

Life Is More Than Just Surviving

How I Found The Woman Within!

Teresa K. Stockton

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This book is dedicated to women around the world, who in spite of life's struggles, have within them the desire to be something more. *Life Is More Than Just Surviving* is your permission slip to unearth that dream, to take the first step toward being everything you were meant to be.

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Why is it about success that is so intimidating? Oh, we do not fear success, you say. Then why is it that we are frequently incapable of accepting even the smallest of compliments? Is that not success at its most basic level? Why is it that we are helpless to believe it when someone says ‘you look great today’—or ‘you are a talented individual’—or ‘you have a lot to offer?’ We, as women, find it next to impossible to believe in our God-given abilities as they relate to excellence. However, if we reason that we are helping others by presenting a subordinate image of ourselves, then we are sadly mistaken. We are able to empower others only through our own triumphs and successes. I have found that lessons learned are not learned at all until we use them to empower another. Within our success lies the key that unlocks the shackles of others, thereby releasing a desire in them to pay it forward, which in turn becomes a full-circle, win-win situation. So, do not fear success, but instead, covet it as one would covet good health, for each shall be your sustaining grace.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I owe everything I am or ever will be to the woman who gave me life, my mother and my friend, **Ada Powell**. Regardless of my life choices, she never stopped loving me; she never gave up on me. Just as each of us have, she has made her share of mistakes; she has had her share of misfortune and heartache, but nevertheless, she has retained her good nature, her positive outlook on life, and her bubbly, outgoing personality. Throughout the darkest valleys in her life, during those times when it would have been easier to give in to self-pity, or to become angry and bitter, she managed to hold on, until at last the sun peeked over the horizon and a new day began. She believes in me, perhaps not because she is my mother, but because she sees progress—progress which has required many years to come to fruition. Each of us will leave this life imperfect, but if one can attain perfection through another's love and faith in them, then conceivably, her children have a chance! Thank you, Mom, for becoming my friend.

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and an abundance of my wants; in essence...he spoils me; I am blessed to share my life with him!

To my children, **Jason, John, and Amanda**, who love me in spite of the fact that I lost my training manual for motherhood! Their clemency has allowed them to see beyond my plethora of mistakes. As a result of those mistakes, I am convinced that regrets are one of the most torturous things with which one can live. They are etched in our hearts with indelible ink; our only hope of obliteration is forgiveness. Through my children I have learned the true meaning of forgiveness, and I am continually blessed by the happiness each of them bring into my life. I love you each one of you—with all my heart—always☺

Perhaps no one deserves more accolades than my friend, **Dr. Robert L. Lawson**, for encouraging me to recognize my capabilities. Even though the groundwork was laid long before we met, it was his support, his unfailing belief in my ability as a writer (and then a speaker) that made me even more determined to finish this work. He has prayed with me, cried with me, and laughed with me. He has spent countless hours reading, rereading, and editing rough drafts. He has been my professor, my encourager, my coach, my example of tenacity. More than once, on a day that had become less than ideal, my phone would ring—and from the other end, I would hear the familiar voice of Bob Lawson, telling me how proud he was of me, sharing with me his visions for my future success, and never ending our conversation without asking me: “What can I do to help get you where you want to be?” He is an inspiration to so many, a template of sorts, an exemplar. He is a man who cherishes

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his God-given abilities, using his aptitude relentlessly as a tool to empower others. He is the epitome of a great leader. Through the success of his students, he excels. Thank you, Bob, for being exactly who you are!

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There are countless others who have walked with me through this incredible process of introducing myself to me. Many are **professors and instructors at Ohio University—**Chillicothe, Lancaster, and Southern campuses. I wish I could list each person by name, but surely I would leave someone out. Rather than that, I contend that each of you knows (at least in part) how much you have contributed to any piece of success I might enjoy. We have heard it said that so much more is learned through higher education than what is found in books, but one can have no comprehension of the extent of that truth until they have experienced it firsthand. Thank you, not only for changing what is “in between my ears,” but also for shaping and molding the essence of my self-confidence. You have my undying gratitude.

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I would be remiss if I neglected to acknowledge **Mark Anthony Garrett**—one of the most incredible motivational speakers I have ever had the privilege of hearing. Mark is one of the great promoters of human potential—sharing his life story, using it to lift others up, to encourage them to excel in life, and to unearth the champion that lies dormant within each of us. It takes only one conversation with him to come away convinced that you are truly capable of more than you ever believed possible. Like all who are successful though, Mark Anthony Garrett has stood on the shoulders of giants who shared the vision of tremendous personal achievement before it was ever a reality for him; he excels at passing that vision on to others. Thank you, Mark, for that first conversation—for the interest you took in me—for your genuine concern and belief in my abilities. You are a man among men.

Finally, I wish to gratefully acknowledge every writer quoted. The intent of each quote was to clarify or add validity to the topic at hand. At no time did this author attempt to claim another's work. An arduous search was done, and every reasonable effort was made to establish whether previously published material required permission before reprinting. A number of stories and/or quotes are used, who's only known source at the time of this writing is the internet; once again, a laborious pursuit for the original author was performed, and in many cases, the end result was void of the desired results. If errors do exist, they are

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inadvertent, and if anyone, for any reason, was not contacted, the author invites this individual to contact the publisher so that full acknowledgement may be included in subsequent editions.

Foreword

Why is it such an arduous task to believe that we are capable? Why is it difficult to conclude that we can accomplish great things? We have let the world, and particularly those in our immediate circle of contacts, set our limitations. We have been brow-beaten by well-meaning friends and family members; we have bought in to stereotyping. Many would still have us believe that women should be seen and not heard, that we should do as we are told, and play the role we have been assigned. The end result for many of us is a lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, and bouts of depression that grab hold of us like the jaws of a pitbull.

We cannot sit back and wish our lives were different and expect change. We must challenge the negatives in our life; we must deliberately choose to do things incongruently. It has been said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. And let's face it, if we stay on the same ole horse on the same ole merry-go-round, it is not likely to turn into a prize-winning stallion anytime soon! We must find the courage to step into the unknown, the unfamiliar, and oftentimes intimidating areas...areas in which the past has never allowed us to go. Confucius said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Often, in the beginning stages, it is compulsory to take the smallest of steps, barely putting one foot into the waters of doubt, tolerating the water temperature, relaxing the tense muscles in our bodies, until at last, we are able to put both feet in. It is not silly or spineless to test the water with one foot. What choice would we have but to swim immediately if we tested the water's depth with both feet?! For some, it is a long, hard swim; others will find that once they discover the prowess with which to take that first step, they are drawn, almost instantly, to the high dive. They are amazed at the freedom they have

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given themselves, freedom that was there all along, buried beneath years of baggage. It reminds me of Eleanor Roosevelt, who said, “We must do the things we think we cannot do.”

So, pray for miracles, everyday miracles, but don’t just sit and wait for them to come to you, for that is unlikely to happen. It is possible to help in the creation of some of your own, you know. And along with your efforts, there will be mistakes, yes, but mistakes are the pathways to success. It is analogous to looking for a job in the classified section of your local newspaper. It seems that every position which interests you requires experience, and of course, you cannot gain experience without finding someone willing to hire you in the first place. So it is with mistakes. Mistakes = experience; the more mistakes, the more experience. The more experience, the better equipped you are to handle the next set of life challenges.

Each one of us has the opportunity of learning from our mistakes. In so doing, we are then better equipped to assist others. It is my hope that this book will challenge you to become all you were intended to be, to get past the stinking thinking that threatens to isolate you from your dreams.