel about our Self and our environment? Thinking joyful, kind, or compassionate thoughts make us feel those things. What do you think? Do you agree?



On the next page, you'll have a chance to use the unscrambled words in a new way.

What are ways you can use the words (on the previous page) to describe yourself so that you are building your confidence and self-worth?

When do you show confidence?

In what situation do you use compassion? What about persistence?

Use the space below to jot down ideas on how you can use words to build yourself up.

What are more positive and uplifting words you can give to your Self? Cheerful? Caring? Insightful? Ambitious?



We've talked about the importance of having a vision for what you want for yourself today, tomorrow and over the next few years—and using the Be/Have/Do idea chart generator. We talked about creating a vision board to use as a visual reminder, something you can use daily when making decisions, as well as to stay on track.

When I was your age, I was clueless. I had no idea of a direction or goal. At age nine, I knew I wanted to become a singer. What did I do with that knowledge? Nothing! For years (and years and years) I did everything but sing, and I did a lot of things I had no business doing. Please don't waste your life like I did. Use the little bit of time you have to follow the path to your dreams. That means, if you want to be a musician or writer or teacher or sports superstar—you have precious few hours in a day to “work” toward that. That is where your vision board will help keep you focused.

Another tool to use is an action plan. It is a written down plan that details in both broad and specific ways just how you plan to get from “today” to “success.”



It's a fluid document, one where you WANT to see the line-outs and changes, and notes. Why do you think it's not set as a permanent document?

It's because each day you grow. Each day, things happen in life that may change your dreams, and, you'll be able to cross things off the plan after you've completed them.

And, I would think you would want a record of where you've come from, it's a record of emotional growth.

Create an Action Plan: Captain of Debate Team

1. **What do I want to accomplish?** This is the end state so when you've achieved it—it is “this.”

1a. I want to: “become Captain of the debate team.”

(Do you recognize how specific that was? Not just the debate team, but the Captain.)

2. **When do I want to achieve this?**

This is a BIG goal, which can't be completed (realistically) in a few months or even a year (unless you have tons of natural talent, luck, or connections), but using it here is a good example for long range planning.

2a. I want to achieve this goal by the 12th grade. (Two years, basically. If you are in the 9th or 10th grade now.)

3. **How will I achieve this?**

3a. First step: Find out if the school has a debate team. *If the school does not have a debate team—consider starting one. See: theclassroom.com/start-high-school-debate-team-8296702.html for guidance on how to do that.* But for our action planning purpose—we'll say your school does have a debate team.



Create an Action Plan (example continued)

3b. Second step: Determine what traits or talent I have and/or need for this goal.

⇒ *Have an evaluation of my speaking voice.*

⇒ *Have an evaluation of performance ability.*

4. What do I need to accomplish this goal?

4a. Confidence as a public speaker

4b. I need a computer with internet for research.

4c. I need vocal ability to enunciate words properly.

4d. I need time to practice.

4e. To be nominated as Captain, I need leadership and organizational skills. I'll need assertiveness, as well as patience. I'll need to be able to work with school officials, judges, and parents.

Next, it's time to break this dream or goal into smaller action plans or milestones (goals.)

5. Start with: What is my one-month goal?

5a. At the one-month mark _____ (date) I want to:

⇒ Learned about debate.

⇒ Joined the debate team.

⇒ Have watched local or national debates.

⇒ Been evaluated on voice strengths and weaknesses.



Create an Action Plan (example continued)

6. What is my three-month goal?

6a. My three-month goal _____ (date) is to:

- ⇒ Participate in a practice debate.
- ⇒ Strengthened my speaking voice.
- ⇒ Memorized the different types of speeches.

7. What is my six-month goal?

7a. My six-month goal _____(date) is to:

- ⇒ Compete in a debate.
- ⇒ Volunteer to hold an office on the team.
- ⇒ Help coach newer team members.

8. What is my one-year goal?

8a. My one-year goal _____(date) is to:

- ⇒ Have won a debate.
- ⇒ Held an office on the team successfully.

9. Two-year goal? Four-year? You can see how this develops over time. Continue to identify whose support you'll want or need as well as other necessary resources (teachers, videos, books, and/or equipment) to enable your successful achievement of your goal or dream.



Every month review your action plan for changes in goals, and to check on progress. Taking the time to create an action plan now—will save you oodles of time later.

Action Plan Blueprint

1. What do I want to accomplish?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

2. When do I want to achieve this?

Date for goal "A": _____

Date for goal "B": _____

Date for goal "C": _____

Date for goal "D": _____

3. How will I achieve this? What resources do I need?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____



Action Plan Blueprint (continued)

4. What is my one-month milestone:

For goal "A": _____

For goal "B": _____

For goal "C": _____

For goal "D": _____

5. What is my three-month milestone:

For goal "A": _____

For goal "B": _____

For goal "C": _____

For goal "D": _____

You'll do the same for the six-month and one-year milestone. Remember, a milestone is like a stepping stone toward your goal.

Break Time.

Solve these bamboozables (a display of
(words in an interesting way.)

1. mine _____ yourself you	2. Success E Success Success Success
3. Chance Chance ← Chance	4. Problem
5. Up əp!s	6. Love Love Self

Aren't these fun:). Here's a hint to solving them:a slash
can mean don't or no.

1. Don't you undermine yourself. Get it?



Answers are on page 110.



What You Say About Yourself Matters !

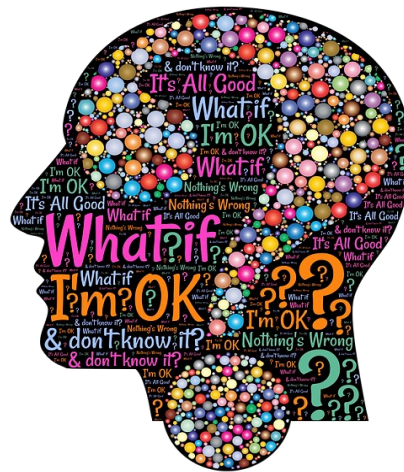
More so than what other people say about you (unless you choose to believe them and if it's derogatory— please don't believe them) what you say about yourself, especially repeatedly, sinks into your subconscious and affects yourself-worth and self-image.

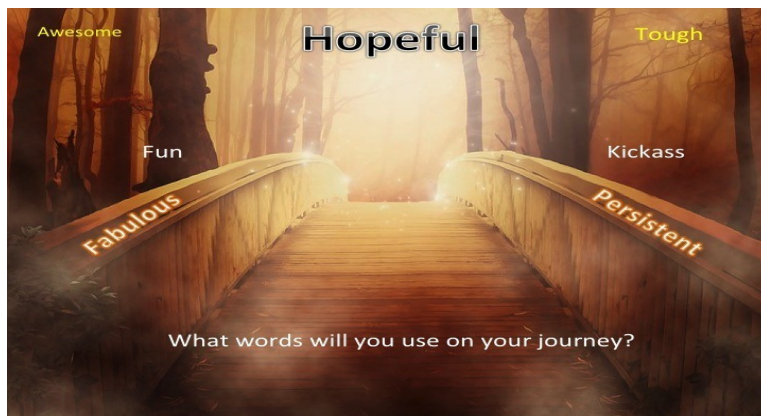
It may seem like nothing to call yourself an idiot when you forget something, or a klutz or dummy, but those negative words and labels stick!

Seeing yourself as something (like a klutz or idiot) will continue into other areas without your permission. You'll begin to have a viewpoint of yourself as lacking in other areas too.

But, if you're saying POSITIVE things about yourself, then you can expect to have a “cando” attitude and you aren't driven by fear. You will have the courage to try out for the debate team or enter some type of competition.

Look at the traits on the next page. Is this how you see yourself and talk to yourself? They are more than mere words in a dictionary. These are traits each of us ought to consider adding to our personal habits and vocabulary.





Amazing
Able
Ambitious
Beautiful
Brilliant
Caring
Daring
Determined
Enjoyable
Giving
Happy
Honest
Inspiring
Incredible
Joyful
Kind
Magnificent
Outstanding
Respectful
Sensational
Sincere
Thankful
Thoughtful
Wise

However, if your self-talk is negative, you will probably talk yourself out of doing things that you really want to do (such as sing, play a sport, attend college, or believe in achieving dreams).

Did you know that when you say something over and over out loud or in your mind—it sinks into your subconscious?



Here's the word list for the puzzle on the next page. Oh, I think you're outstanding! Say these positive words as you search for them. Make an effort to say them daily. Internalize them.

SUCCESSFUL
COURAGEOUS
DETERMINED
OUTSTANDING
CARING
INSPIRE
KIND
GIVING
AMAZING
HONEST

FUN
PURPOSEFUL
CREATIVE
STRONG
INTEREST
FOCUSED
VISIONARY
ABLE
THOUGHTFUL
CONFIDENT

OPEN
AWESOME
OUTGOING
INCREDIBLE
GOALS
INSIGHTFUL
OPTIMIST
NICE
PERKY

I hope you believe the words on the previous describe you and your life. You can find the words frontwards, backwards, and diagonally. Solution is on page 111.

O I N C R E D I B L E A V A T S L F L
U N O O Y K R E P S M I W H U O U U E
T T G N I R A C T A N E P O P N F G V
S E V F S A H R Z E S U E T S T S I I
T R Y I S O O I G O R G I L H S S V T
A E D D N N N N M P A M E G B I E I A
N S F E G G I E O R I V I R O A C N E
D T S N S O W S U S K S O N I L C G R
I T O T G U E O T V N I A V E P U P C
N H S T E F C C O L I R R N O E D S O P
G T U S U B R O S S Y S S D E C I N T
G O A L S A L U F T H G U O H T S O I



What Do You Think? Do you dwell on what other people think of you? Do you find yourself pretending to be different than your usual way or are you doing things you don't want to do to make someone like you? Or to make someone happy?

Most people get pressure to hide or change their true Self (even as adults). Someone may tell you not to “act” a certain way, or suggest you not wear something, or tell you to talk in a different manner, or even try and make you believe something you don't (such as religion, politics, racism, or elitism).

“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”

— Oscar Wilde

Maybe you struggle with the identity of you. Or, questions arise in areas of your life but you're not ready to search for the answer. Some internal questions might be more difficult to answer right now, but will become clear as you grow on your life's journey. That's normal.

If you're confused, let time and your life unfold to help you to make the right decisions that affect you and your life. However, that said, it is important to be true to the YOU that you are today, especially in your mind.

If you don't feel safe (in a conversation or discussion) or sure of yourself, what can you do to be true to your beliefs? How about you come up with a code word, phrase, or quote that you can you always have with you. That way, when someone tries to make you feel bad about

yourself for being "authentic," then you can look at your special reminder and not accept (called internalize) what the person is saying.

An example is:
"I am wonderfully made and perfect as I am."



Or, "I am original, creative, and awesome."

What word or phrase would help you remain feeling good about yourself when your self-worth is attacked or when someone is criticizing you or making fun of you.

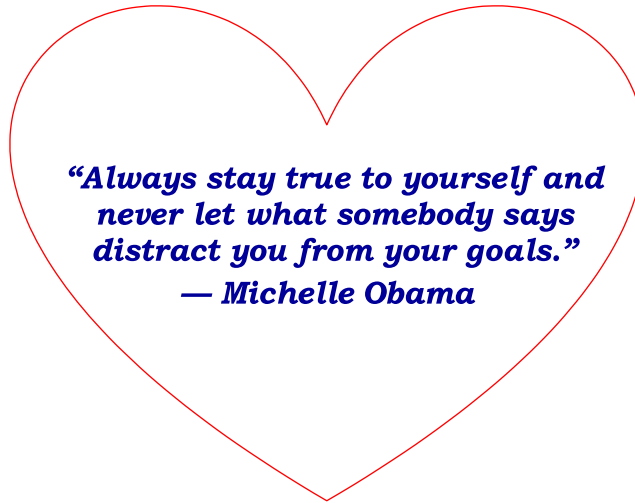
When you try to be someone else, or you try to conform to what someone thinks you should be you will have dissonance. Dissonance is a lack of agreement. It's a difference between the truth and what someone wants to believe. It's a difference between beliefs and actions. If it's about you, then it's a difference between who you truly are and who you are "pretending or faking" to be, and this can cause you some serious-mind-upset and unhappiness.

It's much easier to be true to who you are and let other people come to terms with that.

Of course, the same goes for you accepting "them" as they are.

Do you agree or disagree?





Pleasing Others and Self-Compassion

It isn't surprising that (in the media) only a small amount of attention is spent on telling you *not* to worry about pleasing others. Why is that? Because it's counterproductive (which means, it's against what someone wants).

People (including you and me) like to be pleased. Wouldn't you agree that we like it when someone does something for us? However, solely worrying about what someone wants, or how that person wants us to be ***should not be at the cost of hurting ourselves or feeling negative about our Self!***

Say you're playing baseball and you want to hit a home run for your mom so your mom will be proud of you. But instead, you strike out. Did you let your mom down?

Will your mom be disappointed ***in*** you? Duh, NO!

She might be disappointed ***for you,*** but not disappointed in you — especially when you're trying your best.



Many people may feel they let someone down, and then feel negative about them Self, and possibly call their Self a bad name. That person may even become depressed.

However, parents and guardians usually want the best for their child and are proud their child is trying for the home run, or the

field goal, or the Debate Team, or whatever their child is attempting.

Sometimes though, adults can have unusually high expectations and a child is unable to attain them no matter how hard they try. This may sound mean, but, expectations are the problem of the person holding them. You can't spend your life trying to please others. All you can do is be the BEST YOU!

When a person does something solely to please someone else (and I'm not talking about doing chores) or when that person acts in a particular way that isn't their normal way, or does things that they truly don't want to do

(like drinking or drugs or pick on someone) then they are "acting" like a people pleaser. They are acting fake.

Fake is not good.



Most people pleasers are not happy with the person they are because they are often being untrue to themselves. Sadly, that's how people-pleasers often become a target of manipulation because they are potentially more vulnerable (than non-people-pleasers) to verbal or emotional abuse by others.

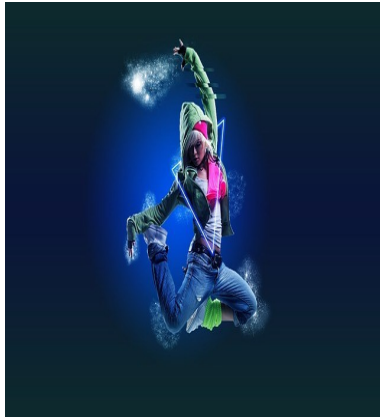


Not only do people pleasers spend a lot of time trying to become what the other person wants, they often act one way for one person and another way for someone else. It becomes a vicious cycle of manipulation and the people pleaser does not learn to value one's Self. Here's an example: Although you want to be in the Drama Club *your dad* thinks acting is for sissies. You want your dad to be proud of you, so instead of joining the Drama Club you try out for the football team—even though you hate football.

Here's the thing. While you are pretending to be someone else, every minute you are “doing or being” that thing that you're pretending, your mind may go to a dark place and you may start calling yourself names like loser, idiot, or weakling. That isn't a healthy attitude.



That's where self-compassion comes into the picture.



You've got to give yourself a break! Yes, try your best. But, if you *do* make a mistake, or don't hit the home run – that's okay, maybe next time you will.

The same philosophy goes for when you mess up and do something you know is wrong, which I believe 99% of us have done at least once! Your parent, guardian, or other significant person(s) in your life will forgive you. Everyone makes mistakes, and everybody fails, or at least doesn't win at something, sometime.

How much better would you feel about yourself if you didn't call yourself mean names? What if you looked in the mirror and said, "I fell off my healthy eating plan, but that's okay. Tomorrow, I'll do better." Realize, no one is perfect.

Do you agree that saying words that are positive in nature or words that make you feel good about yourself would be much better for your self-respect, self-worth, self-image, and sense of Self than if you said words that tore you down, made you feel bad about yourself or supported negativity?



You probably do agree, but often, instead of positive words, the thing we say about our Self is negative—such as, "I'm such a loser, I can't even eat right!"

Not good thoughts to think!

It takes self-compassion to recognize when you are being hard on yourself and others, but luckily, self-compassion is a trait each of us has within our Self, and one we can grow and strengthen. Websites like StoptheHurt.org and PositivePsychology.com, and Self-Compassion.org have articles and resources to help you grow these traits.

It takes work to allow a person to grow and learn.

Instead of being critical of yourself, be kind. Practicing self-compassion on yourself is a great way to learn to become more compassionate to other people. How you treat yourself will eventually become how you treat other people.



***“I had people in my life who were insane and negative, but they taught me how not to be, how I didn’t want to end up.”
— Channing Tatum***

How would your outlook on life change if you were more compassionate to yourself? What are ways you can bring more self-compassion into your life?

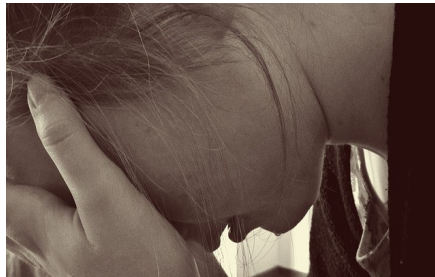
Have you thought of mentorship or volunteering as a way to be more compassionate both to yourself and others?



I know I've said a lot about the importance of positive self-talk. But really, can anything be more important than how you feel about yourself?

You can use the words listed on pages 27 and 28 to create a Self vocabulary. Consider looking in the mirror every day (look yourself in the eye) and tell yourself you are strong, able, creative, determined, and . . . any other positive and encouraging words in this book or in a "positive Self-vocabulary list" that you write in a journal or on your phone.

Really. Try it. I know you'll start to feel differently about your Self if you start being considerate and kind. How could you not? Also, refrain from saying ANY of these words (listed below) when talking about or to your Self:



Inadequate	Unworthy	Unloveable
Worthless	Unable	Ugly
Lacking	Failure	Unlikeable

Are there additional words do you need to remove from your vocabulary? If so, put them here and delete them.

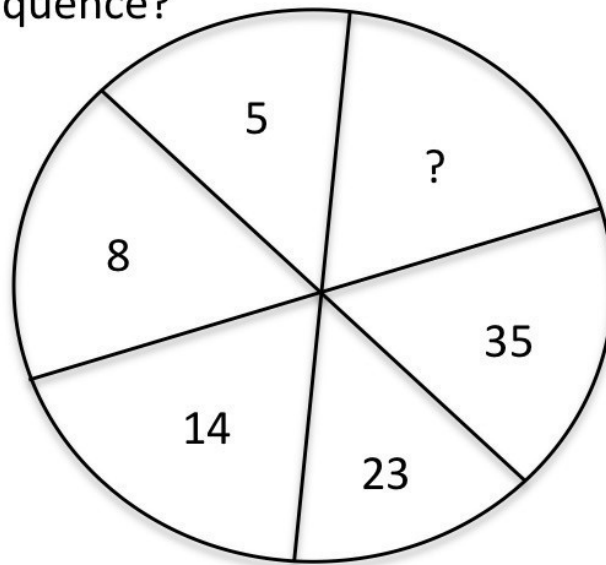
How about taking a break from deep thinking and solve these riddles instead.

1. How many logs does it take to complete a log cabin?
2. If 12 is a dozen and 13 is a baker's dozen, what are 14 and 15?

How did you do?

This next puzzle is a little more difficult (at least it was for me when I was creating it).

What is the next number in the sequence?



Solution for the sequences is on page 111, solutions for the riddles are on page 112.

“Life is too short to worry about what others say about you. Have fun and give them something to talk about.” — Kevin Hart

Talk About It



Either while reading this book, or after you've finished it, talk about it.

Many people find that when reading positive messages or a section in a book that asks them to consider a different perspective about themselves and others—that there is a potential for new ideas to invade their mind and get themselves thinking.

One of the best ways to learn and explore new ideas is through dialogue with a trusted adult. An adult is often a better choice (than a friend) to share deeply personal thoughts with for a few reasons.

First, you can tap into an adult's vast life experiences—the adult may have gone through something similar—so then you might find a wealth of information that helps you see things differently.

A second reason (to talk with an adult instead of a peer) is that while you might be BFF's with someone your own age today, tomorrow might be a new forever and you're no longer friends.

One thing I believe you don't want to happen after you've shared deeply personal things, is to have those personal details splattered on social media. That is less likely to happen when you've talked with a trusted adult.

Of
Trust



A third reason to talk with an adult about your thoughts and feelings is because that close adult in your life is there to help, guide, and support you.

I believe communicating with your parent (s) or guardian (before talking to someone else first) is the best choice. If your parent or guardian is part of the

problem then talk with another trusted adult from your circle of people. It is important to get guidance or support as you're navigating through these challenging years.

Maybe you don't currently have the type of relationship with a parent to discuss personal matters, but I urge you to try.

***“Talk about your problems. There's no need to feel shy. It's always good to talk about issues that concern you.”
— Orlando Bloom***

Parents aren't perfect. Sometimes they act and react with closed minds and misunderstanding. Really. If you try to talk with a parent or guardian and that person isn't able to listen, think of someone else you can talk with, like a counselor, principal, or someone from church.

The important thing is having SOMEONE you can trust to help you sort out the questions, concerns, ideas, and thoughts that are all jumbled inside of you.

On the next couples of pages I'll share some ideas about how to approach your trusted someone about discussing your ideas and concerns. I think they may help.



Strategies to Talk to Adults:

Consider using the following tips when you want to talk about something important with a parent or other adult.

Strategy #1. Ask for an appointment. That may sound odd, but what it really means is

that you are showing you value that person's time and schedule, and that you know that one timeframe might be better than another timeframe for conversation.

Right when mom or dad gets home from work, or dinner is being prepared, or it's exercise time, or they're having a cocktail, or trying to get others ready for bed (or school) – these are not good times to have an important conversation.

Ask your parent for a good time (that day) when it would be a good time to talk privately for an hour about something that's personal.

You may need to tell them that everything is okay, (if it is) so that they don't worry and start interrogating you on the spot. That wouldn't be good.



Strategy #2. Prepare in advance. It can be really, really challenging to talk about what is bugging you. You can make it a little easier on yourself by making notes of what you want to say. Why? Think of how difficult it is getting up in front of your class at school for a demonstration or book report – and that's not even personal stuff!

Strategy #3: Use “I” Statements. Anytime someone starts a sentence with “You,” the person the “you” is directed at will become on edge and begin preparing their defense. It’s an automatic self-defense mechanism. You know when your parent, teacher, coach, or whomever says, “You didn’t, or you don’t, or you haven’t . . .,” you immediately become alert and defensive. We all do, it’s normal.

When you want to talk with an adult – guess what? if you say, “You never take my side,” or, “You never listen to me,” that person you’re talking with will become defensive. Truly and surely.

And if it’s an adult, they’ll probably become a touch angry or annoyed—we’re sensitive about our shortcomings. 😊



Instead, word your issue something like this: “I feel that when there is a disagreement, that my side is hardly ever taken.”

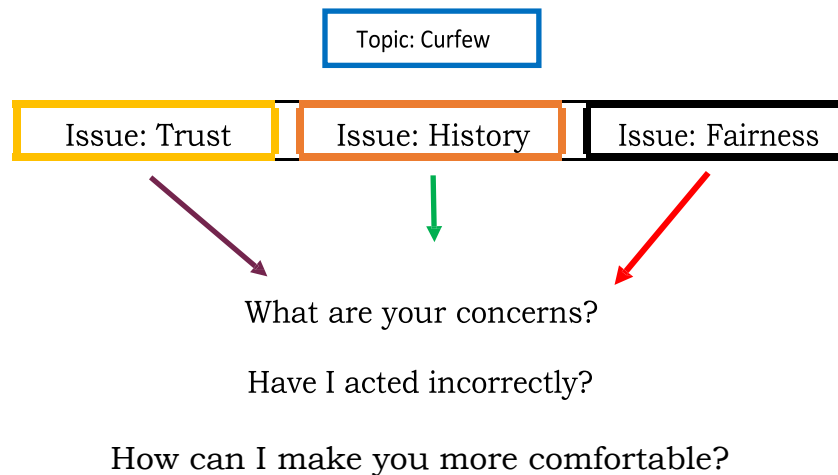
Then, using tip #2 on the previous page, you can have examples already prepared of when this has happened.

Strategy #4. Stick to the topic. It is so easy to start talking about one topic and then end up talking about some other subject.

Often, emotions and time constraints end the discussion – and you never get to fully discuss the topic at hand, or get resolution of your problem or issue. If you see this happening, try to tactfully get back on track by saying something like this:

“That is a good point, and maybe we can talk about that next, but right now I’d like to continue talking about _____. I hope that is okay with you.”

Preparing bullet points or a diagram on a piece of paper can help you stay on topic, and so could creating an agenda. Example:



Strategy #5: Use your emotions intelligently.

EI, as it’s called, is a skill. Just because someone is an adult does not mean that person has the skill of Emotional Intelligence.

It’s okay to have a full range of emotions: cry, get angry, laugh, be happy, or become annoyed. That is totally normal for most everyone. The challenge (and skill) is being able to describe to someone what you are feeling—and also *how* that emotion is making you feel.

As an example, maybe when you're angry your stomach twists in knots, you get hot all over, and your teeth hurt because you're clenching them. Or, when you're angry you feel like you're going to blow your top! For someone else, though, when that person gets angry they get real quiet and stiff. Each of us show our emotions differently.

“Miscommunication leads to complication.” — Lauryn Hill



Crying is a release, and nothing to feel ashamed about. When you are able to tell someone how you feel (even if you start crying while talking) that is called using your emotions intelligently.

Just like dealing with challenges, using your emotions intelligently takes practice.

Many adults freak out when they're faced with someone crying because they don't know what to do, or what to say, or how to act. If this happens, say something like, "I'm really upset, crying is helping me release some tension. I'll be fine, please just give me a minute."

Strategy #6. Be flexible and open to other perspectives. "Because I told you so," might be a typical adult phrase, but it wouldn't go too far if you said it. You might have told your parent (or other adult) something three times already, and have given them fifteen reasons why it's a good idea or why you *should* be able to do something, but odds are ...

you'll have to explain it again. Try a different approach or try to use different words to get your idea across.

Use open-ended questions or multiple examples from different points of view. Refrain from, "Everybody's doing it, Mom!" Show that you've really thought this through. Something like, "Mom, I understand you may have some concerns about me getting a nose ring. I'd like to share with you why I want to get one, and how I plan to keep the area clean and healthy. I even understand that there may be times when you'd prefer I not wear it (such as to church or Grandma's house) and I'll respect your wishes. Please share with me any other concerns you might have."

Question. How would you feel if someone thanked you for your time after you did something for them?

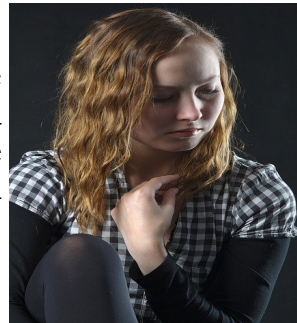
Reach your potential and go beyond.

As *T.F. Hodge* said, "*The sky is not my limit . . . I am.*"



Strategy #7: Don't assume. Has this happened to you? You start to say something, and then someone cuts you off and either finishes your sentence, or says, "I know just what you mean." Ugh! But they didn't know what you meant, or what you were going to say! It's annoying, they had a wrong assumption. Wrong assumptions can be quite damaging.

Maybe you're talking to your dad and he gets a funny look on his face. You assume it's because of what you're saying, so you stop talking and run out of the room and out of the house. Or, maybe you run to your room.



But actually, the funny look on his face is because he had to fart and he was about to blow! Just kidding, but wrong assumptions happen often. Feelings get hurt, people break up with each other, people even get in fights, or other bad things happen.

Don't assume. Ask. If you hear something unexpected or someone is acting weird, ask for clarification. Sometimes what was said could be taken two ways (one positive and one negative).

Adults can easily misinterpret what's been said because they often hear what they want to hear, or what they expect to hear, or maybe they didn't even hear everything you said— or, and this happens often, they're multitasking so they're distracted. That's why an appointment makes sense.



Clarify meaning.

Strategy #8: Thank him/her/them for listening. Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to keep your mouth shut and just listen when someone is talking? It's crazy hard!

After your parent, guardian, or other close adult has listened to whatever it is that is bothering you, give them a moment to think about what you've said, and then ask for some ideas to solve the issue.

Remember, when asking for advice, try to stay open to suggestion. Refrain from immediately saying something isn't going to work.

People can feel insulted if you ask for their opinion and immediately refute it. Instead, you can say something like, "That's a great suggestion, I'll think about it." Who knows, maybe their suggestion will work with some consideration or modification. When your discussion is complete, sincerely thank them for their time.

"I have a very close relationship with my mom, and I'm able to talk to her about anything." - Jessica Szohr



May I share a secret? Chances are, your parent or guardian wants to be a huge part of your life as well as a resource.

Creating a relationship to talk (both during crisis and when things are awesome) would be good for everyone.



Here’s the kicker, though. Just because someone is an adult doesn’t mean they’ve developed good communication skills, or know how to start a conversation, or have figured out how to

create a relationship.

Each of those distinct areas—starting a conversation, communication skills, and building relationships take practice and often even professional help or training.

Some adults might as well put on a mask and start snorkeling just to have a conversation starter.

Help your parent or guardian get to know the “real” you. Maybe you can be the point person here using the eight tips just mentioned, or visualize some other ones.

Use the space below to jot down some other methods you can use to start a dialogue with your parent or guardian?

“I don't think you should try to be anything you're not. If you're not smiling all the time or always happy - I don't think it matters. If you're having a bad day, show you're having a bad day. Don't try to put up something that's fake.” — Elle Fanning



Unique? Different? Original?

Are you noticeably different? Original in appearance or unique?

Do you share your creative vision with others? Sometimes, a person's display of uniqueness makes other less-than-strong people feel threatened. Some people that feel threatened feel

jealousy, or feel “less than” or small and unsure. So they tend to lash out and hurt other people—especially those people who are different. Your originality, creativeness, uniqueness and/or your confidence to be true to yourself is then used against you, instead of being celebrated.

“I do what I do. You like it, great. You don't, go listen to somebody else. I'm stickin' with the people who stuck with me.”
— Ice Cube

It takes courage to be different and original, yet it can be so satisfying! Think about it, trends and fads happen because someone had the courage to “be weird.”

Most people don't have the courage to go through with their ideas or act the way they want to act. Actually, most people are followers.

Most people follow trendsetters and “creatively unique people.” They're the people who laughed at “the weirdo's” when the weirdo's were unknown, but now that everybody is doing it – (colored hair, holes in the pants, nose rings) they'll do it too.

How many examples of fads have you seen today?



“People who love themselves don't hurt other people. The more we hate ourselves, the more we want others to suffer.” — Daniel Pearce

Following other people isn't always bad (unless it's hurting someone). That's what fads and trends are. But making fun of someone *because* they're different or unique – that's never okay, and it's never a good thing to do. Instead of making fun of someone try to appreciate their courage to be true to the person they are.

Maybe kindness and tolerance will spread and people no longer will have to fear being unique or different.

I believe, having individual differences colors our world in interest and beauty.

*“If you're lucky enough to be different, don't ever change.”
— Taylor Swift*



Maybe you know someone who is a little “different.” Consider acknowledging that person's difference and then sharing a sincere compliment describing what you like about them that is different from the norm. Being able to accept the "weirdness" in others is a sign of strength — in you.

Do you know of someone at school who gets picked on because of their uniqueness?

For example, maybe the person likes to dress in costumes (all the time). Or maybe they walk or talk differently. Maybe they burst out in song at inopportune times (like I do).



Truthfully, almost all of us have some quirky thing we do. How would you feel about showing them some support or kindness?

“My pain may be the reason for somebody's laugh. But my laugh must never be the reason for somebody's pain”

— Charlie Chaplin

Perseverance and Determination

Matt Johnson knows all about perseverance. He tried out for the reality TV show called, “The Voice” every season for seven years (that’s 14 times). Then, on Season 15, in September 2018, he was finally selected as a contestant during the blind auditions. That’s perseverance!

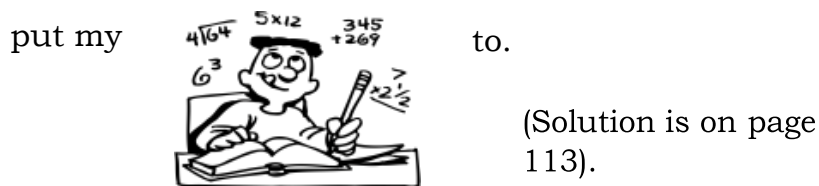
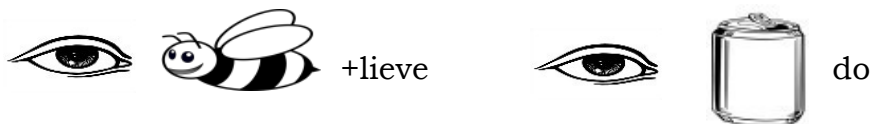
When you are attempting to grow and mature, an area that greatly affects your life today, tomorrow, and over the years to come, is your ability to persevere and do the “growth things” that you probably don’t want to do; such as go to school, do your homework, learn to manage



your time, use good personal hygiene techniques and eventually get a job. This is the time to surround yourself with people who are motivated to help you succeed. Follow the mantra, "Don't just go through it, grow through it."

"Your reality is yours. Stop wasting time looking at someone else's reality while doing nothing about yours."
 — Steve Harvey

Here's a fun pictogram to solve.



"Don't you ever let a soul in the world tell you that you can't be exactly who you are." — Lady Gaga



Like a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly or a frog becomes a prince . . . (just kidding) you'll find that through every experience (whether good or bad) you will grow and mature. Granted, while you're going through those experiences, you probably won't be thinking, "I'm going to grow through this experience." However, when you look back through the pieces and parts of your life, challenging experiences are ones you'll remember.

The key is using those experiences is to help you become the person you want to be. That's why at the beginning of this book I asked you what you wanted. What type of person do you want to be as a student, or think about what type of person you'd like to be when you become an adult?

Having an idea now helps you direct your life (to the extent that you can) and make decisions on which way to go and which steps to take to achieve what you want. When you have an idea about the type of person you want to be, anxiety and stress are reduced.

"When I was going on auditions, it was nerve-racking. I'd always say to my mom that it would be awesome if I could get a series. When Modern Family came along, I said, 'You know what, Mom? I believe I'm going to get this role.'"
— Rico Rodriguez





While you're doing all the "growing-up" things noted on the previous pages, remember that you'll need to find time to dream about your future and do actions that will help you achieve the goals you've set, while creating and living the vision you see for yourself.

Here are a couple tips to help you create actionable steps toward your vision and goals:

- ◆ Something successful leaders know and practice—is to surround yourself with people who are smarter than you, who have more logic and common sense, and also more aspiration and drive. Being around these types of individuals will help motivate you as you grow and mature. You'll learn skills and thought processes. You can find these people through clubs, school councils, and sports teams.
- ◆ Find a role model and watch, listen, and learn how that person acts, reacts, and lives their life. Apply that to your life. If your role model is a celebrity, realize that much of what that person does (or says) is orchestrated by other people.

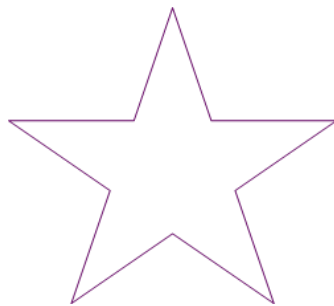
“My advice to anyone with a dream is to never stop pursuing it.” — Shawn Mendes

- ◆ Use your action plan and create a list of ideas that will help you reach your goals. Let’s say you have a dream to be a musician, specifically a guitar player. Create a list of all the ways you can become a guitarist:
 - (a) Get a guitar.
 - (b) Take guitar lessons.
 - (c) Practice daily. Okay, that’s the normal way.

Maybe the normal way of learning how to play guitar won’t work for you. Maybe before you can become the next YouTube sensation—you’ve got to get a little creative.

Say you live in a place that doesn’t have a guitar teacher within walking distance, or you can’t afford to buy lessons, or even buy a guitar! But deep down you still want to be a guitarist.

What can you do?



Matthew David Morris from Atlanta, GA, aka MatyBRaps, started posting YouTube covers at age seven.

His perseverance paid off. At age 15, he had almost 900,000 Twitter followers of his “BFamily” posts, nearly 15 million followers on YouTube and 6 billion video views.



When traditional access to learning won't work for your situation, for whatever reason, you'll probably need to become creative.

This is also where desire and determination becomes crucial to achieving whatever it is you want to achieve. Here's some ideas to

get you started:

- ◆ You can join your school music program.
- ◆ Rent a guitar.
- ◆ Make a substitute instrument to practice finger movement on such as wood, string, or cardboard.
- ◆ Watch videos from YouTube (using the Internet at the library if you don't have a computer at home).
- ◆ Read books on how to play guitar.
- ◆ Listen to instrumental guitar music.
- ◆ Watch TV specials and old documentaries.

What are some additional ways to learn?

Other ideas for working toward your dream are:

- Find help. Contact art stores, community centers, senior centers, paint stores, neighborhood family alliances, and businesses whose mission is community related.
- Ask to intern for a business in your field of interest or ask if they want to mentor you.
- Ask for donations for what you're trying to do. If you can show how determined you are, and describe how you'll use the resources, people may want to help you.
- Maybe you have people in your group that know someone who knows someone who can help you. If this happens, make sure you "do good" for your friend by being a stand-up person.
- You can reach your goals, but it takes courage to take the first step, and perseverance to keep going through the challenges (and there will be challenges when you're trying to achieve something).



You have the power within.

Have some fun with a Honeycomb puzzle. Each honeycomb has a letter. A group of seven letters spells a word which correlates to one of the questions below. Example:

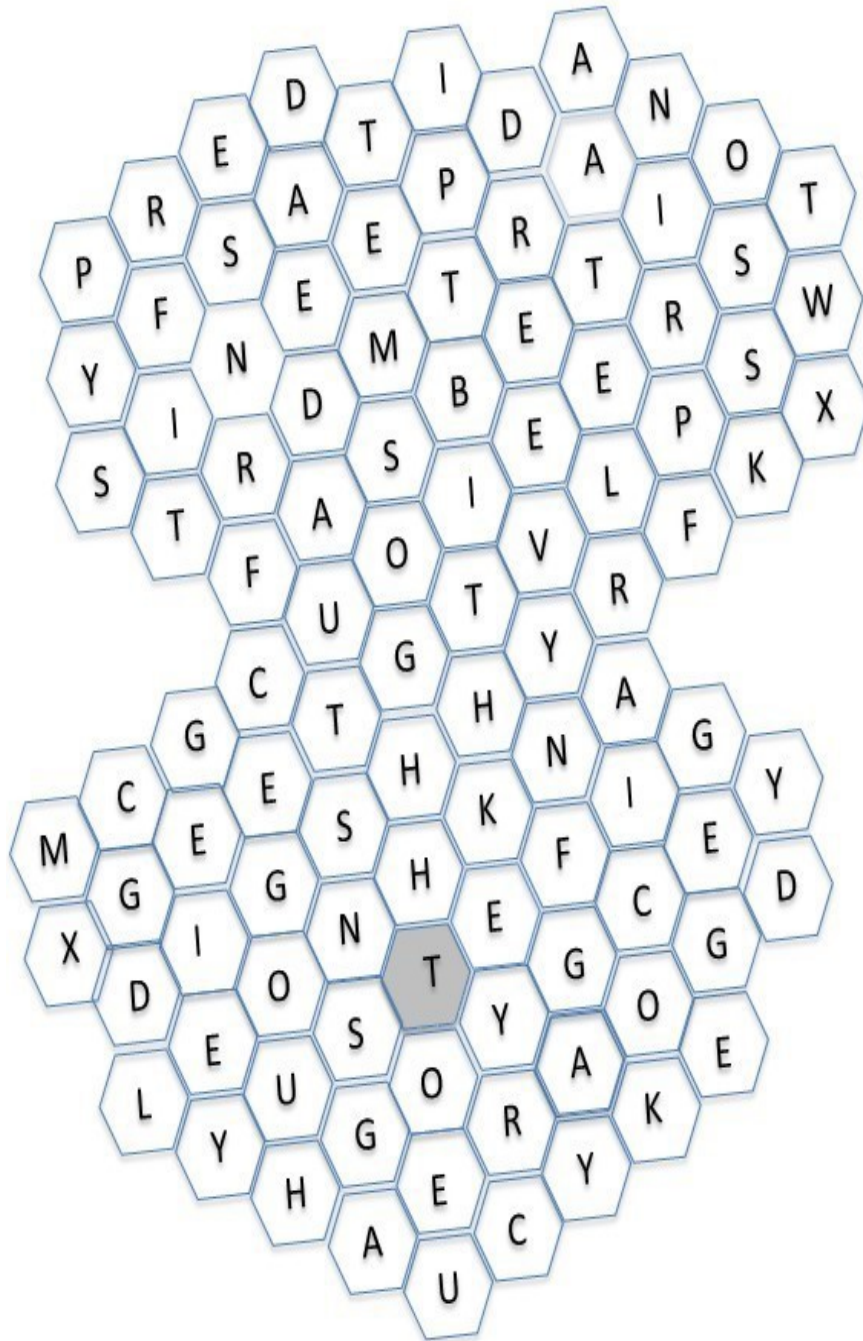
The shaded T and the six letters surrounding it spell HONESTY, which matches clue #1 below. Find seven more seven-letter words and shade the letter in the center. The shaded letters combine to answer the Sweet Word question below.

1. The quality of being honest: honesty - T
2. Accept something as true; feel sure of the truth:
3. Persons whom one knows and with whom one has a bond of mutual affection:
4. An idea or opinion produced by thinking or occurring suddenly in the mind:
5. To continue a course of action in spite of difficulty, opposition, or failure:
6. Make an effort to achieve or complete something, typically a difficult task:
7. Shining or glowing brightly:
8. The ability to do something that frightens one:

Solution is on page 112.

1. Now, unscramble all seven of the center letters to spell the Sweet Word:

This book is for pre-teens and _____ s.





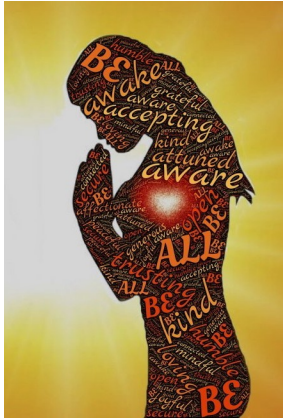
According to music blog “Joy Tunes,” quite a few famous musicians (David Bowie, Elton John, Louis Armstrong, Prince, Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, Jack White, and more) are self-taught.

- ◆ Find the time (even a couple of minutes) every day to do at least one thing to work toward your goal. Whether it’s to practice, read about your interest, or research . . . just do something.
- ◆ All those little things and little actions add to success. Hannahlei Cabanilla started dancing at age two and worked on it every day. In July of 2018, she won “America’s Favorite dancer,” on Season 15 of “So You Think You Can Dance.”
- ◆ Believe you have the power to accomplish your dream.

*“Productivity is one of the best feelings.”
— Olivia Rodrigo*

- ◆ Start small. If you want to be a fashion designer, get free or almost free clothes from churches or thrift shops. Want to paint? Dance? Sing? There are so many free tutorials on YouTube. You can use free apps for your mobile phone, too. There are free or nearly free classes at non-profits for many areas of interest.





Labels

Sometimes labels box a person into a certain way of thinking, or cause one to have preconceived ways of thinking.

Some labels, such as slow, stupid, retarded, and "at-risk" (a label government, social workers, educators, and attorneys use often) can make the person who has been given that label—give up and quit trying (if that person had ever started)

to be something more, or even to be “average.”

Labels can do serious damage to a child’s development. Even children your age can be affected by an adult’s use of a label. If someone put a label on you, consider finding out how and why that came about. If appropriate, understand how having the label might help you, (such as a lower teacher-pupil ratio) and learn to see the label in a different way. Not all labels are bad or damaging—they are used as identification of something (such as autistic, dyslexic, ADHD).

Sometimes, being able to label a feeling or an action can be beneficial, especially if it helps you find ways to cope or learn to overcome the challenge or the reason for the label. Such was the case for actress Elsie Fisher.

She described how she felt nervous and overwhelmed during middle school. She learned that a medical condition called anxiety (a feeling of worry or unease) was causing her to “act out” during conversations with people (and I add, possibly at other inopportune times as well).



If you feel anxious, try using the mobile phone app “StopBreatheThink” or www.stopbreathethink.com



One day while listening to a broadcast, I heard a story (second-hand) about a boy who was called “at risk” by his guidance counselor. He was told he would never amount to anything, not make it out of the projects where he lived, and never succeed in life. The boy accepted (internalized) that label (of being “at risk”) and didn’t put any effort into learning or doing anything to change his circumstances.

Then one year, the boy had a meeting with a new school counselor. She changed his life with just one word.

Potential. She told the boy he was “at potential,” and that it was up to him where he wanted to go in life.

Imagine the possibilities that jumped into the boy’s mind. It was up to him where he wanted to go or how far he wanted to go? He had a choice? It had to be mind-blowing.

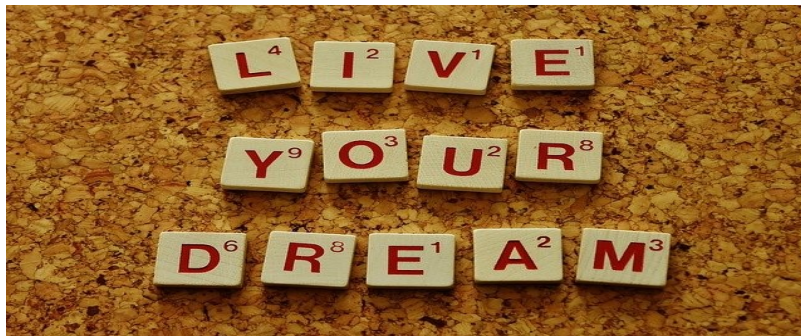


“At potential” caught his attention. That little bit of encouragement started to turn his thought process around. He started caring. He started studying and doing his homework. That boy became successful *every day* because he tried!

I am certain there are a great many stories of children who were told they couldn't make it, or weren't smart enough, or determined enough, or ... you fill in the blank.

This is a true story. I had a kindergarten teacher tell me my son was a trouble-maker and that he was never going to do anything with his life. Seriously! My son was five. He was in Kindergarten. For him, it wasn't that he was a trouble-maker, it was that he was bored. The teacher was teaching to the students who did not know their colors, numbers or letters, and did nothing to encourage the group of children that came into Kindergarten already having learned them. Yes, you can bet I got angry with that teacher!

Financial circumstances or a crappy school can cause someone to be in a more-challenging place mentally and physically, than others, that's true.





Yet many people who have come from those circumstances (who had self-determination) have made a successful life.

Icons of rags-to-riches stories include: Oprah, Henry Ford, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs, and Ralph Lauren, to name a few. Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein are two people that we owe our comfort and way of life to. Yet, as children they were negatively labeled.

Don't wear a label like a blanket if it's going to hold back your "fire" – use it to propel *you* and motivate *you* to find ways to reach your dreams.

When I was your age, I lacked in every area I am talking to you about. I lacked self-esteem, self-worth, confidence, and even self-determination.

After suffering through the repercussions of many bad decisions, I finally had an epiphany (an intuitive grasp of reality) and developed the tools to turn my life around. I learned to love my Self. I created a vision and set goals. I did for myself in my 40's everything I'm suggesting you to now, at your age, to give your day, month, year, and future direction.

I wrote "Loving Myself First" to share my techniques with people who had similar upbringings. Age doesn't bring self-worth and confidence. Try to work through today's challenges so they don't build up and become overwhelming. And remember, today's challenges are the building block foundation for you as a adult. So whenever possible, ***make the best decision for your future you.***

Just for fun, and to refocus after the heavy “future” talk, try the Mind Benders:

1. What’s The Next Letter? WTN _____
2. Taking a picture of a girl with sunglasses is impossible. Why?
3. What can be bigger than you, or smaller than you, but doesn’t weigh anything?
4. Which is heavier: two tons of bricks or two tons of feathers?
5. John is five feet tall and has a part-time job at Sal’s Produce Stand. He wears size 8 shoes. What does he weigh?
6. What ends school, always?

Answers on page 113.

You can reach your dream. It may take a stool or a ladder, but if you stay with it— the distance between the desire for something and achieving it will get shorter and shorter.



Changing Your Mood



If you're feeling down, depressed, or just plain yucky about things that are going on in your life, a simple way to change your mood is to change what you're thinking about.

Try this: Pick one of the words listed below (a trait) and think about a time in your life it described you. If you're stuck, make up a story about how you performed some deed or overcame an obstacle using that specific trait.

Worthwhile	Passionate	Resourceful
Purposeful	Radiant	Creative
Energetic	Brilliant	Loving
Peaceful	Courageous	Graceful
Kind	Thoughtful	Imaginative
Focused	Persistent	Insightful
Interesting	Compelling	

Need an example? Let's say that right now you're feeling overwhelmed with all the requirements you have coming up (test, science project, braces, book report, etc.).

Think back to last year. Maybe you went through something challenging during that time, something similar to what you're presently going through, maybe just not quite as much because you were a year younger.

What did you do last year to make it through the challenge that you could apply now?

Would you believe that just acknowledging to yourself that you've been through a similar situation before and that you came out of it learning something new can help you figure out a solution in the current situation you might find yourself experiencing.

Additionally, thinking of that success can booster your confidence and help you think of actions or techniques, too. All of this can help you change your mood.



Or, you can just put on some music and dance or even just jump around all over the place. There's no way you can stay upset when you're dancing and jumping like the

people in the picture.

Disagree? Try it. I double-dog dare you to.

Or, you can say things like (patty-cake melody):

Silly, silly, silly putty, sitting on a sill /a bird flies up and tweets until/ all the flowers open up to get the sun's fill/ and we laugh and giggle till all is well.

How you feel about yourself affects your mood as well. If you believe in yourself and your potential, no aura of negativity can keep you down for long. A positive self-image strengthens your whole perspective on life, school, and friends.

Besides, who would want to stay in a yucky mood? Not me, and I hope—not you.

Watch What Your Mind Takes In



If you find, subscribe to, or often watch something online, and most posts are a complaint, tragedy, or horror story of some kind, it will suck the life out of you.

Literally and figuratively. Hours of your day can be tied up in this virtual

experience, as well as deteriorate your fitness levels and energy. You could find yourself tired, weary, and yes, lethargic—mostly caused by lack of physical activity. Not only your energy is sapped and zapped from being on a computer, gaming device, or TV, yours eyes are likely to be affected as well.

The more you watch or play, the more you *need* to watch and play. It's addictive. Instead of finding the beauty in things, you may find yourself seeing the negativity in everything, without realizing you're doing it.

Once you're desensitized to the negative and the violent, you may need more increasingly negative and violent things to prevent boredom, and then — you may not be affected by things in the real world—you may become numb to evil actions like murder, violence, theft, and/or child and animal abuse. That's not good.

You are our future.

We need you to care and feel emotions.



Instead of sites that promote despair, consider visiting websites that promote hope, encourage joy, and provide stories of people helping or serving others. You'll find your spirits lifted and you'll feel better about yourself, your environment, and your future.

You've probably heard scholars and motivational speakers say our minds are like computers. I agree with that research. Look back in your memory archive and you'll find all kinds of things you forgot you knew—those memories only needed a trigger to refresh them.

Everything you see, hear, feel and taste becomes a memory. That memory is then catalogued, indexed and filed away.



File away good memories.

File away happy thoughts.

File away accomplishments.

Then visit them every once in a while.



As other memories are accumulated, they add to that particular memory. Sometimes, though, memories are incorrectly labeled and filed, (seriously) and are thus lost until some random new stimuli brings the memory forward.

Then, when you have the opportunity to get new information (like meeting a new person, trying a new food, attending an event of some kind, or hearing new music, your mind instantly (and without you asking it to) gives you references to draw from. So suddenly and without reason, you remember you don't like eggs, or you become afraid for some reason, or, and here it can be scary, too, you lose fear of something you should have hesitation doing.

That's why there is much talk about young people watching TV and playing games that have sex, violence, drugs, alcohol, disrespectful behavior, and just plain nastiness in them.



Those programs, even though you know (when you're watching or playing them) that they aren't real, can make real life not as exciting, or make it seem more dangerous. It all depends on your mind and the memories it has.

Instead of a diet of violent programs or games that don't value life – use your time to feed your mind those programs that enrich it, that give you knowledge and confidence, and good feelings about yourself and your future.

And just to let you know, it isn't just young people this affects—nope. Adults are just as influenced by what they watch on TV or in movies, or the games they play.

How would your day or your life be different if you felt good about what was going on in it? How would your day be different if you heard: "You're awesome, you're doing great, or way to go!" Better, maybe?

Ask yourself this: Do I want to be upbeat and encouraged by my life and my environment, or do I want to feel angry, depressed. And negative about myself?

Next, consider how you spend your time. Then answer the questions below.

TV programs I watch:

What percentage is positive? _____

What percentage is negative? _____

Computer games I play:

What percentage is positive? _____

What percentage is negative? _____

Music I listen to:

What percentage is positive? _____

What percentage is negative? _____

Ask yourself: what can I change about the way I spend my time that will help me feel good about myself, my life, and my future? Then write your answers below.

1. _____

2. _____

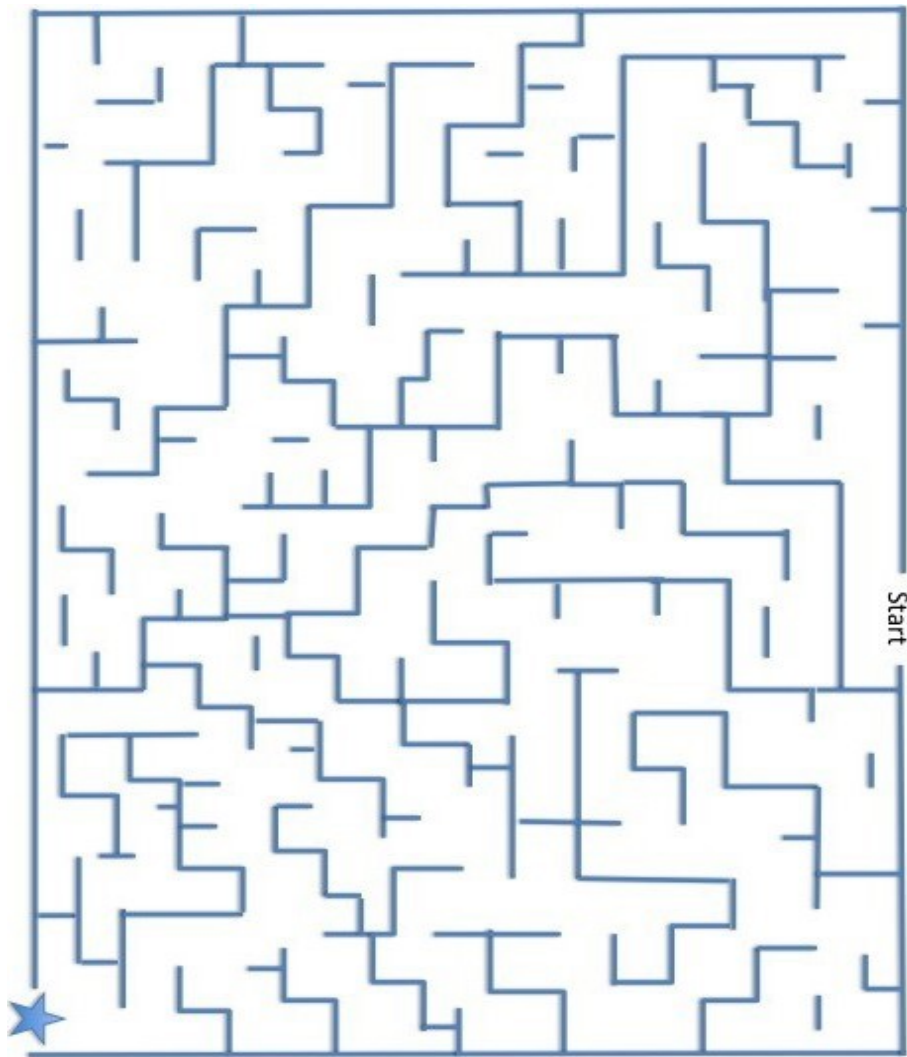
3. _____



Now is a good time to take out your action plan and vision board and recognize how your dreams and goals do not have room for a lot of fluff.

To achieve—you must do the actions and hold the beliefs that support whatever it is that you're trying to achieve. It will not happen on its own. To achieve takes work. It takes believing in one's Self, and it takes re-training your brain to verbalize the self-talk necessary to fully love your Self and do the actions necessary to learn and grow.

When you perform self-talk, you are telling your conscious mind what you want to be, have or do. Phrases like, “Every day in every way, I’m getting better and better,” or, “I’m gaining confidence daily, in my ability to sing,” or, “I choose to eat healthy, junk food no longer interests me.” Do the self-talk thee times daily and you’ll see changed in your life. Just for fun, give your mind a rest, or a twist by completing the maze. Solution is on page 114.





Popularity

"I'd eat my lunch in the nurses' office so I didn't have to sit with the other girls. Apart from my being mixed race, my parents didn't have money so I never had the cute clothes or the cool backpack." — Jessica Alba

Are you one of the popular kids or the unpopular kids? If you're one of the popular kids – here's a tip. You can become even more popular by being nice to people.

Your peers already want to dress like you, talk like you, walk like you and do the things you do . . . how much more would they adore you if you were kind to them? Tons.

Yet sadly, one study showed that only 9% of popular children are widely liked by their peers (the other popular people) and schoolmates.

If you aren't popular in school (or even if you are) this section might be interesting to you; it has a few ideas about why some kids aren't popular, but also why being popular isn't always such a good thing.



I remember when I was in school, the whole reason I started writing songs was because I was alone a lot of the time. I'd sit there in school and I'd be hearing people like, 'Oh my god, this party that we're going to is gonna be so awesome on Friday. Everyone's invited except for [Taylor].'"

Taylor Swift

Much research has been conducted on the subject of popularity, social and anti-social groups, and how all of this affects 11-18 year-olds. In case you didn't know, the age group of 11-13 year-olds is the most challenging because it's at this age that a person is trying to "fit in" to whatever group they desire.

"I'm glad I could do those films, and I was glad to leave school. I couldn't relate to kids my

***own age. They are mean and don't give you any chance."* — Kristen Stewart**





Rejection by anyone, but especially people you look up to or want to befriend, can be hurtful and damaging, but it doesn't have to be.

Here are a few questions to consider about popularity. Maybe it's not as "wonderful" as people think.

Question 1. Are you outgoing and friendly? Outgoing and friendly kids are easier to get along with. You may say "duh," but in reality, many kids are shy and just a little withdrawn when they're ages 11-17, especially if they've had a difficult time getting along with others when they were younger.

Shy people don't magically become "un-shy" just because they get older. For some people, it takes a lot of effort to be outgoing, even in high school.

2. Are you bossy or one of the team? You might agree, there can only be one bossy person in a group. Who likes to be bossed around? Ah, no one. Being a team player is much more fun. Sure, voice your opinion on what to do or not do (that's important) but it doesn't always have to be your way – you can let others choose, too.





3. Do you play a lot of video games? Spending much of your time online reduces the time you spend face-to-face with peers, another duh, right? But think about it.

The social skills you need to “Push On” include handling conflict, negotiating, articulation, communication, and problem-solving. Okay, well, according to my son – you need a lot of problem solving skills to play a game.

However, when you spend time with friends (or a group of people) you learn how to handle challenges better because you gain experience “reading” a situation or what’s “truly” going on. It’s that emotional intelligence (EI) thing again.

*“In high school I was an outcast. I wasn't cool to hang out with. I ate my lunch in a bathroom stall because that was the one place I could go where I wouldn't be seen.”
— Shay Mitchell*

Here’s another opportunity to review your action plan and vision board. How important (to your goals) will the ability to interact and relate to other people (network or make sales) be toward reaching your goals? I’m guessing it (communicating well) will be important.

Learning to communicate well is a skill that will reward you over and over again throughout your life. It also opens up many areas of employment and leadership positions.



4. Do you like an adrenaline rush?

The news (and every social media site) are filled with pictures and stories of young people doing things that are dangerous either physically or mentally—or both, and those actions can have lifetime effects: Alcohol, drugs, inhaling fumes, sex, strangle-holds, and extreme activities (racing, bridge jumping, you-name-it) to one-up their friends, look cool, or get more viewers on social media.

Accidents, death, jail, and pregnancy – all of these results can and do happen. If you **aren't** trying to impress someone, then you might **not** feel like you have to do all this stuff to be cool. That's a good thing.

"I hated high school. I didn't have any friends, because I didn't fit in." — Chad Michael Murray

Are relationships important to you? Would you prefer to have a group to hang out with, or a friend that likes you just as you are? Or, how about a group of friends who like you just as you are?



Popular people, especially girls (or those who identify with being a girl), often have a society-driven negative self-image, so they're constantly in real, or imagined competition with friends over what to wear, makeup, cars, jewelry, boys, and everything else - including who is more popular. This competition between friends can ruin a friendship. Instead, consider



talking with your friend about likes and dislikes, and why something is important to you. While it's normal for friends to want or like the same

or similar thing, it can be challenging when one part of the friendship doesn't want the other part of the friendship to wear the same shoes or necklace or shirt.

Having clear communication strengthens a friendship. Something like, "Hey, I really love those boots, and I'd like to get a pair. What are your feelings about that?" If you ask and your friend says no, don't get them, then it's up to you if you choose to go forward with the purchase. If you do go forward with a purchase after someone asked you not to, you can expect some tension.

Maybe as you read this, you're thinking —heck, it's my choice what I buy, no one can tell me I can't buy something. True, but which is more important to you—a copycat purchase or a friend.



Chances are, a friend is more important than a pair of jeans.

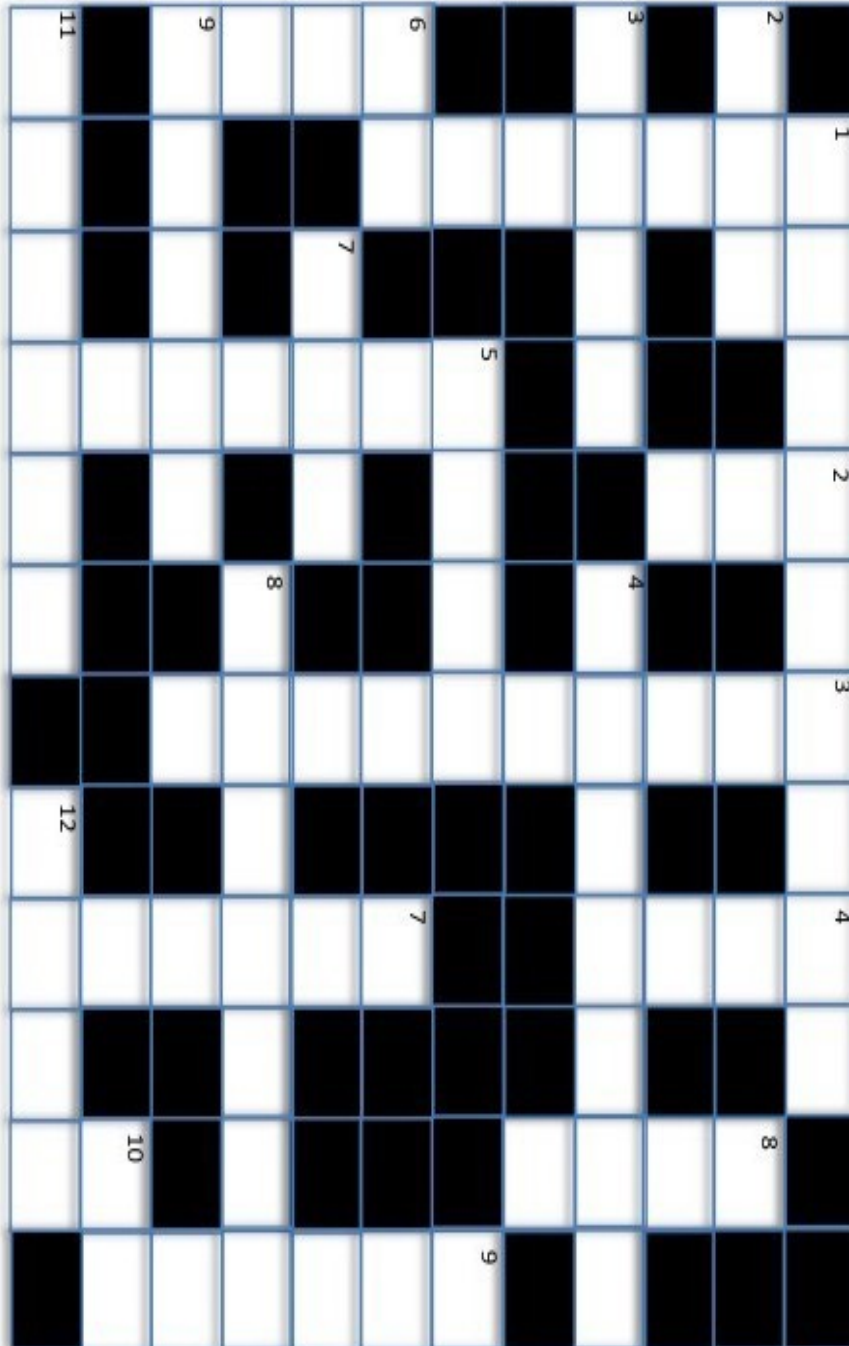
Puzzling Crossword **ACROSS**

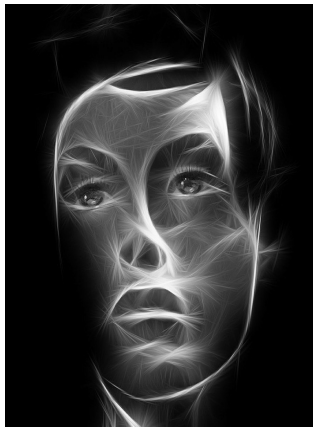
1. When you are___, you aren't afraid to try new things.
2. She has a_____do attitude.
3. Not many instances of this available.
4. When you don't give up.
5. Keep_____and carry on.
6. To_____in the moment is living.
7. No matter what you do, you may still ____ someone the wrong way.
8. A show of faith in something or someone.
9. When you do this, you discover paths / ideas.
10. You have_____, you just have to believe.
11. As a teen, it's important to have a trusty one of these.
12. Always do your_ _____.

DOWN

1. Possesses the skill required to complete an action.
2. "Girls Just Want to Have ____." (song)
3. He was_____to make the debate team.
4. Have you heard the_____?
5. It takes this trait to be an original.
6. Be_____, be beautiful.
7. One of a kind.
8. What you do when you see a falling star.
9. This is the best thing you can be with yourself.
10. When you get_that you're worthy, you'll feel better.

Answers are on page 113.





Don't Hurt Yourself **and Don't Hurt Others**

I don't have to tell you that your life is hard and challenging most of the time. But I do have to tell you that you can get through it, and that many of the challenges you face as a teenager mostly disappear once you graduate high school. The pressure of being a teenager isn't as "pressurizing" once bullies, grades, and the need to fit in are taken off the table.

*"I took a beating from several boys for years. They put me through hell, punching and kicking me all the time."
— Christian Bale*

Although I've brought it up in other areas of the book, bullying or being bullied is, unfortunately, a huge part of being a pre-teen or teenager. It's terrible! As an adult, I hate, hate, hate, hearing about how some kids meanly and cruelly treat other kids! My feelings are probably nothing compared to yours – if you're going through that now. Being the person getting bullied sucks.





Words hurt. Yes, sticks and stones may break your bones, but the words people use will remain with you long after they've been said. Sometimes, those words will follow you into adulthood and beyond. I can still recall the words said to me by my mother when I was a child. They were mean, and horrible, and things a parent ought not to say to a child. Those words are still here, in my mind, decades later.

People use words to intimidate others, or mock them when lashing out in anger, and to make others feel bad about themselves.

Sometimes, people hurt other people without meaning to. Maybe you've heard the expression, "You can't handle the truth." At times, when a person asks another person a question, the person has a pre-conceived and expected answer in their head. So when something contrary to the expected verbiage is given—feeling may get hurt, no matter how nicely it's said.

Sometimes, when you give your opinion, you are saying it's "the truth" when actually, it's just your opinion. Your opinion is subjective. How well you wrote a book report is subjective, as is the "amount" of style in an outfit. The yumminess of chocolate cake is also subjective.



When something is the truth, or true – it means that there is no subjectivity – it is what it is. A basketball when filled with air is round: truth/true. A grand piano has 88 keys: truth / true.

“It gets better. It seems hard, you know, I think being different is always gonna be a tough climb. There's always gonna be people that are scared of it. But at the end of the day you give those bullies, those people that are so ignorant, if you give them the power to affect you, you're letting them win. And they don't deserve that. What you're doing by being yourself is you're keeping it real, and you're being really brave.” — Adam Lambert



Be part of the solution. Think before you speak. Make sure before you say something, that it's true, kind, and here's the hard part — necessary.

Here's an example. Your friend asks what you think of Jason. You think the guy is a jerk. Anytime you've talked to him, he's been rude and argumentative. Whether he's a jerk or not is up to each person who formulates an idea.

But is your opinion true, kind, and necessary? No, it's your opinion, or your feeling, or your experience and also based on your belief on how someone (who isn't a jerk) *should* act, it isn't a truth.

“I realized that bullying never has to do with you. It's the bully who's insecure.” — Shay Mitchell

Someone else might talk or interact with Jason, and be treated in the same manner, and think Jason's cool, or nice, or normal, or being "authentic." How we view or interpret someone's behavior is based on our own values system.

Our values are just that—ours.

Same thing when one of your friends asks your opinion about something they bought. It's a tricky situation.



If you don't care for it, or don't think it looks good, and you want to give your honest opinion, then consider your words carefully. If they bought it, then saying something negative about the item may cause hurt feelings (and maybe hurt your friendship without either of you realizing it), however you don't want to lie, either.

That's why thinking about what you say, before you say it, is important. Does that mean you should lie? No. However saying something like, "It's not my favorite," can answer whether you like something or not. Not everything you think needs to be said.



Would you want someone to stand up for you? I don't even like it when someone is talking bad about someone who isn't even present in the conversation. When that happens, and it does even with adults, I excuse myself, or I say something positive about the person.



Sometimes, if not most of the time, it can feel overwhelming to be harassed and hurt.

Overwhelming and I think—exhausting. Being harassed and hurt once is enough, but when it continues and you don't know how to stop the harassment—it can seem that it would be easier to give up and end it all, to quit yourself and what you have going on in life.

It's not easier. Don't even consider it! Don't ever give up on yourself and the people who love you. Increase the communication, find alternatives, find solutions—don't become overwhelmed or exhausted.

You and your life are an important part of the world today, tomorrow, next year, and after school.

“I was bullied every second of every day in elementary and middle school.”
—Selena Gomez

There is life after school, and we need you to live to see it.



Here's a tip: when you're dealing with harassment or anything challenging, remember - you need only push on through the moment or the day. You get what I mean?

Instead of "another year of this" think: "I can make it through today. Tomorrow, my strength will be renewed."

Make use of your vision board and visualize a period of time in the future. Map out a dream and an action plan. However, for challenges, even small ones, day-by-day sight might be enough. Breathe. Meditate.

The statistics for young people ending their lives because they gave up is heartbreaking.

Sadly, many young people do give up. They get to a point where they can no longer suffer the abuse given by others.



Or, they lose faith and belief in the adults who are supposed to be there to help them.

"When I was younger, I was bullied daily, and it led me to face other struggles. I know what it's like to feel alone and outcast."

— Brittany Snow



If someone is harassing you, hurting you, or making you do things you don't want to do – there are actions you can take. They include:

1. Make you parent or guardian aware of the harassment as soon as it begins and is apparent that it will probably continue. Don't wait. Make sure they know the whole situation. What happened, what you did or didn't do, and who've you've told. If you have a parent that tells you to toughen up, find someone else to talk with, such as a counselor or the principal. Toughening up is not a solution. Every person has the intrinsic right to be treated with respect.
2. Even if you make your parent or guardian aware of the situation (#1 above), consider making your school or coach aware of it too. Those leaders need to know there is a problem. Please don't assume they see what is happening.
3. Notify social media platform administrators if you are being cyber-harassed. Then, close your social media accounts.

Communicate the Issue



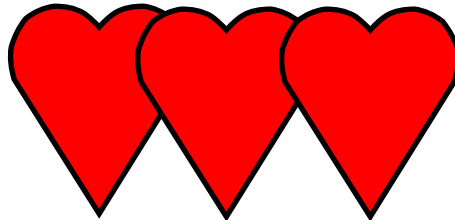
4. Tell your friends you don't want to hear what other people are saying about you. If you don't know what is being said, you won't be hurt by other people's opinions or feel the need to retaliate.

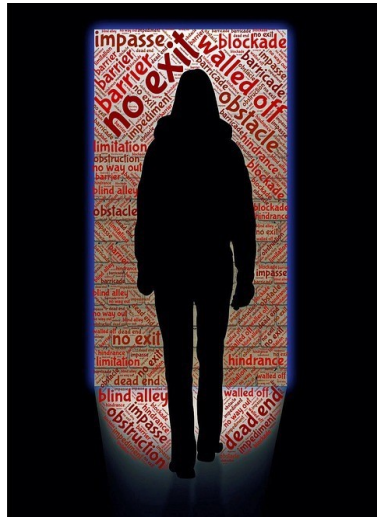
5. If you feel unsafe or are in fear of your life—talk with the police. Bullying, assault, harassment and cyber bullying/harassing is against the law.

6. If someone is making you do something against your will, or making you do illegal things, once again, contact the police. Get help. You can be the one who goes to jail if you are the one doing illegal actions.

According to the CDC, (1), during 1999-2019, the United States LOST 10,258 young people between the ages of 15-19, because of accidents, suicide and homicide. That is 10,258 too many.

YOU are important.
YOU are needed.





Please do not let a temporary situation cause you to make a permanent decision. You can push on through the challenges of youth and make it out the other side.

Honestly, you have something to offer the world. Believing in yourself and your potential can help you push on.

Maybe you aren't the smartest person in your class, or the fastest runner in track. But maybe you have something just as important – like a smile that warms a person's heart. Maybe your gift is writing stories or singing songs or creating art.

You may think you don't have anything special about you – but you're wrong in this. Each of us has at least one (probably many more) special traits. Feeling unremarkable is something almost each of us feels at one point in our life, if not on many different occasions.

If a person follows celebrity "happenings" often, then it's a good guess that person feels "less than" more often. But celebrity life is not real life.



Celebrity life is a stage.

When you're feeling down – look at the list. You can also say the affirmation phrases I shared on page 14, or the character traits on pages 27 and 66.

There are more phrases (affirmations) at the back of the book. Consider copying the page and keeping them someplace with your list, so you can see them daily.

You can create additional affirmations as well; ones that hold special meaning to you.

Take a few minutes and think about what makes you special, and not saying “Nothing!” Have you realized, and it's a big responsibility –but you are the number one person in charge of making yourself happy. It's all on you. Write out: I am special because:

Many young people become overwhelmed from the situations (harassment, pain, rejection, imposed beliefs) other people (including their parents, friends, bullies, peers and other adult leaders) inflict on them. They give up! They either kill themselves, or they take revenge and attack the people who have hurt them.



Neither of these results or actions are good.



A 2016 blog on the website firsttee.org lists seven methods for helping teens prepare for success, and the site also has additional links for further information.

The suggested methods are: get a mentor, live a healthy, active lifestyle, build your interpersonal skills, learn to set goals, learn to manage emotions, be a good student, and develop and follow your

values. Many, if not all of those ideas have already been presented in this book, however, if you visit the website, there are additional resources, too.

That's one resource in a whole world web (pun intended) to help guide or provide resources for you, the reader to create the life you want, and maybe (if desired) methods to improve yourself in whatever manner you choose.



Hopefully, as you've read through this book, you've noted the theme: You're important, and needed, and there is "help for those who ask for it" and not just at Hogwarts.

Anger, Revenge and Choices

When I give (adults) a “Loving Myself First” dream visualizing, goal-setting book talk, I use as a visual, a deck of over-sized playing cards. As I talk I play a game of Solitaire with the cards. In the game of Solitaire, as in life, there are choices. I demonstrate when given the choice of playing say, the seven of diamonds or the seven of hearts, that from just that one choice—the game can end, or it can continue—because it’s both what’s under each seven (unknown) and the strategy of what is known, the environment surrounding the cards, the potential of continual play. It’s an a-ha moment, and also an eye opener for some.

Every day each of us is given many options and choices. Some can be small, like whether to eat an apple or a banana, and some can be game-enders—like whether to take a gun to school, shoot someone, take a life –yours or someone else’s.

Since August 1, 2021, there have been over 20 school shootings this year alone, and sadly, there was one injuring four in Arlington, Texas this week (October 2021). From 2018 to March 2021, there were, according to the website EdWeek.org, 81 school shootings. Such



numbers are hard to wrap your mind around. At least 81 people got it in their head to bring a gun to school with the intent to harm, or believed a gun was needed for protection.



Earlier research on the subject reported by a New York Times article, “On average, there have been about five school shootings each month, including shootings that were not considered mass shootings. The research was for 2014-February 2018, which included the shooting in Parkland, Florida, where 17 people were killed.

I won’t say I understand the pain and isolation someone feels that causes them to take such revenge. But I will say if you’ve read this book this far then you can see that whatever you are going through—you are not alone.



To talk with someone right away, contact one of these (open 24 hours a day, every day of the year) Hotlines:

Child Abuse Hotline:

<https://www.childhelp.org/hotline/> 1.800.422.4453

Suicide Hotline:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> 1.800.273.8255

Hotline for gender identity, abuse or suicide:

www.TheTrevorProject.org/ 1.866.488.7386

Mental or Substance Abuse Hotline: 1.800.662.4357

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline/>

Links: <https://teenhealthandwellness.com/static/hotlines>

If you are having thoughts of hurting yourself -call and talk to somebody. You are needed.

Please “Keep Pushing On” and don’t hurt your-self. Get help. People care.

Affirmations in Verse:

Do you like music? Or poetry? How about you come up with lines that finish this verse that will make it true for you. Here’s an example:

My Verse: I know that I — can be set free
From every day negativity
If only I — just believe
My happiness depends - on only me

Now your turn:

Life sure has its ups and downs

Yes, I can keep pushin’ on through



Song/line sample on page 113.

Music is a mood changer. When you need to pull yourself out of a mood - choose uplifting, positive music and stay away from negativity.

Forgiveness

Do you feel resentment or hatred toward someone? Possibly, if you do then this section is for you. Learning to forgive and give up the anger, the hurt, the resentment you have for someone might just be one of the most difficult actions you may ever take. True forgiveness is like it never happened, period.

“Resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.”—Carrie Fisher I like this quote, it’s so simple and easy to understand.



It might not be today or anytime soon, but there will come a time (maybe next week, or five years from now) when you are able to look back on how you acted, what you did or didn’t do, and even recall what had been

done to you—and at that time, if you haven’t already, you’ll have the opportunity to forgive.

Anger, hurt, rejection, resentment, and hate are emotions that will eat away at your core and affect every area of your life and even your future happiness.

“Forgiveness gives you back the laughter and the lightness in your life.” — Joan Lunden

Sure, you could have 1,000 reasons to hate someone for the things that person did, but forgiveness is not for them – it’s for you. When you can truly forgive a wrong done to you . . . it will be like removing a 100 pound boulder from around your neck.

“I can forgive, but I cannot forget,” is only another way of saying, “I will not forgive.”— Henry Ward Beecher

At some point in our life, we have to forgive ourselves for the bad or the wrong we’ve done to others. None of us are perfect.



At some point in our life, we have to forgive ourselves for the bad or the wrong we've done to others. None of us are perfect.

If you've done something wrong, and you've tried your best to make amends for it (or you didn't know better when you did the wrong) then eventually, you'll need to forgive yourself for whatever you did. Guilt is an emotion that will definitely keep you from pushing on and reaching your dreams.

"I did a lot of things that I regretted and I certainly paid for my mistakes. You have to go and ask for forgiveness and it wasn't until I really started doing good and doing right, by other people as well as myself, that I really started to feel that guilt go away. So I don't have a problem going to sleep at night."
— Mark Wahlberg





Some Things You Should Know (As A Teenager)

“You don't need anybody to tell you who you are or what you are. You are what you are!” — John Lennon

“You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.

This is such an insightful thought. You don't need to have everything figured out to move your life forward. Having a vision allows you to take that first step in the right direction.

You become what you focus on. According to philosopher Laozi, *“Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habit.”*

If you have a habit of eating healthy and making healthy choices – then it would be expected that you are or become healthy.

Likewise, if you eat a diet of fried and breaded food and/or lots of processed snacks, smoke, and drink alcohol – then it would be expected you'd have acne, be overweight, lounge around and play games or watch (a lot of) TV, and . . . be susceptible to illness and disease.

Eleanor Roosevelt said, *“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”*



Think of the people you think are interesting. What do they talk about? What makes them interesting? They are probably interesting to you because they make you

think, or laugh, or feel. You've probably heard the phrase, "Don't say something behind someone's back you wouldn't say to their face." That is such good wisdom, and something I think each of us should strive to adopt.

Some skills necessary to possess as you grow into your teen and young adult years are:

- ◆ honest communication
- ◆ assertive behavior
- ◆ self-compassion

But most of all, belief in yourself. Say this daily: I am brave, fearless, bold and strong.

“Create the highest, grandest vision possible for your life, because you become what you believe.” — Oprah Winfrey



Developing a positive relationship with your body is also something that's critical as you deal with body changes during your teen years. If you don't have a positive self-image when you're young—it will haunt you into your 20's and possibly even your 30's. Yuck!



Becoming comfortable with your body and overall acceptance of your size, shape, strengths and weaknesses helps you to become more in charge of how much you allow

other people's opinions to affect you.

With a positive sense of self-worth, a harmful comment won't have the same effect on your emotions as that same comment to someone who feels less than, inferior, ugly, unattractive, unworthy, and so on.

Sure, you may have some things you don't like about yourself, or things you want to change—most everyone does. But accepting yourself as you are gives you internal strength.

The people you see on TV had expert help. Cut yourself some slack. That said, it is a good trait to practice good



personal hygiene (brushing your hair and teeth, regular showers, etc.) and dressing in clean clothes.

When you look your best, you feel better about yourself. It's a proven fact.

How you feel about yourself is so important during this time of your life. Your self-worth and self-image today “set the stage” so to speak, on how you’ll be tomorrow, next week, and next year.

“I don’t have time to worry about something as petty as what I look like.” — Adele

Developing a positive sense of Self – right now, as you are, will benefit you greatly. Self-acceptance is the first step in having true happiness. Maybe you don’t think you’re perfect, but you can still accept the person you are. You may not like something about your body, or your hair, or even the way you walk or talk. But I can tell you—you are wonderful just how you are.

“Be who you want to be - be free in your own skin, be liberated and feel beautiful, and do what you want to do without judgment.” — Adam Lambert



After you push through the challenges of being a teenager, you’ll grow into a more-prepared person ready to handle the next phase of your life (like college or the workforce). Remember this: there is help available If you are:

- Having trouble “dealing with” body issues,
- Thinking about hurting yourself,
- Thinking about self-medicating,
- Needing information about your questions or issues.

“One’s dignity may be assaulted, vandalized and cruelly mocked, but cannot be taken away unless it is surrendered.” — Michael J. Fox



Throughout my coaching career I have shared the importance of making time to dream. I hope you find the words and the tools I've shared helpful.

Making a vision board and action plan is important too. Having a visual helps keep your Self focused.

For the websites and apps I shared, *I make no claims to the accuracy of the information on them, nor did I receive any benefit for sharing them* –they could be additional tools to help you on your journey of “pushing on.”

I hope someday soon there is a cure for people who feel the need to bully other people. Maybe if enough people develop a positive sense of Self, and stop judging and criticizing other people – meanness and cruelty will become a thing of the past. But until that happens, and until there is a cure – the tips and techniques in this book, I hope, will help you keep pushing on. You are worth having. **You are important. We need you.** Please “Dream * Believe * Visualize * and Achieve™” and in turn – make our world a better place. — L. Morgan Scott

About the author, L. Morgan Scott

My mom was a divorcee with four children of her own, who even after the divorce, raised her two stepdaughters. She worked hard, but women were paid hardly anything back then and my dad didn't pay child support. We were on welfare for a few years, and I experienced going to the store and handing over food stamps to the clerk. I know that it sucks to be poor. Period.

Besides living in poverty, I had horrible personal experiences as a child, as a teenager, and even as an adult —things no child (or person) should ever go through. But I did what I'm asking you to do—I pushed on.

I am the mother of three wonderful and well-functioning children (two biological and one step-child). I was lucky enough to meet my (now) husband at a good time in my life, and as of 2021, we've been married 26 years.

I love to learn, and even as an adult I continue educational pursuits. I have a Bachelors degree in Business, a Master's degree in Education. I started my PhD in Psychology then decided I really didn't need to pursue a PhD, because music, writing and coaching are my passion. SO I enrolled in a music program instead. I'm a certified professional coach. Just Keep Pushing On is my fifth (finished) non-fiction book. I have a few fiction books in the works.

Helping others achieve positive self-worth is a passion of mine. Music, art, and writing are my greatest passions. God, my family and my friends are my source of joy and love.

Dream * Believe * Visualize * Achieve™ is my trademark, and my mantra.

I hope this book has been beneficial to you. I do hope you'll share your story and how the book helped you create a vision for your life. My best to you, L. Morgan Scott

Resources:

1. <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/puberty.html>
2. https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/?WT.ac=k2t_tab
3. <http://www.thelearningcommunity.us/tweens-and-teens.aspx>
4. <http://www.bemedwise.org/abuse-prevention/not-worth-the-risk>
5. <https://www.nutrition.gov/subject/life-stages/teens/tweens-and-teens>
6. <https://www.verywellfamily.com/puberty-resources-for-girls-3288406>
7. <https://firsttee.org/2016/12/06/prepare-teens-success/>
8. To develop self-compassion see: StoptheHurt.org, Self-Compassion.org and PositivePsychology.com

References:

1. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/elle_fanning_517031
2. <https://www.joytunes.com/blog/music-fun/15-famous-musicians-totally-self-taught/>
3. <https://www.mensxp.com/work-life/leadership/8984-top-10-ragstoriches-success-stories-of-all-time.html>
4. <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/celebs-who-went-from-failures-to-success-stories/>
5. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/growing-friendships/201312/popular-kids>
6. <https://www.buzzfeed.com/rachelhorner/20-celebrities-that-werent-cool-in-school>
7. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/14/health/child-suicides/index.html>

Additional references are on page 115.

People Quoted in this book:

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the U.S., and American statesman, lawyer//Adam Lambert, singer-songwriter// Adele, singer-songwriter//Brittany Snow, actress, producer, director, singer// Caitlin Carmichael, actress//Carrie Fisher, actress, writer//Carson Leanders, actor, singer//Chad Michael Murray, actor, spokesperson, writer, fashion model//Channing Tatum, actor//Charlie Chaplin, English comic actor, filmmaker, composer//Charlie Puth, singer, songwriter, record producer//Christian Bale, actor//Connor Fiererty, dancer, actor, singer//Daniel Pearce, English singer, songwriter and actor//Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady of the U.S., political figure, diplomat, activist//Elle Fanning, actress//Ellen DeGeneres, comedian talk show host, actress, writer, producer//Henry Ward Beecher, Congregationalist clergyman, social reformer, speaker//Ice Cube (O'Shea Jackson Sr.), rapper, writer and actor//Joan Lunden, journalist, author and television host//J.K. Rowling, British novelist, philanthropist, film producer, TV producer and screenwriter// Jessica Alba, actress and businesswoman//Jessica Szohr, actress//John Lennon, English singer, songwriter and peace activist// Johnny Orlando, singer//Kamie Garcia, writer//Kevin Hart, comedian, actor and TV host//Kirsten Stewart, actress, model and director//Lady Gaga (Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta), singer, songwriter and actress//Laozi, philosopher//Lauryn Hill, singer, rapper and songwriter//Mark Twain, writer, humorist, entrepreneur, publisher// Mark Wahlberg, actor, producer, businessman, former model, rapper, songwriter// Martin Luther King, Jr., Baptist minister, Civil Rights Activist // Michael J. Fox, actor, author, film producer, activist, comedian//Michelle Obama, First Lady of the U.S., lawyer, university administrator, writer//Nolan Gould, actor//Olivia Rodrigo, actress, singer//Oprah Winfrey, media executive, actress, talk show host, TV producer, philanthropist //Orlando Bloom, Actor// Rico Rodriguez, actor//Selena Gomez, singer, actress, producer// Shawn Mendes, Canadian singer/songwriter//Shay Mitchell, Canadian actress, model, entrepreneur, author//Steve Harvey, actor, author, and comedian//T. F. Hodge, author//and Taylor Swift, singer-songwriter.

Images came from Pixabay.com, (including but not limited to artists and photographers: bessi-909086, several from geralt-9301, joshuaworoniecki-12734309, pixaline-1569622, mmckein-3845064, a couple from alexas_fotos-686414, /ezequiasphotography-2875489, dimhou-5987327, several from johnhain-352999, reneebigelow-2047917, /bknis-2559320, sjjp-1134750, wokandapix-614097, vdnhieu-20473455, renan_brun-4672280, /lars_nissen-2780243, josephredfield-8385382, graphic-mama-team-2641041, iqbalnuril-12845379, satyatiwari-3310601, alexandra_koch-621802, istock.com, or BING creative commons. Quotes came from AZQuotes.com, brainyquote.com, or from Twitter posts. Occupations for people quoted in this book are courtesy of Google.com, AZQuotes, or Wikipedia.

Comments, questions, or suggestions can be sent via email to: Publisher@peptalkpublishing.com.

Solutions to the puzzles included in this book follow.

Some puzzles were inspired by Boys Town flyer, but were created by L.Morgan Scott.

Solutions to Page 13 Cryptograms:

OP POF DBO CF B CFUUF S ZPV – UIBO ZPV. =

Answer: No one can be a better you – than you.

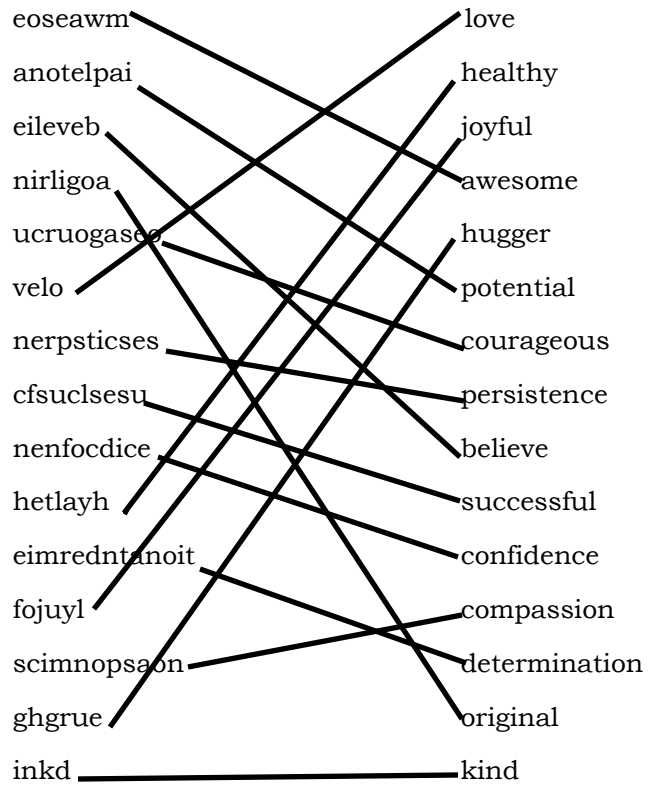
(Key: Replace each letter with the one that comes right before it in the alphabet.)

GNDOI TAWH SI THRIG SI TON SYALWA YSEA. =

Answer: Doing what is right is not always easy.

(Key: The last letter of the word moves to the front of the word, and the second - to- last letter is the second letter in the word.

Word Scramble Solution: (Page 17)



Break Time Bamboozables (Page 25):

Don't you undermine yourself.

Ready for success.

Second chance.

No problem.

Upside down.

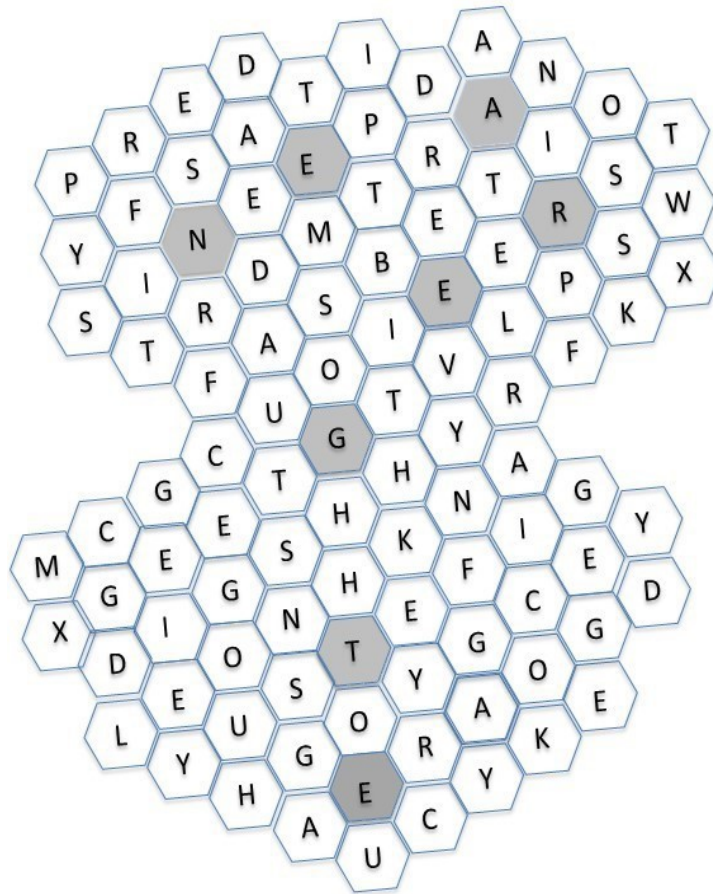
To love oneself.

Solutions to Riddles (Page 38):

1. Only one, the last one.
2. 29. (14+15=29)

Solution to HONEYCOMB (Page 58):

1. T: Honesty
 2. E: Believe
 3. N: Friends
 4. G: Thought
 5. R: Persist
 6. T: Attempt
 7. A: Radiant
 8. E: Courage
- Sweet Word: Teenager



Solution to the Pictogram (Page 52):

I believe I can do anything I put my mind to.

Solutions to Mind Benders (Page 65):

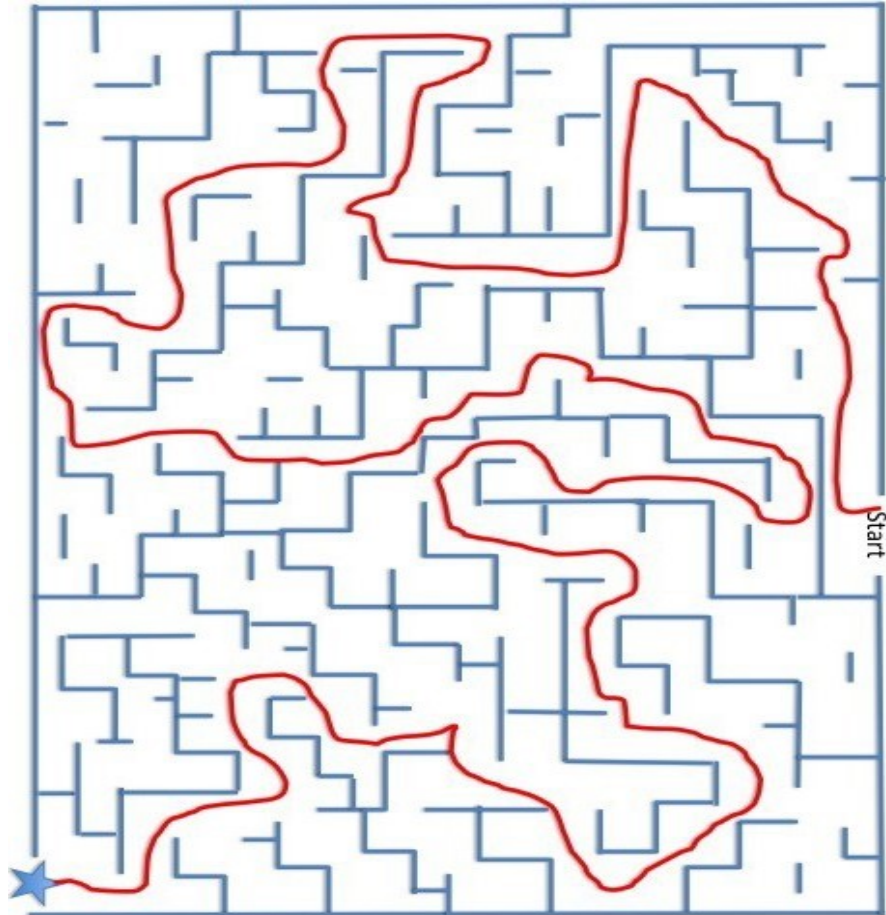
1. "L"
2. You cannot take a picture with sunglasses, you need a camera.
3. Your shadow.
4. They both weigh the same: two tons.
5. Vegetables.
6. "L"

Crossword Puzzle Solution (Page 82):

		1	C	O	N	2	F	I	3	D	E	4	N	T				
2	C	A	N			U			E			E			8	W		
		P				N			T			W			I			
3	R	A	R	E			4	P	E	R	S	I	S	T				
		B							R						H			
		L			5	C	A	L	M							9	H	
6	B	E			O				I			7	U				O	
	O			7	R	U	B			N			N				N	
	L							8	B	E	L	I	E	V	E			
9	D	R	E	A	M				D			Q					S	
					G								U			10	I	T
11	F	R	I	E	N	D				12	B	E	S	T				

Possible lyrics for the verse on page 98. line 2: positive thoughts help leaps and bounds line 4: with love of self and good friends too.

Solution to the Maze on page 74.



"In this world, one thing you should definitely strive for is originality. Just be who you are, and be your own person. That's what will make you stand out." — Nolan Gould

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/15/us/school-shootings-sandy-hook-parkland.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/adolescent-health.htm>

Page 89, the CDC reports 10,258 youth have died 1999-2019, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2020. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2019, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> on Oct 8, 2021.

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/school-shootings-in-2019-how-many-and-where/2019/02>

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/school-shootings-this-year-how-many-and-where/2021/03>

https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/teen_suicide/state/ALL

<https://www.apa.org/research/action/suicide>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2021-06-11/cdc-study-documents-rise-in-adolescent-suicide-attempts-during-pandemic>

To develop self-compassion see: StoptheHurt.org, Self-Compassion.org and PositivePsychology.com

Affirmations you can say every day:

I am confident.

I am optimistic.

I believe in myself.

I am full of potential.

I respect other people.

I believe in my dreams.

I am okay with who I am.

I have positive thoughts.

I am in charge of my life.

I learn from my mistakes.

I enjoy challenging myself.

I am beautiful inside and out.

I have the courage to be myself.

I get better and better every day.

I am kind to people and animals.

I discover the beauty in everything.

I forgive myself for making a mistake.

All is well.

"I think it was at 16 when I forced myself [to sing in front of people] because my dad had nagged me for an entire year. Like, 'Come on, sing for people. You have a nice voice,' and I just wouldn't do it. One evening, I just decided, 'Screw it, I'll do it.' I remember it was really bad. But I did it. So that was good." — Charlie Puth

Every day is the start of a new day, and a new opportunity to:

- * Become the person you want to become.
- * Achieve the goals you set out to achieve.
- * Push through any challenges set in your path. So,

JUST KEEP PUSHING ON

As you journey through this book of encouragement

- *read the quotes (more than 30 notable people),
- *complete the puzzles and riddles, and
- *answer the thought-provoking questions.

You'll be enhancing your self-worth, developing a vision and creating an action plan you can use right away and well into the future.

Praise for "Just Keep Pushing On" includes:

"I really like the message and intent of the book. The writing style and attempt to truly connect with our young audience will be so helpful to many students and families in desperate need of encouragement and guidance." - Rick Winters, Superintendent of Mary Walker School District, (Springdale, Washington)

