

healthy women rock

Madeline McCray & Terahshea McCray

FOREWORD by TERRIE M. WILLIAMS



**HOW TO LIVE
THE LIFE YOU
DESIRE & DESERVE
LOSE WEIGHT
and CONTROL
NEGATIVE THOUGHTS**

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Live the Life You Desire and Deserve, Lose Weight and Control Negative Thoughts

Madeline McCray & Terahshea McCray

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FOREWORD

By Terrie M. Williams

It's your time to shine. I know how intimidating it is to step into the light and claim it as your own. But truth be told, most of us walk around unaware that we even have a light to claim. Were it not for the late great jazz legend Miles Davis, I might still be a clinical social worker at the hospital where I initially met him. Miles was the first person to tell me that public relations was my calling. At the time, I felt that being a social worker was meaningful work – but his words forced me to examine more closely my secret yearnings for the unknown. Once that door had been opened, there was no looking back. I owed it to myself to seek and find my true life purpose.

Today I stand proudly in my own light, a mental health advocate, author, mentor, professional speaker, founder of The Terrie Williams Agency and co-founder of the Stay Strong Foundation. The journey to this point has been nothing short of amazing; Eddie Murphy, the biggest box office draw in the world, became my first client. I went on to represent celebrity artists including Chris Rock, Sean “Diddy” Combs, Janet Jackson, Russell Simmons, and the legendary attorney Johnnie L. Cochran. Other clients included sports figures, Fortune 500 companies, hit film and TV projects, authors, political leaders, and of course my second client, Miles Davis himself.

I share my story with the intent to underscore the points being made in this book by my dear friend Madeline McCray. She is saying that if you want to live the life you desire and deserve, you've got to get out of your own way to create it for yourself, and stop ignoring the signs and the messengers who somehow can clearly see your greater self. Suppose I'd ignored Miles' advice, written his observation off as a patient's painkiller-induced hallucination. The fact was that I did possess more potential, but I wasn't acting on it. He introduced me to a side of myself that I hadn't considered. Still, I had to do what you must also do, move forward despite your fears, set aside your self-doubt and just go for it. Of course there will be challenges that you have to work to overcome.

I was running a PR company with highly demanding clients while struggling with clinical depression. There was a price to be paid for that – I wasn't taking proper care of myself, another point made in this book. These days, I do take better care of myself. In fact, the co-author, Terahshea, is my personal trainer and holistic lifestyle coach. Thanks

to his patience and professionalism, I've lost weight and my energy has increased tremendously. He helped me understand how to use exercise to elevate my mood, which is no easy feat. I've worked with numerous trainers in the past and yet never reached this level of success. You'll learn so much from what he has to share with you in this book. Terahshea is a thorough, sensitive, and superbly knowledgeable personal trainer and nutritionist. However, no matter how magnificent a trainer he is, it is my responsibility to be disciplined about what I eat and how much exercise I get – it's about personal accountability. I highly recommend him to anyone who is serious about living a healthy lifestyle,

Lastly, I encourage you to use this book as a guide and tool to help transform yourself. Its purpose is to inspire you to open your mind to the greater possibilities available to you and your expectations of yourself.

Simply put, this book is solution-driven. Its raw honest approach compels you to stop hiding behind a mask. Madeline is convinced, as we all should be, that the life we want to live is already ours. All we have to do is show up to claim it.

Terrie M. Williams

Author of *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting*; *The Personal Touch – What You Really Need to Succeed in Today's Fast Paced Business World*; *Stay Strong – Simple Life Lessons For Teens*

DEDICATION

For my mother, Gertrude Ida Mason, who gave me life and taught me the meaning of love, grace, and quiet dignity. Gone too soon – with me always.

*My uncle Jim, a gentle, generous and kind spirit
who adored, loved, and fretted over me as any caring father would.*

- and -

*my reasons for living:
Uhuru and Terahshea, Khalil, Nadir, Minkhara,
Elijah and Kyla*

INTRODUCTION

Living the life you desire and deserve is your birthright. The problem is that you may not be all that clear about your real desires. Worse yet, you might not be certain whether you are deserving at all.

I wish there was a magic wand to wave away that one, but unfortunately there is none. Therefore it's your responsibility to feed your mind the right messages, to honor



MADLINE MCCRAY

your spirit and nourish your body-temple by eating foods that are good for you and exercising regularly. When you love yourself in these basic ways, your capacity to lead with love for others increases automatically. Before a jet leaves the airport, there is a reason that we're instructed to place the oxygen mask over our own mouths before trying to help our fellow passengers: we can't help anyone else unless we ourselves are conscious, alert, and physically able to help another person.

Every day I speak with women who share with me that they're still not exactly sure what they want. To that I sometimes suggest, "Start with knowing what you don't want and you'll eventually realize exactly what you do want."

I'm aware that according to popular belief you should focus on what you want. I totally agree – if only it was that simple from the beginning. The problem is that most times it takes a little while to figure out what that is.

Here's a thought: if you're not sure what you do want, then get clear about what you don't want. Coming to terms with what you don't want can steer you in the opposite direction, and knowing with certainty what you do want will eventually cause its manifestation. In time the things you want in life – respect, love, financial security, joy, a home, family and satisfying career – will become clear to you. That's when your Aha moments will start showing up. You start making plans and taking necessary action to create that lifestyle. Think about it, if you know you don't want to be lonely, you'll do what? Find a way to meet people. Right? If you don't want to be cold, you wear warm clothing. It's not rocket science. It's simply natural to do the opposite IF you act upon that which you desire.

When you know what you don't want, you're less inclined to waste time doing things that aren't in alignment with what you do desire. You won't waste too much time with people who distract you. You won't allow disappointments or fear of failure to get the best of you. You won't back down when challenges arise – you'll just forge ahead with confidence knowing that this too shall pass. Most importantly, you'll adapt the right mindset that'll help you get out of your own way. Once you're operating from a position

of power and certainty, you must use every mental muscle to focus on what you want and then take action each and every day until you have acquired it.

Luckily for me I learned this early in life through an encounter with a job placement counselor. At age 15 I showed up to a job fair with a huge chip on my shoulder.

When I arrived, the room was already overcrowded with hundreds of teen hopefuls. Finally my name was called. I dropped down in the chair in front of Mr. Hunter like a lump of clay and responded to his questions with very curt “yes, no” answers.

After a few of those, Mr. Hunter, who had been jotting down my answers on a form, suddenly raised his head slightly to get a look at the insolent girl in front of him. He then tossed his pencil onto the desk, rolled his chair back, and shifted his position to lean forward and stare straight into my eyes.

I was unmoved by any of it. However, something about the words that came out of his mouth sent chills through me.

He said, “I don’t know what your problem is and I don’t care. I don’t owe you a damn thing. If you don’t want to be here then you can just get your ass up out of that chair and give the seat to someone who does.”

The warning registered quickly in my brain. I had a decision to make. Stay and be placed in a clerical training program that would help me improve my life circumstances or leave and return to everything that I didn’t want for myself.

Fighting back tears that had nothing to do with him, I matched his glare and responded by adjusting my attitude. As far as I was concerned, no one else would be sitting in my seat until I’d gotten what I came there for in the first place – an admittance slip to a training program that paid an \$80 weekly stipend.

I was frightened, full of anger, and uncertain about what I actually could do or wanted to do with my life. My vocabulary didn’t include thoughts like “live the life I desire and deserve.”

Still, I was positive that I didn’t want to end up homeless, addicted to drugs, or stuck in an abusive relationship. At the time, each scenario was a very distinct possibility and might have become my reality had I not been clear about what I didn’t want.

My life is filled with turning points that kept me moving in the opposite direction of what I didn’t want, while gaining more and more clarity about what I did want.

These days I’m not confused about anything. I know exactly what I want to do with the time I have left on this earth. I want to live and leave a legacy behind that my children and grandchildren can be proud of. I want to work alongside kindred spirits like you whose mission mirrors my own, to bring about positive changes in this world we inhabit together.

Around the same time of my experience with Mr. Hunter, I came across a little brown wooden plaque.

The poem “IF” was written on it:

If you can face the changing world,
with courage and with trust;
if you can overcome all doubt,
and do the things you must;
if you can cling to your own dreams,
believing they’re worthwhile;
if you can weather passing storms,
and never lose your smile;
if you can give as well as take,
and hold your head up high;
if you can keep the joy of youth,
from ever running dry;
if you can open up your heart,
with love that long endures;
then peace and all of life’s sweet gifts,
will happily be yours.

~ Jackie Winfield

Someone had thrown that little plaque away. I took it, kept it, memorized it, believed it. I’ve always felt that it was no accident that I discovered those words during such a turbulent period of my life. Somehow no matter what was going on around me, those words brought me comfort me – they gave me hope when I didn’t have much hope.

Words, words do matter. That poem, though I didn’t know it at the time, was my instruction on how to live the life I would eventually desire and deserved to live. I may not have been aware of it, but that was a directive being passed on to me, to be passed on to you.

I set out to write a book to help you build upon the instincts you already have inside of you. I believe you have a sense of what you can do, but you let your mind talk you out of doing it. I don’t have all the answers, no one person does. I can tell you that I’m sharing with you every detail that I believe will give you the confidence to move forward with your plans and dreams, in spite of any obstacles.

You've probably surmised that I'm no stranger to challenge. Ironically, that's why I feel so confident and happy today. I don't have the drawback of being born with a silver spoon. I haven't been "grandfathered" into a single opportunity. Generally speaking, I have no qualms with those who have been – I believe that women from different socio-economic backgrounds can learn a great deal from one another. We can and should work together to close the gap for future generations. But that's another topic for a different book.

The point I'm trying to make is that I know, and I want you to know too, that however many disappointments you've had or wrong turns you've taken, you can always get back on track and win the race if you have the right mindset.

If you aren't already operating from the right mindset, then you must be willing to take yourself through a mindshift process. Life is all about attitude and beliefs. The adjustment of attitude and reconstruction of crippling beliefs are what will take you from point A to point Z and there's simply no way around that fact. Having the right mindset is the single most important key to everything you hope to accomplish.

Maybe you've been telling yourself that you need to lose weight, but you haven't. Why? Are you overweight because you love fatty foods, or is there something deeper going on in your subconscious? Something is keeping you from taking action. Are you an emotional eater? Does depression drive you to the refrigerator to look for snacks? Is there a thyroid problem or some other medical condition? Whatever your case may be, you're going to have to get to the right mindset to deal with it.

When you meet the co-author, Terahshea, in the **Change Your Body** section of the book, you'll find excellent guidance on diet, nutrition, and fitness. Your success will be based upon on your mindset.

Your mindset also applies to the way you deal with money. When I was a child I heard over and over again how money didn't grow on trees and that it was the root of all evil. (That's actually a New Testament verse, and the correct version is that the LOVE of money is the root of all evil.) Because I heard these things, though, I was in no hurry to be connected to evil aka money. I wasted it on frivolous nonsense faster than I could make it. Thankfully, I've sense-shifted into the right mindset about money. I go out of my way to find people capable of teaching me how to earn money and make it grow. You'll be meeting them in this book, too.

It is my sincere hope that you'll find more clarity in these pages – that you'll be inspired to change your thoughts to only those that empower and strengthen your mind, body, and spirit. Perhaps one of the experts in the book will tap into your inner-winner, and you'll begin a new journey to your becoming a happy, healthy woman who rocks!

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think we become."

~ Buddha

I've only been alive for fifty-seven years and, hands down, this is the most exciting time to be a woman! All bets are off. I'm not talking about any sexual revolution, that's a different kind of personal. I'm talking about the collective mind-shift that's taking place in women. We are finally coming into our own. No doubt, there's still much work to be done, but at least the shades are no longer drawn shut to keep possibilities in dark, forbidden places where women dare not even think about entering.

Through technology, information about opportunities is more accessible than ever. It's our responsibility to determine where we fit in and how we can benefit from these exciting new opportunities. Or maybe what you want is to figure out how you can improve upon the opportunity you already have. In either case, your mindset must match your desire to do it.

You're searching for answers, ideas, and solutions – that's great. You're ready to tap into your inner-winner, to live up to your full human potential. Well here's the good news, you can start where you are right now. It doesn't matter what age you are, or where you live, or how much money you have or don't have. All you need is the right mindset.

If that seems over-simplified, you might consider making that your first mindset adjustment. After all, you're in charge, you make the new rules. If you believe that you can change the course of your life by having the right mindset, you'll do it. Likewise, if you don't believe it, then you won't. It's up to you.

"I LOOKED FOR LOVE AND
FOUND IT WAITING IN MY
SOUL."

~ MADELINE MCCRAY

I'm wondering if you've given serious thought to who you really are. There are so many misleading images to choose from. Are you even aware of what you're currently capable of accomplishing? If you are, why haven't you already done it? It's the same question I've had to ask myself. Have your thoughts been getting in your way?

Let's do a "Rocker Checkup" from the neck up, shall we?

Do yourself a favor, be honest!

Rate your current characteristics on a scale of 1 to 10:

Happy	Confident
Motivated	Patient
Ambitious	Playful
Hopeful	Healthy
Grateful	Adventurous

Answer the following questions yes or no.

	yes	no
Do you have specific goals?		
Are you outgoing?		
Do you anger easily?		
Do you need to lose weight?		
Are you creative?		
Do you enjoy exercise?		

Do you believe in yourself? (scale of 1 to 10) _____

I'm not a psychologist or a therapist. The sole purpose of this exercise is to have you pause for a moment to think about your current state of mind and overall being. This is to get you thinking about your strengths, your goals and dreams, and remind yourself how important it is for you to continue growing and tap into the confidence that reinforces ability to fulfill your dreams so you can live the life you desire and deserve. All that is required is that you BELIEVE that you can. Belief is a necessary mindset.

Hey, if you're already sitting on top of the world in your nest and feel you don't need this book, then be a pal and "gift" it to a gal who does need it. We have to be our sister's keeper, to inspire and empower those among us who we know could use a little inspiration. After all, there are times when we see things in others that they are still afraid of seeing in themselves!

Countless women are watching life pass them by, not knowing where to begin or how to participate. Experienced, mature women who are blessed with creative minds, thoughts, and ideas – if given a chance – can transform lives and help make this a better world for everyone.

You are very powerful. All you need to claim that power is the right mindset – the most positive level of thinking and belief. Yes I repeat this message a lot. I'll bet you can still hear TV or radio advertisements from your childhood in your mind. Why? Because Madison Avenue executives are experts at selling you products that you don't need.

You must become the expert who sells you stuff you do need. So repetition-repetition-repetition. If you gave yourself a 5 or less for confidence when you rated yourself on that, then you've got to work diligently to get that level way up in order to *sell yourself* some confidence. You've got to step outside of your comfort zone. This is where those other categories make sense in the rating game. For example, do you feel like you are adventurous? If that's also a 5 then you've got to challenge yourself to be more adventurous, which will automatically pull up your confidence rating.

Choose something that looks like fun that you don't normally do – and then do it. This way you're having some fun while you become more adventurous and build your confidence at the same time.

"PROGRESS IS IMPOSSIBLE
WITHOUT CHANGE, AND
THOSE THAT CANNOT
CHANGE THEIR MINDS,
CANNOT CHANGE
ANYTHING."
~ GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

I don't know how you rated yourself. I offer no scientific or psychological scale to assess your current state of being. I leave that to you, it's why I suggested that you be honest.

I can honestly tell you that I set the bar high for myself, therefore anything below 7 would be cause for alarm with me. See, I believe that in my case, 5 and 6 is cowardly because I'm better than that. Operating from those figures would mean that I will never have the life I desire and deserve, and that frightens me. I use that fright – that fear – to create a positive outcome for myself.

I use strong language to describe myself because that's what motivates me to stretch and grow. So if I rated myself at a 5 (and 4 is not even up for discussion), I'd call myself a coward. Cowards never take home the prize, in my estimation, so I'll do everything I'm capable of doing to reach and to exceed 7. At least then I know that I'm applying myself. Still, I'm not satisfied with myself until I'm able to honestly assess all of my categories between level 9 and 10, because that's how I get to take home the prize.

You must be brutally honest with yourself. It's impossible to make changes if you're making excuses and lying to yourself.

Can you do more to accomplish your goals than you're doing?

Are you satisfied with your life as it is?

Think of some aspects of your life that need improvement, and write them down. You can think of something, and writing them down will help!

ROCKER SUCCESS TIPS

Be sure to surround yourself with:

- People who are like-minded
- People who will encourage and inspire you
- People who believe in you and your abilities
- People who can teach you how to reach your goal
- People who genuinely love you
- People who respect you and your ideas
- People who know and understand you

Write down three goals, things you want to do:

TIPS AND STEPS

- Develop a powerful mindset. Make a firm decision that you're going to make it happen.
- Write down the reasons "why" you want to do it. Make sure the reasons are strong and meaningful for you.
- Create a timeline with deadlines to complete specific task.
- Identify someone else who is already doing what you want to do. Research them to learn what they did, and copy their steps. (You don't have to know them personally.)
- Reward yourself after you've completed a certain milestone task. It doesn't have to cost money; it could be as simple as taking a luxurious bubble bath, getting a manicure, or just spending the day sitting by a creek. Something that makes you feel good about yourself.

MOTIVATION

I am not ashamed or afraid to admit that I use everything at my disposal to motivate myself – and you should too. There aren't any hard and fast rules guaranteeing that by mimicking them you'll live the life you desire and deserve. You must make them up as you go. It's not that difficult.

You can do simple things. These might include something like finding a mentor, listening to women (and men) who have already achieved most of their goals, buying motivational CDs or DVDs, attending seminars and panel discussions, or even browsing YouTube to listen to top motivational speakers such as Zig Ziglar, Les Brown, and others – for FREE. Their talks can stimulate your imagination and inspire you to get busy. Then go ahead and customize your plan according to your own needs and circumstances. As long as the method to your madness doesn't include hurting yourself or anyone else, it's all good.

Many women try to fool themselves into believing that everything is fine just as it is. Thankfully, *the spirit knows better* – and eventually the spirit must be dealt with!



When I was a teenager pretending to live the life I wanted to live, I was given a gift by a man who used to watch me hanging out with my friends. I was suspicious at first, until one day he walked over to me and said something that I never forgot. He said, “You’re not a follower, stop acting like one.” Then he handed me a little paperback book and walked away.

At first I didn’t want to take the book he offered me. My initial reaction was to back away – I was very guarded back then and angry at the world. I took it, but I didn’t intend to read it. I decided that he should mind his own damn business. But alone in my apartment, my curiosity got the better of me, and I cracked it open to the first page where I discovered he’d underlined a passage:

“I am not a sheep waiting to be prodded by my shepherd. I am a lion and I refuse to talk, to walk, to sleep with sheep.”

from The Greatest Salesman in the World by Og Mandino

The words hit me in the heart like a brick tossed at my chest. Why did he give me this? How did he know that I was hiding my real self in plain sight, that I was capable of doing more, of being more? I wanted to and would have eventually asked him, but I never saw him again. It didn’t matter, because what he did made a difference in a young girl’s life that may not have otherwise occurred. He’d taken the time to counsel me, or perhaps to scold me.

However I chose to accept it, one thing is certain: in that very brief encounter, using just a few words, he caused me to adjust my behavior. I was forced to confront my going-along-to-get-along foolishness, or as he not so delicately put it, being a follower. The incident taught me something else, too: that it doesn’t take years for someone else to recognize the essence of who you are. Here was a stranger who had observed me from across the street and who saw qualities in me that I was neglecting. A person who had no agenda (although I originally suspected otherwise), and took the time to give me a \$5.99 paperback book that had a profound impact on my thinking and ultimately, on my life.

At the time I wasn’t ready to make all of the changes that could have and probably would have propelled me forward sooner. Still, throughout my life whenever I was at a low point, I’d remind myself that I am not “a sheep waiting to be prodded by my shepherd. I am a lion, and I refuse to talk, or walk, or sleep with sheep.” The “slaughterhouse of failure” is not my destiny. I would always persist until I succeeded. And I’ve always translated those words to mean that I needn’t wait for anyone’s permission to live my life on my own terms, because I truly am the master of my destiny.

And so are you.



To be master of your destiny you must always find the strength to remove yourself from situations that weaken you, or from people who undermine you and undervalue your contributions. And you should especially remove yourself from a “herd” mentality. Trying to please everyone else and not being true to yourself never has and never will work to your benefit.

The journey to living the life you desire and deserve begins with your mindset. However, it doesn't stop there. The journey is a holistic one. As your thoughts shift from old to new, so must your body and your overall health. There is simply no way to separate your need to be healthy from your wealth, creativity, leadership ability, or any other facet of your full expression.

I assume it's obvious by now that everything I share with you is based both on my personal experience and on that of others who have also “been there and done that.” For example, if I keep stressing how imperative it is for you to put yourself first, I probably have a very good personal reason for doing so – because it can help you. There is a high price to be paid for not making the shift in your mindset from one that says *I'll get to me later* to one that says *I am a priority*.

- Do you let people get away with insulting you?
- Are you always trying to please others?
- Are you in a toxic relationship with someone who doesn't make you feel good about yourself?
- Do you put your needs last?



Your needs must be a priority.

You might think you're doing everyone a favor by ignoring your own needs. However, putting important things off until later is never a good idea, especially when it has to do with your health and wellness. I learned this early in life. My mom was afraid of dying. My brother Gerald and I teased her about it all the time. A superstitious woman, she refused to buy life insurance because, according to her, a policy insured death, not life. However, the problem wasn't in her theory about insurance, the problem was procrastination and not putting herself first.

For as long as I can remember, my mother suffered from severe asthma attacks. We lived on a fourth-floor walk-up in Harlem, and by the time my mom reached our door, she'd be doubled over, barely able to breathe. I'd watch her enter our apartment, inhaler clutched tightly in her hand as she'd collapse on the living room sofa a few feet away. Once there, she'd raise her hand and place the inhaler between her lips and begin the arduous process of drawing the mist into her lungs, which would eventually provide her temporary relief.

It always seemed like an eternity because the coughing and wheezing would continue for hours. I still remember my overwhelming sense of helplessness during those episodes. It hurt me deeply to see her suffer.

Then one very cold night in January 1969, my soft-spoken and loving mother stopped breathing. She was only 39.

We thought that the asthma took her life, but while clearing out her dresser drawers, I discovered her admittance papers from Harlem Hospital. Our mother was supposed to sign herself into the hospital to be treated for a heart condition. None of us knew she had one. Perhaps in her mind, because she'd survived up to this point, there was no real cause for alarm. Maybe she even thought the doctors were wrong. Or she was too busy worrying about us. I don't know. I never will.

What I do know is that at fourteen I no longer had my mother in my life. The world was a bitter place without her in it and without her guidance. I fell into situations she would have shielded me from had she lived.

I hope you can personalize my story, make it your own and ask yourself:

Am I in denial about the condition of my own health? Am I overweight and at risk of contracting diabetes or heart disease? How much more would I be able to accomplish if I weren't tired all the time? What would happen to my family if I weren't around anymore? Is another slice of cheesecake or deep-fried chicken more important than preventing a stroke?

Think about it. Who else suffers when you get sick? How much debt will be created? What could you have done to prevent the illness? Suddenly, putting yourself first isn't all about you, is it? The best way to love your family and those you care for is to love yourself enough to take care of yourself first.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, an asthma attack can occur when you are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke, dust mites, outdoor air pollution, cockroach allergen, pets, and mold – just to name a few.

More fatal than any other disease:

Heart disease is the leading cause of death of American women, killing more than a third of them.

35% of deaths in American women over the age of 20, or more than 432,000, are caused by cardiovascular disease each year.

More than 200,000 women die each year from heart attacks, five times as many women as breast cancer.

More than 159,000 women die each year of congestive heart failure, accounting for 56.3% of all heart failure deaths.

Lloyd-Jones D, Adams R, Brown T, et al.
Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics 2010
Update: A Report from the American Heart
Association Statistics Committee and Stroke
Statistics Subcommittee.

Women & Heart Disease: More common than you may think!

An estimated 42 million women are currently living with some form of cardiovascular disease. More than 8 million women have a history of heart attack and/or angina. Five and a half million women will suffer angina.

I'm the first one to grab a bullhorn and yell "Stop the whining and do something!" But I'm certainly not suggesting that there is a one-size-fits-all solution. In fact it is very important for you to be aware that things aren't always what they appear to be.

You must identify problems in order to fix them. My mom was aware of the status of her heart, but she chose for whatever reason to not act upon a solution that may have fixed the problem. Her life ended, and we all lost.

Now my beloved friend Terrie Williams shares her story. A story which further illustrates that we cannot run, nor hide from our reality, unless we choose to merely exist in shadows.



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When I cast my eyes over the sweep of my life up to now, I see my whole adulthood in the long shadow of depression. The shadow starts right on the brink of my grown-up life. I was studying at Columbia University to become a clinical social worker. I worked like a maniac, doing everything required, everything optional, and even more work than I assigned to myself. The rest of the time I slept.

At first I didn't notice the change. Then things got worse. I always hated waking up, but slowly it was turning into something deeper; it was less like I didn't want to wake up, and more like I couldn't. I didn't feel

Who is at risk?

Cigarette smoking results in a 2-3 times increased risk of dying from heart disease.

48% of adult women have a total cholesterol of at least 200mg/dL.

50% of Caucasian women, 64% of African American women, 60% of Hispanic women, and 53% of Asian/Pacific Islander women are sedentary and get no leisure time physical activity.

58% of Caucasian women, 80% of African American women, and 74% Hispanic-American women are overweight or obese.

Women with diabetes are 2.5 times more likely to have heart attacks.

tired, but I had no energy. I didn't feel sleepy, but I would have welcomed sleep with open arms. I had the sensation of a huge weight, invisible but gigantic, pressing down on me, almost crushing me into the bed and pinning me there.

The next second my heart would start pounding like crazy, and I would jerk myself upright and throw off the weight, heaving breath until the panic faded. And then I would get up and do what I had to do. I woke up with this terror every day – it felt like the universe was closing in on me. On top of that, I started isolating myself. Whenever I turned down an invitation to do anything, and got past the point where the person pressed me with, "Are you sure?" and finally accepted my "No," I felt only one thing: relief.

And the panic got worse. By the end of my first semester I decided to see a therapist. I found a nice and well-intentioned white guy. Every week for nine months we talked, mainly about school work and my daily routine, because I never once felt safe to talk about what was really bothering me: my obsessive working, my constant sleeping and my chronic fear. Deep down I think

I couldn't shake messages from childhood like, "Keep your feelings to yourself" and "Don't air your dirty laundry (especially in front of White Folks)." In the end my therapist described me as guarded but "on top of things," and I'm sorry to say that his shallow reading of my symptoms satisfied me. I didn't know at the time that misdiagnosing depression in Black patients is routine – that our strong personal style, on top of beliefs that we can handle anything, often makes white professionals miss how much pain or anguish we're in. I was no exception: My therapist had misdiagnosed me by a long shot.

After a while my symptoms lessened, and I began work as a clinical social worker. The change, coupled with focusing on problems other than my own, started to make me feel more like my old self again. I still didn't understand the feelings I'd had in graduate school, but since that was behind me, I told myself, so were those feelings. I thought I was back on top of things, but you know the saying, denial isn't a river in Egypt.

After two years of social work I felt drained. God must have had a hand in leading me on a new path, because within a year I had changed careers completely. Working at a breakneck pace I became a public relations counselor, landing A-list celebrities including Miles Davis and Eddie Murphy. On the outside I was living the American Dream, but on the inside things still didn't feel right.

By the year 2000 I was the head of a public relations and marketing firm that was growing beyond my wildest hopes, but once again every day I was waking up with crippling anxiety. Once I was out the door, I was ON: By 9:00 a.m. I had typically read five papers, placed twenty calls, and spoken with over a dozen people. My office was buzzing – clients were calling, news was breaking, I was doing promotion (like getting a celebrity on a magazine cover or getting the word out about a new CD or movie or book) and damage control (helping a client do media interviews after a DUI), and by 6 p.m. I was gearing up

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for that evening's movie premiere, fundraiser or book party. It was rare that I got home before midnight; when I did, there was nothing left – nothing left for me.

Here I had everything society tells us should make us happy: success, money, access, but not one thing in my life gave me pleasure. In the middle of all this action and all these people, I felt like I was in solitary confinement. And I began to cope with these feelings of emptiness and dread by numbing the pain with food – the only thing I looked forward to after a sixteen-hour day. On the way home I would pick up snack foods, ice cream, party mix, cheese ... mix them with leftovers from restaurant dinners, and eat until I was beyond full. But my hunger increased week by week, until every half hour I would get out of bed and go to the refrigerator for a snack. I was gaining weight; the more weight I gained the more disgust I felt; the more self-disgust I felt the more I wanted to hide from the pain by eating and sleeping. Like every drug, the food gave me less relief each day, but I clung to it. It was the only thing in my life that could soothe me – the only crutch I had to help me limp around my intolerable feelings. But what started as a source of comfort became another prison.

WHAT STARTED AS A SOURCE
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The saddest thing about all this is that I was able to go so long without anyone really noticing or at least feeling like they could say something. Every shred of energy I could muster after a night of sleep interrupted by binge eating went into servicing my clients and doing my superwoman act: competent, together, single woman making it on willpower alone; I was the poster girl for ambition and achievement; the Strong Black Woman. Strangely, sadly, the façade held up. As far as my colleagues and clients were concerned, the work got done and got done well.

Sometimes I think about how things might have gone if I had been a less talented actress, less able to convince everyone around me of something I knew was false. The bottom line was that my success, the thing I had given so much of myself to, was a cover for what was killing me. I had reduced myself to two modes: my game face, the soul-destroying mask I wore to work, and the numbed-out shell of a woman who sat alone in her apartment eating and sleeping.

Finally I reached a breaking point. I woke up one morning with a knot of fear in my stomach so crippling that I couldn't face light, much less day, and so intense that I stayed in bed for three days with the shades drawn and the lights out.

Three days. Three days not answering the phone. Three days not checking my e-mail. I was disconnected completely from the outside world, and I didn't care. Then on the morning of the fourth day there was a knock on my door. Since I hadn't ordered food I ignored it. The knocking kept up and I kept ignoring it. I heard the sound of keys rattling in my front door. Slowly the bedroom door opened and in the painful light from the doorway I saw the figures of two old friends. "Terrie, are you in there?" They opened the windows and I shielded my eyes against the light. They sat down and put their hands on me, gently lifting me to sit up. I don't think I could have done it myself.

They stayed for three hours. They did the dishes, got me into the shower, helped me pick out clothes, made me an emergency appointment with a therapist that afternoon, and somehow got me there – I honestly don't remember how. Fifteen minutes into the session, I was staring at the therapist, barely understanding our conversation, and feeling like I'd fall down on the floor any second when she said the words "clinical depression." I felt like I was outside my body, like I was seeing us on TV, but I knew something had finally given: I couldn't go on the way I was without hurting myself more. The therapist told me I was in an emotionally dangerous place, that I would probably need medication before any real work could begin. She gave me the name of a psychiatrist and called to make the first appointment for the next day herself. She gave me her cell phone number, telling me to call if I didn't think I could make it to tomorrow. I looked at her and the number. Tomorrow? Tomorrow was a million years from now. I wasn't going to make it to the next hour, forget about tomorrow!

THE ONLY WAY I WAS GOING
TO GET THROUGH THIS WAS TO
STOP PRETENDING.

My friends took me home. One of them stayed the night. Somehow I did make it to the next day and to my appointment with the psychiatrist. She asked questions, took my blood pressure and began the long process of finding the right medication for me. Those six months were some of the hardest of my life. After two weeks the medication kicked in a little and I felt slightly better, and with it came an overwhelming clarity about what my life had become, a clarity that brought me a new kind of despair. I was in a pit so deep I didn't know if I could get out; and even though I was functioning, I was probably in a more fragile state than when I lay in bed unable to move. I was so low I couldn't fall off the floor.

When I think back on that time I'm stunned. There I was a mental health professional, and I couldn't bring myself to admit that I was suffering from a major clinical depression. I had been too paralyzed by my feelings to recognize the whole range of symptoms. All my energy was going into just functioning, doing the work things I "had to" do; and by hiding my feelings the only guide to my well-being became my own confused perceptions.

Then I had a thought that began to change my life: If this could happen to me, with all my experience and knowledge and access, what was happening to other people? What was happening to people who didn't have any of my resources? That was when I realized that the only way I was going to get through this was to stop pretending, finally, that it wasn't happening. And the only way to stop pretending was to let people know how I felt every day.

The first time I did it God told me to. I heard his voice telling me it was time to share my story and I obeyed. I used to wonder when people would say, "God spoke to me," but now I know. It was just four months after my meltdown, when I was scheduled to give a talk at a conference with a good number of the best-known people in the world of business. I kept wanting to cancel the talk, telling myself again and again that it was too early, that I wasn't ready, and that, honestly, I might never be. But for reasons I couldn't understand I didn't cancel, and I forced myself to go. As I walked up to the podium my fear was so intense that I thought I was going to vomit. I made myself breathe deep and kept

reminding myself that there's no way out but through – I knew that God put me there for a reason. Then I did something that shocked everyone in the room, including me: I told the truth.

There you have it Rocker – Terrie told the truth. It wasn't easy. It was necessary; it took a great deal of courage. Whenever we exist in a state of either ignorance or denial, we automatically block our blessings. Each of us has a purpose to fulfill while we're here. Terrie discovered that part of hers is to help educate people about depression.

I can tell you that Terrie has no regrets about that day when she stood in front of an audience of her peers and confessed to suffering from clinical depression. In fact, since that day Terrie's story has helped thousands of women and men step out of the darkness into the light of their truth too.

Perhaps you recognized a little piece of yourself in her story. If so, you might want to pick up the book *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting*. It's available on Amazon or you can purchase a copy by emailing Terrie for an autographed copy. I suggest you type Healthy Women Rock in the subject line.

Sometimes life throws you curve balls. You walk around doing everything right and all of a sudden BAM – out of the blue, some crisis strikes and you never even saw it coming. There are so many things over which you have no control. That's why you should be chomping at the bit to control the things you can, such as nurturing and protecting your mind, body, and spirit.

The point I'm trying to make is that your mindset, your thoughts and beliefs govern and control each and every action you take or don't take. If you're serious about living the life you desire and deserve, you're going to have to make a list and start crossing off everything that's keeping you from actualizing your goals and dreams – especially negative energy and thoughts that limit your human potential. You've got to be on alert every waking hour, ready to receive positive reinforcement.

Little pearls of wisdom can come from very unlikely sources at random moments. It is incumbent upon you to be open to receive them. A favorite of mine is from the 1980

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movie *The Empire Strikes Back*. I remember sitting there in the dark theatre staring up at the screen listening to the little wrinkled creature, Yoda, instructing Luke Skywalker to use his mind to lift his X-wing fighter from the swampy water. Luke understandably argued that the ship is too heavy, that moving stones around (a feat he'd accomplished earlier) is different. Yoda responds, "No! No different. Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned."

Whether or not a spaceship can be physically lifted using the mind wasn't what stood out for me. I was fully aware that I was being entertained, it's why I was at a movie in the first place. However, the notion of unlearning teachings that have not fostered or encouraged growth was for me perfectly sound advice then – and it remains so today.

The line in the movie was one of the early seeds that took root and led me to this moment. The point is, I was receptive to new ways of thinking and to change. Are you?

You might be thinking okay Madeline, I've been with you up until now, but you can't expect me to pay attention to a woman who listens to Yoda! All I can say is suit yourself – as for me I'll learn from and be motivated by a cat if it can speak with good sense!

Before I bring this chapter about changing your thoughts to a close, I'm going to throw a few seeds your way that I hope will take root and grow.

I believe that there is a greatness within you. I know it seems hokey for me to make that statement when I've probably never met you. Guess what? I don't have to know you personally for my belief to be valid. Truth is, everyone is born with greatness in them. You don't know me either, but I can tell you that there is greatness within me. It's something that I can't quite articulate – it's a feeling that's always been with me. A feeling that I've questioned, doubted, denied, and ignored. A feeling that rises up when my spirits are low, refusing to be denied or ignored. It is the same feeling that causes me instinctively to rebel against anyone who dares to discount my capabilities or undermine my value.

In the past I applied my greatness, talents, and skills to benefit the dreams, goals, and aspirations of others, as I'm sure you have also done. Isn't it interesting how we tend to be casual about our own goals, but will charge ahead like a raging bull on steroids for bosses, husbands, lovers, friends, and our children without so much as a second thought? The desire to please them somehow overrides our fears and doubts.

Well, the time has come to cast aside those same fears and doubts on your own behalf. If not now, when? Are you getting younger? I'm not, that's for sure.

It's not been an easy road for me. I'm willing to bet that I can match your disappointments, betrayals, and hurts teardrop-by-teardrop. You don't get to live as long as we have without playing host to some unwanted ghosts in the closet or collecting excess baggage along the way. Well you know what? Time to stand firm. Up until now you've been negotiating with ugly situations wearing cashmere gloves, now's the time to be a Rocker, honey, and Rockers don't wear gloves.

Time to put your hands on your hips, wag your finger at your image in the mirror and say “NO MORE!” Time to assess where you are in your spirit, with your health and your bank account. Time to take control over your destiny by doing some soul searching and some spring cleaning – to sit yourself down with an old-school notebook or your modern-day iPad and make a list of what goes and what stays.

Start with your head and your heart. What are those recurring negative thoughts that consistently hijack your emotions, clutter your mind, block your dreams, or dilute your imagination? Thoughts that rob your joy, deplete your energy, and overwhelm your body with anxiety? Fling open that closet, grab the ghosts by the collar and drag them into the middle of the floor right next to that excess baggage you’ve been dragging along from relationship to relationship. One by one, give them a pink slip, but be sure to tell them *why* they’re being fired. You might say as you go down the list:

TIME TO TAKE CONTROL
OF YOUR DESTINY ...

Bitterness ... you and I have had a good run all these years. I’ve clung to you every since he cheated and lied to me. Because of you, I’ve distrusted, insulted, and chased away or denied access to a lot of really cool people. I can’t help but wonder how different my life might have been without you. It’s time for me to learn, and now I’m letting you go.

Anger ... you’ve been so loyal to me. I could always count on you to keep me company after I’d alienated innocent bystanders with my irrational outbursts or passive-aggressive and obnoxious behavior. Looking back, you might be the reason people have labeled me crazy! So Anger, I’m letting you go while I still have time to make amends and wake up feeling excited to be alive!

Fear, oh dear, dear fear. If it hadn’t been for you I might have made the terrible mistake of actually daring to do all those things that I’m perfectly capable of doing. I’ve already put an ad on craigslist for your replacement. I didn’t even need to create a new one, I simply copied the AA statement, you know the one: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. After all, addiction is addiction, and clearly I’ve been addicted to you, Fear. You’re a persistent sucker, so I know you’ll come creeping back from time to time. But be forewarned, Fear, that when you do I will summon Courage to my side and together we will kick your scrawny butt. Now get out of here!

Okay, so you’ve cleared some room in the mind, heart, and spirit. Now there’s space for real friends. Throw a welcome party for them and your new mindset that promotes:

- Self Love
- Spiritual Awareness
- A Forgiving Heart
- Self-determination
- Personal Accountability
- Belief in you – belief that your life has purpose, that you are a miracle – a manifestation of God’s grace, love, and infinite possibility. Believe that within you lies the power to transform your own life and the world around you. BELIEVE with a heart wide open and a readiness to receive all that heals and strengthens you.

Identify the “she-heroes” or “sheroes” in your life – the women whose positive attitudes strengthen you and keep you in check. Truth is, I couldn't slack off or throw myself any pity parties even if I wanted to, because these women in my life have left really big footprints for me to grow into:

Miriam Richardson, or “Babysis,” as she was affectionately called by family and friends, lost her battle with cancer over a year ago – but not before she taught everyone around her how to be in charge of your life until you draw your last breath. All throughout her chemo and radiation treatment, Babysis was on the phone providing comfort and encouragement to others. I was one of those blessed to receive weekly phone calls, cheering me on and making me laugh. She was the matriarch of her family and she left no room for anyone to pity her, because she didn't feel sorry for herself. Her strong faith in God, her love for her family and caring for others completely blocked any woe-is-me from ever entering her spirit. Long will live her lessons, her light and her love.

Rose Johnson, my adopted Mom-e, is the embodiment of vigilance. She too experienced the horrifying breast cancer news. When she first told me over the phone, I was speechless. After the pause that I hoped was brief, I launched into my “We're going to beat this” power-pep-talk like someone had just lit a ten-pack of firecrackers beneath me. I really did believe what I was saying to her, but still the news was beyond unwelcome. I found myself walking down my building hallway in a rage, kicking the walls, thinking what the \$&ck! (Yes, I periodically revert to childish tantrums, it's the Aries in me.) Also, even though I didn't want to admit it, I knew that it was my fear. Of course when I went to see her in the hospital, there she was exuding that quiet strength of hers, speaking in her normal soft tones. I didn't dare mention my ridiculous outburst.

It took me only a few moments in the room with her to relax, because her mindset minimized the event, she was in control, and she had a very positive attitude. “I'm in my Lord's hands,” she said. “I'll be all right.”

You might even know amazing women like Babysis and Rose. If you are so blessed, take your cues from them ... you will never go wrong if you do.

While I'm on the subject of being in control of your thoughts and actions, let me also share with you my newest lesson about life and aging.

Recently, I became friends with one of the most upbeat, classy, fun-loving women in the world. I smile just thinking about her spirit. Lynne Charnay and I found one another through Terahshea. He was riding his bike through the streets on a hot and humid New York summer night when he heard a faint voice calling out to him for help. He stopped and went over to assist this sweet lady, who was carrying two heavy bags filled with fruits and vegetables. The two of them engaged in a long conversation on the way to her building. Afterward, he called to tell me about this lovely woman he'd helped, and he said she'd invited him to come back to visit.

I immediately said to him, "That's not a great idea. I hope she doesn't do that with everyone she meets on the street." Lynne, you see, is 86 years old. The first thing I think about is how people sometimes prey upon the elderly. It happened that she mentioned her son's name, and I tracked him down in case he was unaware that his mother was inviting strangers to her home – I felt he should know. I couldn't bear picking up the paper one day to read that something unpleasant had happened that I could have prevented with a simple phone call. He and I spoke, he thanked me, and I felt better.

Fast-forward about a month later. I get a phone call and it's Lynne. Her son had told her about my call, and she wanted to meet me. I went over for a visit. She is every bit as charming and amazing as Terahshea had described her to be. I was with her for seven hours, hearing of her adventures and watching her zest for life. And as we sat on her sofa she turned to me, looked me in the eye, and said, "I want you to know something. You can't change me." She said she'd lived a wonderful, wonderful life. But it was her next words that stilled me. "I will not live my life in fear. If anyone ever did anything to me, I'm ready to go. The only reason I care to be here at this point in my life is to see my granddaughter grow up." She continued to tell me how blessed she is to have such a wonderful and caring son, and a great relationship with her daughter-in-law. She's lived a charmed life without regrets ... and that no matter what happened to her now, no one would ever be able to take that from her. She reminded me that had she not called out to Terahshea, she and I might never have met.

I WILL NOT LIVE MY LIFE IN
FEAR.
~ LYNNE CHARNAY

I had no comeback for that, nor did I want one. Knowing Lynne has made my life even sweeter because she gives me a peek into what my future can be if I'm as cool as she at 86!

The cynics say people can't be trusted. Painting everyone with a single broad brush, they claim that no one keeps their word anymore. Not only is it an unkind, negative assessment, it's plain ol' untrue. I have plenty of instances like the one here to disprove that theory.

During the summer of 2011 my long-anticipated package arrived. I set it down on the bed to stare at it – to allow myself the luxury of remembering how this WOW moment had come to be. A year earlier, I'd accepted the Facebook friend request of Linda J., an artist with a special talent. After studying one another's profiles and photos, Linda and I discovered that we share a lot in common – our family values, socio-economic sensitivities, and grandchildren. Out of the blue one day Linda offered to make me a gift of a quilt. I was very flattered, but tried to insist that she let me pay her for it. She flatly refused.

I'm fully aware of the tremendous amount of work that goes into the art of quilting. I thought it was a lovely gesture on her part, but I wasn't going to hold her to such a commitment. Yet here it was before me. I spread the brightly colored and beautiful quilt across the bed, and my mind flooded with thoughts of Linda's giving, beautiful soul. Then I saw that she'd also personalized it by stitching onto it the names of my beloved grands. As I sat there tracing them one by one, tears of gratitude fell onto the gift that is now our family heirloom. We will treasure it forever, as I will the friendship of Linda J.

When I asked her again, if I could compensate her in some way, she had this to say. "I would be much more fulfilled if you know or hear of anyone who needs a warm cover for the winter months or is ailing, and I'll make them as quickly as I can and send them to you for the sake of giving to them. I have been so deeply blessed with love and joy, dear Sister; I just want to give back in some small way."

I share this story to celebrate and publicly thank Linda for her giving spirit – but also to remind you to never listen to the cynics. There are more beautiful, kind people in this world who can be trusted, who are true to their word, than not. You are probably one of them!

I believe that knowing we are surrounded by goodness plays a significant role in our health overall. The world is a much bigger place than our own backyard, which at times might not be a reflection of light and love. But it is so important to never lose sight of the fact that it's out there, you just have to be open to recognizing the signs. Knowing that gives you something positive to look forward to, which brightens the spirit and reduces anxious, depressed feelings. Also at the risk of repeating something you most likely know

already, the act of giving is good for your mind, body, and spirit – do it as often as you can.

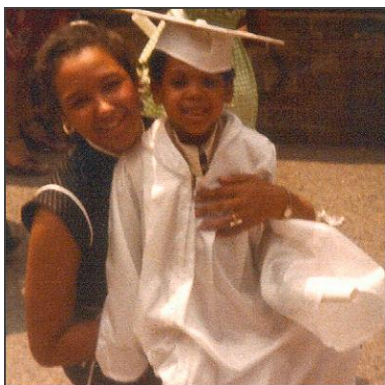
Not a day goes by that I'm not grateful for Terrie Williams. Her generosity is the stuff legends are made of. Personally, I don't know anyone busier than she is. I marvel at the way she juggles ten thousand things at the same time, treating each as a priority. She has boundless understanding and compassion for others who are hurting emotionally. Terrie has this gift for seeing beyond the bravado directly into a person's soul. She can be in the middle of a major deadline, yet remember that she needs to check in on so-and-so because he or she is “going through the fire,” as she calls it. That's special, real special.

The world is a much better place because of these women and others like them who inhabit it. My hope is that you have your own sheroes. Don't take their presence for granted. They are the guiding lights among us. Watch, listen and learn.

CHANGE YOUR BODY

Being healthy and fit begins in the mind, fueled by a heart with a burning passion for life!

– Terahshea McCray



Where does the time go? It feels as though I blinked for a moment and when I opened my eyes both of my sons were all grown up!

This proud Headstart graduate, Terahshea, now holds a B.A. in radio and television production from Rider University and too many fitness and nutrition certifications for me to keep track of. He's also made me a grandmother three times.

Gone are the days of making him tremble in fear with my "mean-mommy glare." It worked so well on him and his brother Uhuru, until they started Headstart. Ahh,



those were the good ol' days. These days however, Terahshea casts a similar glare in my direction while training me! He's tough about my being in shape – and for my own good, I listen. But, I do enjoy kicking at him without worrying about child abuse charges!

As I turn you over to him, I do so with the utmost confidence in his ability to provide you with expert counsel and guidance vital to your health and well-being.

The following chapter isn't a typical format. We hope you'll follow along with as much enthusiasm for absorbing the information as we had in crafting it.

Meet you again in Chapter 3. Now it's time to get energized, health-focused and fit for that life you desire and deserve!

TERAHSHEA'S TURN!

Before I get into nutrition and fitness advice, I want to tell you how honored I am to be a part of this project. Women are truly the glue that holds families and societies together.



Unfortunately, too many women aren't taking the best care of themselves. Generally speaking, your stress levels are off the charts, you eat foods that aren't good for you, and somehow you've gotten it into your mind that exercising is optional. It's not. Exercise isn't simply a device intended to help you fit into your favorite jeans; exercising regularly empowers you in every facet of your life. The energy alone can make you a better leader and increase your finances. Most importantly, exercising regularly can prolong and save your life.

I provide fitness training and nutrition consulting to women from all walks of life. I'm an eyewitness to the difference that a healthy lifestyle makes in their lives. Let's face it ... healthy, energetic women have the power to turn heads and move mountains – I was raised by one!

My mother and best friend in the world continues to be the rock in the life of our family and in the lives of many others. I use my knowledge of nutrition and exercise science to help her maintain her lifestyle. When my brother and I were children, we revolved around her energy as if she were the sun. If she would have burned out, we would have been in the dark.

As you read through this chapter, please understand that you are the light, the strength and the hope of our world.

Whether your goal includes being a leader, like

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First Lady Michelle Obama, having arms like her and Kelly Ripa or just to be a better parent or teacher, we want to help you get there. The only catch is YOU. You're going to have to show up for your own party, ready to participate. You have to accept the fact that no matter what you want to do in life, it will require that you love yourself enough to take care of yourself and your mindset. I stole that line from my mother, but I couldn't agree more.

Good health and proper nutrition are two of the keys that will unlock that awesome potential percolating within your heart and soul.

My goal is to teach you how to lose fat and to develop lean (not skinny) bodies, as well as to create the energy and vitality that will enable you to continue the incredible healing work you've always done throughout the ages on this planet.

I'm also aware that many of you run in packs. I've seen the group trips to the ladies room. No wonder there's always a line! That's all right as long as you are aware that you are unique.

While it's great to have a workout partner so you can both motivate each other, the last thing you should do is to compare your progress with anyone else's. Here's a little story I like to use to help make this point:

Weight A Minute: Why she loses weight, while you lose your mind!

Take a look at two women, Karen and Keisha. They each weigh 170 pounds and have decided to start dieting and exercising together. According to Karen's plan for them, she and Keisha will exercise four days a week. They'll go on the "low-no carb diet." Their program consists of a 45-minute 1½-mile walk, three days a week, with one day of light lifting and another of Pilates.

After four weeks, Karen is down to 160 pounds while Keisha is only down to 167 pounds. Why has Karen lost 10 pounds while Keisha lost just three pounds? The simple answer – it's a matter of bio-cellular individuality as it relates to the oxidative and metabolic type of these carbon life forms. They are slow oxidative and fast oxidative and therefore require opposing stimuli to the musculoskeletal system.

Okay, I know you're saying: "What the heck are you talking about TJ?" Well, it's simple, really: Keisha's approach needs to be completely different from Karen's. Why? Because Karen is probably slow twitch dominant, meaning she is built for endurance. Keisha, on the other hand, may be fast twitch dominant, or built for strength, speed, and power. Take a look below at three key points.

- Karen does well with 45-minute walks. Keisha may need to start with 20-minute walks at a much faster pace than Karen's.
- Karen is fine using weights one day a week – performing two sets of each exercise for 15-20 reps. Keisha needs at least three days of strength training where she is working hard to push out 8-12 reps per set.

- Karen feels great on a high protein diet, but by comparison, Keisha is often tired and moody on this low-no carb diet. That's why she sneaks some chocolate when Karen's not looking.

The bottom line is, if your program isn't working for you in four weeks, you should make a drastic change. Karen chose a plan that worked for her genetic type. Now go ahead do the finger snap followed by, "Oh no she didn't" ... but I'm here to tell you, "Oh yes she did!"

And if you think for one minute that Karen was not aware of the intricacies involved in diet and exercise programming design, based on bio-individuality ... think again. Keisha, I suggest you watch your back around Karen – clearly she's out to take your man!

Fitness and Nutrition Q & A

with Madeline and Terahshea

MADELINE

How do you determine whether you are fast or slow twitch dominant?

TERAHSHEA

Typical fast-gainers can usually lift 4-6 reps at 80% of their 1 rep max. These are generally pure mesomorphic types who are fast twitch fiber dominant. Hard-gainers are able to complete 15-20 reps at 80% of their 1 rep max.

MADELINE

What do you mean by hard-gainers?

TERAHSHEA

A hard-gainer is a person who doesn't easily develop lean body mass. They have highly oxidative slow twitching muscle fibers. Most human beings are not purely fast twitch or purely slow twitch. Each body part may respond differently to training. Your arms may have great anaerobic endurance while your chest may be powerful, yet lacking in oxidative strength. This is the principle of individual difference. Which is why slow twitch dominant people need more volume, duration, and frequency when it comes to training for fat loss. You have to stimulate your body in order to speed up your metabolism.

MADELINE

What effect does exercise have on people who suffer from depression?

TERAHSHEA

Exercise stimulates all of the natural opiates in the brain that make you feel good. Adrenaline and endorphins are pain suppressants and mood elevators. Exercise leads to the release of endorphins and boosts your adrenaline. When you are training to reach a certain goal, you feel better about yourself for a myriad of reasons. It could be that you want to fit into your favorite dress, or run two miles – such accomplishments will always suppress depression.

To borrow a phrase frequently used by one of my favorite motivational speakers, Tony Robbins, "Motion creates emotion."

Exercise energizes you, and energy is the key to unlock creativity, joy, and focus. Exercise is also related to overcoming the feeling of lassitude, which strongly correlates to depression. The completion of a short exercise routine can give you a sense of accomplishment. You will have that “Yeah, I did it” feeling, and that sensation can be a huge self-esteem boost for individuals struggling with depression.

MADLINE

Stress is a huge problem for women at work. What are a few simple exercises that can be done near the desk area to relieve stress?

TERAHSHEA

Exercising at work may be frowned upon, but if there is an opportunity to do some intermittent exercising to relieve stress, I do have a few suggestions.

- Bicep curls with a rubber exercise tube. Try 4 sets of 15 reps with 15 seconds rest in between each set.
- Standing calf raises will help revitalize you at the office. You can do these standing next to your desk.
- Chair squats will help you develop those strong toned thighs.
- Lateral raises with a rubber exercise tube are great for helping to shape your shoulders.
- Hand grippers at your desk help with stress relief

Note: For a video training session, check out healthywomenrock.com - and remember that it's wise to consult with a physician prior to exercising.

MADLINE

I do these at my desk whenever I start feeling sluggish. I use 5 to 8 lb. free weights instead of the rubber exercise tube. The bicep curls and lateral raises get my heart rate up and increase my energy. Each of them will sharpen your thoughts. For me it's a sense of empowerment knowing that I can stop for a few minutes to do something that makes me stronger. Shucks, if you're shy you can take that rubber tube with you to the ladies' room and do the exercises in the stall. You can do this in seven minutes.

MADLINE

Do you have a preference for women and working out? Are free weights better for our bodies than gym equipment?

TERAHSHEA

I prefer free weight training for women because it's the most appropriate mode of strength training for women. Free weights help women strengthen their core-stabilizer

muscles. Proper free weight training will encourage the development of those deep postural muscles that lead to a stronger and better looking body.

Machines isolate the prime mover muscles way too much, which is why machines are great for bodybuilders who try to build huge muscles. Free weights integrate the body in ways that create a better fat-burning environment than machine training. Women should spend more time using dumbbells, barbells, standing cable machines, stability balls, and body weight.

MADLINE

Sometimes people turn to crash diets for quicker results; does that work?

TERAHSHEA

I'm totally against crash diets because they don't last and they're bad for your body.

Take the case of Kara and Kathy (I've changed their names), two overweight women who were also clinically obese with body fat levels over 30%. While working at the front desk of a gym, Kara noticed her favorite trainer (I'll call him Jack) was getting leaner and harder each day. Jack, a wannabe bodybuilder was more than happy to share his meal plan with Kara: "All chicken breast, all the time."

Following Jack's lead, Kara suggested to her friend Karen that they go on an "Atkins-like-diet" so they could get lean and firm too. Within 10 days the women saw a marked difference in their bodies, which inspired them to start running on the treadmill. By week three, the two women looked amazing. The compliments they were getting were off the chart – they were on top of the world.

However, as the weeks wore on, something all too familiar to me began to happen. The women's willpower decreased as snacking increased. Kara's and Karen's waistlines ballooned beyond their starting points and they gained back even more weight.

What happened? It turned out that the women were eating 400-800 calories per day. Clinical dieticians use these extremely low-calorie diets on their chronically obese patients, but they monitor them closely in a clinical setting.

You see, at 400-800 calories, both of the women's bodies were literally starving. In order to sustain life, the body produces and stores fat. When the body is in starvation mode, the metabolism slows down and you begin to store fat while losing precious fat-burning muscle, and at that point your body cannibalizes itself because it is using its protein for energy instead of building muscle as it's meant to do. I would never recommend less than 1,200 calories per day for a weight loss program.

Jack didn't have the same results as the women did. Why? Because he failed to tell the women that he was taking designer steroids to help him build muscle and strength.

The moral of this story is, crash diets lead to crash landings. On a related note, always be careful about who you take diet and nutrition advice from.

MADLINE

I'll chime in with my two cents' worth. Experience has shown me time and again that shortcuts and seemingly easy fixes don't work in the long run. My cousin Betty's motto has always been, "Do it right the first time and you won't have to do it again." No matter what you want to accomplish, you're going to have to do the work. Always make a true commitment. You are worth it. The reward is sweeter and has more meaning for you.

Next question, Terahshea, what makes people continue eating after they've had a meal?

TERAHSHEA

Overeating can be a sign of malnutrition. Have you ever come home from a hard day at work or from the gym, grabbed a box of cereal and just munched until the box was nearly empty? You might think to yourself that you just can't stop eating, but that may not be true. My friend does this all the time. I simply had her eating four egg whites after her workout and she would rarely touch the cereal. She needed *protein* and that is why she sometimes overate on the cereal. One serving of cereal has approximately two grams of protein and 130 calories. What if your body needs 10 grams of protein? You will likely eat at least five servings of cereal to get those 10 grams of protein. That is 650 calories! Four egg whites have 14 grams of protein and only 67 calories. She could have eaten one serving of cereal and four egg whites for less than 200 calories, and she would have been full.

MADLINE

We keep hearing that you'll lose weight if you go on a diet and exercise. What do you say to someone who does everything right and they still don't lose weight?

TERAHSHEA

The bad news is that you may have a hard time losing weight even if you are dieting and exercising. This is often due to water retention. The good news is that this will not last. One can hold water to off-set the weight of oxidized fat. The body forms water as on byproduct of metabolized body fat. Kidneys will not excrete water because of an increased level of anti-diuretic hormones in the body. The water-binding effect can cause over 15 lbs. of weight gain in only two days. Water binds to high-carb foods. My advice is for you to eat lots of fresh vegetables and drink up to a gallon of distilled water each day to offset this biological phenomenon. Hold off on the starchy foods until you actually lose weight.

CALORIC CHART

SEAFOOD

3 oz canned white tuna in water	111 calories
3 oz canned light tuna in water	99 calories
3 oz steamed sole/flounder	99 calories
3 oz baked cod fillet	90 calories
3 oz baked snapper fillet	111 calories
3 oz baked swordfish	132 calories
3 oz baked scallops	111 calories
3 oz steamed shrimp	88 calories
3 oz broiled king crab legs	120 calories

POULTRY

4 oz chicken breast - skinless	188 calories
3 oz deli honey-roasted turkey	90 calories
3 oz white turkey skinless roasted	120 calories

DAIRY

3 oz sharp non-fat cheddar cheese	120 calories
3 oz sharp non-fat swiss cheese	120 calories
3 oz sharp non-fat white cheese	120 calories
3 oz sharp non-fat yellow cheese	120 calories
3 oz 1 low-fat cottage cheese	120 calories
6 oz non-fat cottage cheese	110 calories

EGGS

4 large egg whites	67 calories
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I've got a question for you before you get into the next chapter. Do you realize how important exercising and being physically fit are to your financial prosperity? If your response was yes, good for you. But you'd be amazed how many women and men don't have a clue how exercising regularly equates to making more money and maintaining the highest level of success.

In 2009 I was contracted to work as nutritionist for one of the biggest music moguls in the entertainment world. Sean "P Diddy" Combs is an extremely busy professional who often works 12 to 20 hours per day. In our first meeting he gave me an account of why he needs to feel energetic and strong to run his business.

- He needs the energy derived from exercising to be creative.
- He needs to feel strong to perform, to do meetings, and to make important decisions.
- He needs to look his best during video and photo shoots.
- When he looks good, he feels good and he's on the top of his industry game.

These are genderless based principles that apply to everyone. It doesn't matter whether you're running a billion-dollar empire or a small neighborhood bakery. Staying on top of your business requires a healthy body, the ability to think clearly, and lots of energy.

Hold yourself accountable for your health. Are you overweight? If you are, you are at risk for serious life-threatening illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and high blood pressure.

Face your truth. How much do you currently weigh?

I am currently _____ lbs.

How much would you like to weigh? _____ lbs.

How tall are you? I am _____

What is your age? I am _____

Do you eat fast foods? _____

How often do you eat fast foods? _____ days per week and _____ times a day

Do you exercise? _____

How many days a week do you exercise? _____

What do you need to do to improve the quality of your health? Stop smoking? Lose weight? Create more energy?

Write down here things you need to improve and why:

AWARENESS SAVES LIVES

HEALTH WARNING SIGNS

STROKE:

Stroke can affect your senses, speech, behavior, thoughts, memory, and emotions. One side of your body may become paralyzed or weak. The five most common signs and symptoms of stroke are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking - dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

HEART ATTACK:

- Chest discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body – in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath, often with chest discomfort, or before chest discomfort.
- Other symptoms: breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness.

DIABETES:

- Bleeding gums when you brush or floss.
- Red, swollen, or tender gums.
- Gums that have pulled away from teeth.
- Pus between the teeth and gums (when you press on the gums). Bad breath.
- Permanent teeth that are loose or moving away from each other.
- Changes in the way your teeth fit when you bite.

Who is at high risk for developing diabetes?

Women and men age 45 or older who are overweight or obese, and those age 18-44 who are overweight or obese AND have any of the following:

- Parent or sibling with Type 2 diabetes
- Less than 150 minutes of physical activity each week
- History of gestational diabetes or a baby born heavier than 9 pounds
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- History of heart attack, stroke, or peripheral arterial disease

Overweight persons with a racial/ethnic background in these high-risk groups are candidates for developing diabetes: African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

(* From the American Stroke Association, the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, and American Diabetes Association.)

Pay attention to shape not weight!

It's not about weight – it's about shape. What do I mean by that?

It means that *sometimes* it's okay to ignore the scale when you're dieting and exercising. I recommend that rather than watching the scale, you focus instead on your caloric intake and faithfully follow an exercise regime. If you're paying too much attention to your actual weight, you might become discouraged and quit because you won't think you're making any progress, which wouldn't necessarily be the case at all. A better way to tell if you're getting in better shape is to pay attention to the way your clothes fit, or don't fit.

Let's say you start your weight loss program at 150 pounds. You follow your diet and you exercise regularly, yet two weeks later you've only lost four or five pounds. That could be pretty disheartening unless you understood why the numbers on the scale aren't dramatically different. You see, as your body becomes leaner (not skinny), you'll notice that you have more room in your jeans and that your favorite dress isn't as snug as it was. That's because while adhering to that proper diet and exercising regularly, you've burned fat off and put muscle on in its place.

As we health-conscious cavemen like to say, “Lean body mass good, too much body fat bad.”

Let's have a heart-to-heart, and get real about the true consequences of being overweight.

In American society it's practically taboo to talk to a woman about being overweight – to tell her that she's carrying around too much body fat. The usual comebacks range from “My man likes me big, honey,” and “I know I look good” or “I'm sexy” to “I'm not trying to be no skinny b*%c#!” These responses are generally followed by a lot of loud laughter and finger snaps. Generally, that's where the conversation ends because no one wants to sound insensitive. As a result, you are left to believe that you're no more in danger than anyone else. But you should know that there is a tipping point. And while you delude yourself, an entirely different reality is taking root inside your body, which will at some point turn into a full-blown crisis. By then it might be too late to fix it. So I ask you, why would you invite illness into your life? Why provide fertile ground for disease to take hold?

Being overweight is no more good for you than being anorexic or bulimic. I'm telling you the same thing I'd tell my own mother were she to gain too much weight.

As a healthy lifestyle advocate, my concern is your well-being. Like it or not, if you've got too much body fat, you are NOT healthy – and in fact you're a prime candidate for heart attacks, strokes, and diabetes. That's just a few of the serious health risks; there are many others. Do yourself and your loved ones a huge favor, lose the unhealthy pounds and get in shape. You'll have more energy, a better quality of life, and more joy in it.

There are many reasons for overeating and your homework is to identify why you do it. Perhaps you're an emotional eater. There could also be a physical issue that requires medical attention, or it could be depression-related. The point I'm trying to make is that *you have the power to change your body* and improve your health. Don't throw away your power.

Before I sign off I'll repeat myself by telling you that I'm honored to have this opportunity to share vital information with you about your health. I look forward to reading comments you post on our blog at healthywomenrock.com and you can also email me with questions about diet, exercise and nutrition.

terahshea@healthywomenrock.com

CHANGE YOUR LIFE and YOUR FINANCES

There is no royal flower-strewn path to success and if there is, I have not found it, for if I have accomplished anything in life it is because I have been willing to work hard.

~ Madame C.J. Walker

Growing pains and growing plans

There I was, curled in a fetal position with eyes swollen shut from the open palm blows that had landed over them the night before. Arms bruised by the knees that had pinned them to the floor the night before, beaten by the man I loved – the man who tried to love me but didn't know how to without being violent. A man who'd confused love's passion with possession, replaced its splendid beauty with ugly obsession. A man who tried unsuccessfully to erase his own pain through my pain – which he caused. All his good and right intentions wrapped inside dysfunction, and an uncontrollable rage that lived inside of him long before we ever met.



And so there I was curled in that fetal position again, feeling his mother's warm teardrops rolling over my face as she hovered above me looking down at a face she barely recognized. She was angry. I was empty.

Something inside me had died on the floor the night before. I was glad because in its place a resolution was born. *This would not be my life nor the life of my child.*

I felt like a ghost when I rose from the bed to step into the bathroom, looking in the mirror, my mind racing a mile a minute. My silent declaration of "soon I will be gone" encouraged a sneer that would have appeared to be a slight smile had my lips not been split and swollen. I didn't need to see in the mirror – my heart knew my spirit was already in a better place. I'd grown while lying on the floor that night tasting my own blood and salty tears. And I was, from that day forward, changed.

MADLINE@MADELINEMCCRAY.COM
TERASHEA@HEALTHYWOMENROCK.COM

HEALTHYWOMENROCK.COM
MADELINEMCCRAY.COM

Help is available to callers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you or someone you know is being abused, get help. Call (800)787-3224 memorize this number and hide it from view if you're being abused by someone.

Here's a bit more food for thought: Violence committed against you or committed by you is not a solution. It's always best to avoid inflicting emotional or physical pain on anyone. People who are hurt hurt other people. If you think you might lack self-control and are prone to strike others, then you owe it to yourself to find a professional who can help you get to the root of that anger so you can begin a healing process.

It's personal – so dream your dream

Life and business development. Are they very different? You choose a spouse, or business partner, and for whatever reason it doesn't work. You have to make a decision. You either stay in the relationship and disappear, or dissolve and move forward. Personal and business relationships die all the time. Your dream, however, must never die along with it. In each case you have to regroup, make decisions, plan your next move, and charge ahead like your life depends on it – because it usually does.

It's true even when your dream is still evolving, with just parts of it in place. In my early years my dream was to have a better life, live in a safer/better neighborhood. Once I became a mother myself, my *why* skyrocketed to a whole different level of desire. *Why* is powerful – you have to know why the dream is important to you. You use the *why* clarity to keep yourself motivated.

Make your decision and fully commit to it

Once you know what you want and must do, don't let anyone turn you around ... including you!

At fifty-six, I decided to start and complete a book – this one. At the same time, I started asking myself questions. Who am I to write a how-to book? Who gives a hoot about my past life, the scars, trials, or triumphs? Most women have their own war stories and the emotional or physical battle scars to prove it.

What was I really doing by asking those questions? I was procrastinating, allowing a little bit of fear to creep in and muck up my party. I was also operating from an outdated mindset. These are two pitfalls that will keep you from living the life you desire and deserve.

- Fear. You have to work through it. It's tough sometimes, but you can't move forward unless you're prepared to overcome your fear.
- The outdated mindset. This one is dangerous in your personal life and in business.

The notion that you should suffer in silence can eventually destroy your soul and literally kill you. Though there are some private details of your life that you may want to keep to yourself, it shouldn't include information that will set you free. Free to use your authentic voice, free to escape a bad relationship, free to speak up for yourself if you're being mistreated at work, free to use your experience to help someone else. The business world has changed.

There are more new opportunities available than there are old ones. If you're already in business or thinking of starting one, you should be using a modern-day business model. What worked in the '50s or the '90s just will not cut it today – just as operating from an old mindset will not help you move forward from where you are now.

The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn.

~ Gloria Steinem

(See, Yoda's not the only one who knows this!)

I had to work through my fear – the fear that no one would need to read what I have to say. Of course my story isn't unique, *but I am unique and so are you*. So get your act together. Get clear about why your dreams are worth pursuing and let nothing get in your way.

By adding my voice and experience to an ongoing conversation, there's a chance that my lil' ol' story might make a difference. Maybe, just maybe, a woman currently living a nightmare or just looking for answers will read something in this book and realize that she is not alone – that not only is there a way out, there is a way up as well. All you or she need to know is this: **the way out always has begun and always will begin with strategic thinking, followed by an executed plan of action.**

Find your true voice and use it. My personal story is inseparable from to my process of writing an inspirational, empowering "how to" for women. I begin making a point about how you mustn't allow anything to get in your way, when suddenly I'm reminded of my reasons for knowing this to be absolutely true.

How would I, Miss hot-to-trot author, suggest that you reject a life of hunger unless I recall my own empty belly or my own broken heart? Who am I to say to you that it's better to be alone keeping company with your dignity than sharing your soul with someone undeserving – unless I am prepared to speak of my lonely hours?

What matters most is that you get something you can use from these pages. An idea you can run with, a hope you can build upon, a diet to help you lose weight, a reason to get fit, a financial plan, a reawakened dream, or a smile if you need one.

I am not advocating a life of being alone. I'm just putting it out there that you won't perish if you take a little time for yourself to figure out your next best move – until you ground yourself spiritually, emotionally, and financially. During your quiet time you'll discover strength that you either forgot you had or didn't know you had in the first place. You'll have time to connect with your spirit and experience a peaceful, focused mind.

It's hard to focus and fully commit to your dream when you are hiding your truth. You certainly can't genuinely help others, because the dishonesty creates a disconnection for you. You have to be present in the creation of that life you want.



In life and in business, if you're holding back, you must let it go. How you go about doing that will be completely up to you. Talk to a friend you trust, see a therapist, or do what my friend Terrie did – stand at a podium and tell a room full of strangers the truth. That's how you get to be authentic. Use your voice fully. That's how you get to not only dream your dream, but to actually *live* your dream.

When you're happy, you can make others happy.

We want to live in an environment that appeals to our taste and sensibilities. We also want financial stability. Whether you want to travel, produce a play, take art classes or singing lessons, put your kids through school, own a home, donate to a favorite charity, or get out of a destructive relationship – you will need money.

I don't know about you, but I deserve to treat myself to a spa visit for a facial, massage, and a mani-pedi whenever I feel like it. That to me is not asking too much. But without disposable income it can seem as daunting as purchasing a friggin' enchanted

island! I don't want to have to skip a bill payment in order to enjoy these simple pleasures.

So what to do? Sit around waiting for a miracle to happen? Find a sugar-daddy? Pray somebody hurries up and dies so you can collect an inheritance? Just pray? I don't think so.

God Bless the Child Who Got Her Own

The late great Billie Holiday sang that song as no other could. I first heard those lyrics through our apartment's kitchen window while eating dinner by candlelight – not the romantic kind, but the kind where the utility company had disconnected our electricity for non-payment. Still, my mother was creative enough to cook a pot of rice on the gas stove, mix it with sugar and a little canned milk, and *voilà* – dinner! I remember



my belly growling at the time, too, so the words of Billie's song have a very special place in my memory bank. It's no wonder that later invitations to romantic candlelit dinners never got me all hot and bothered!

These days, this Rocker is focused on “getting her own” by applying ingenuity, energy, skills, and talent in ways that render the outcome I desire. For me, that requires having the finances to travel to distant lands with my grandchildren, where we will stand at the passage of the Pyramids and walk the grounds where Queen Nefertiti and Akhenaten once ruled, to visit Auschwitz, and the Elmina Castle in Ghana, to see those landmark places where crimes against humanity were carried out, to see the wonders of nature before they disappear. I want to sip coffee at outdoor cafés on beautiful spring days in Paris. When those fundraising letters show up in my mailbox, I want to be able to write the checks.

As an artist I wish to be in a position to fund creative projects that help people connect to the goodness that is their soul. This is the way I want to spend the remainder of my life – not sitting around waiting for miracles, bitter and angry over past stuff!

It would be wonderful to have this clarity during your youth so that you have more time to do more. However, you must also know that it's never too late

to pursue joy to whatever degree you desire.

If I had my life to live all over again and could choose a different one, I would not. With the exception of losing my mother so young, I've benefited from each and every experience afforded to me. I have the sons I want, fathered by the man I was supposed to meet – who despite his flaws taught me many things about life, including the importance of being true to your word.

On this journey I met a family – a family whose blood does not flow in my veins nor mine in theirs. They are my loves, I cherish them, and thankfully they cherish me also.

You have to claim the life you've lived. View it through eyes full of gratitude. You must take responsibility for your actions and behavior. Be woman enough to admit your mistakes; everyone makes them. Apologize to those who suffered somehow because you erred with or without intent to do harm. You must love all manifestations of your evolution. Understand that no matter how thin was the veil of your character in days gone by, that at sunrise you are born anew, given a new chance to make amends with others and to forgive yourself as well. Know that your new day was made possible by a force much greater than yourself, and that you dare not waste it stewing over past events that can never be reversed.

PAIN, DISAPPOINTMENT,
AND DEFEAT ARE ALL PART
OF LIFE, AND ON THE FLIP
SIDE OF THAT COIN THERE IS
HEALING, JOY, AND
VICTORY. YOU CHOOSE.

When I think back on all the unkept promises made to me, bigoted decisions that spoiled joyful plans, fellow artists whose smiles were merely tools to sharpen their blade before the blow, or con artists who came disguised as friends and the sheeple (sheep people) who accused and then turned their backs, ignoring hard work and facts, I thank them. I thank them one and all, because rather than break my spirit, they actually strengthened it and empowered me. Those challenges revealed to me the depths of my strength and durability.

I have not forgotten, but I have forgiven. I'm not jaded, but I am jazzed about those splendid possibilities yet to be actualized. Through my solo-soul-searching journey, I discovered that I am who I am – and I'm happy to be me.

What about you? Are you standing tall in your blazing glory or stooping down to a lesser self? Pain, disappointment, and defeat are all part of life, and on the flip side of that coin there is healing, joy, and victory. You get to choose which side of that coin is face up.

Here's the deal – obviously, if it ain't broke don't fix it. However, if your self-esteem and confidence level do need an adjustment, you've got to leap forward and dive into a pool that will rejuvenate you and renew your spirit.

Change is possible, change is necessary – in fact, change is the only constant there is. It is time to change your thoughts, change your body, change your finances and your life. No matter how good your situation might be right now, there's still room for learning and growth.

Having the wrong mindset about life's occurrences hinders progress. Up until a few years ago, I had a terrible relationship with money. Despite the fact that my family preached the virtues of having a savings account, or that I have friends and acquaintances whose lifestyles range between comfortable and lavish, I treated money like a casual fling. I lacked the motivation to save money. Why? Could it have had something to do with my mother dying before she reached the ripe old age of forty? Might my being fifteen at the time of her death also have been a part of the equation? Yes and yes. Was I harboring guilty feelings over not being at home the evening my mother drew her final breath? Yes.

I grew up hearing people preach that “money is the root of all evil” and if you combine that belief with my own feelings of guilt, what you get is a young girl-turned-woman who felt undeserving to have money, evil or not. This subconscious level thinking was irrational, and I know that now.

Maya Angelou said that when you know better, you do better. If you're not there already, you need to move yourself to the point where you do better.

“I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations ... I have built my own factory on my own ground.”

~ Madame C.J. Walker, National Negro Business League Convention, July 1912

Madame C.J. Walker, an African American, was the first American woman to become a millionaire.

She obviously knew that poverty, not money, is at the root of evil. You can only imagine the horrors that she endured during that ugly period in American history. Obviously, her oppressors spent ample time trying to persuade her that the only purpose she had in life was to serve their needs. But Madame Walker had a mindset of her own, which was in stark contrast to theirs. Not only did she desire a better life for herself, she also wanted to provide other African American women employment that would boost their sense of pride and self-worth.

Many women have a poor relationship with money. One sure way to gain control over your financial future is to dig into your past for an understanding of how early

childhood events shaped your behavior and poor attitude about money. Once that's done, you've got to keep it moving.

The good news is that you can control your destiny one emotion and strategic step at a time. You have to be vigilant. Life happens. You stumble and fall and get back up. You get older, become wiser, grow stronger, and get laser-focused.

"I got my start by giving myself a start."

~ Madame C.J. Walker

As I looked out my Jet Blue window, I felt as light as I imagined the clouds were. There I was on my way to Los Angeles to attend my first Author University 101 conference, with a broad smile on my face that may have raised the suspicions of my fellow passengers. I didn't care. I was feeling like a kid just before Christmas morning. Something exciting was about to happen. I was about to enter new terrain, meet new people, learn new things. This marked the very first venture that was solely about what I wanted to do – learn about internet marketing and write a book.

I could barely wait to check in at my hotel. It had been a very long day already, and because of the time difference between New York and Los Angeles, it was going to be an even longer one for me. As soon as I arrived at the hotel, I went to my room, dropped my bags, and headed back downstairs to sign in for the conference. I picked up my name tag and went straight to the venue, where the room was filled with strangers.

I'm accustomed to attending big events, yet it felt awkward to stand alone in the beginning. But that goes with the territory, and it's up to you to break that ice. Make eye contact, ask people where they're from, engage. Before you know it you feel right at home. It's always helpful to have a gracious host, too. I must say that Rick Frishman, his wife Robbie, and their staff know how to throw a fantastic event.

The participating authors, agents, marketing experts, and publishers gave generously of their time and advice. Each of them offered tremendous insight into how to market a business and sell products online, including books. This business model was intriguing. Not because I'm a gifted computer geek – on the contrary, I was born in 1954 – but neither you nor I can afford to be intimidated by the new or unfamiliar.

"The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious."

~ John Scully

As I set out on this journey, I didn't know exactly what to expect. I did know that I was prepared to make myself fully available to receive whatever I would learn. Before leaving the East Coast, I'd already decided to live in the moment. I wasn't traveling over six thousand miles to shy away from new possibilities. I'd was going with the specific intent to take control over my future, determined to enhance my lifestyle and to find ways to permanently change my undesirable financial reality.

From the time I entered the hotel, I kept overhearing attendees asking one another, "Did Tom Antion speak yet?" I kept wondering who this guy was, and what was it that he had to say that nobody wanted to miss?

All the conference presenters were great. But Tom Antion really struck major chords for me. Although the presentation was full of internet marketing language that I'd never heard, I found myself tapping into my "I can do that" stream. Why? Because I'd already decided that I would cooperate with my brain rather than shut it down by telling myself this stuff was for younger people. I fed my mind with positive language. I admitted that it might be more challenging for me than my teenage grandsons, but I also acknowledged that I was perfectly capable of learning how to develop a thriving online business.

A month before, I'd signed up with a company to learn how to create an online presence. But, listening to Tom, I realized I'd invested my money with the wrong company. Oh well, you live, you learn, you keep it moving. I still have to pay off my contract with the other company, but I wasn't about to waste any more time with them. Although I didn't sign on with Tom at the event, I knew I was going to. I simply needed get back home to evaluate how I would make that happen with my limited budget.

Craig Duswalt hit the stage like a lightning rod, and with an explosion of rock star energy. Authors don't generally pop like that. Of all the best-selling authors who were at the conference, it was Craig's enthusiasm, passion, and delivery that I most connected with. I'd never heard anyone deliver with such conviction the virtues and benefits of becoming an author. I signed up for his course on "How to Write a Book in 30 Days" right then.

When I got back from the event, I hit the ground running, reviewing notes, listening to tutorials, and writing. I was on a roll – and then, of course, challenges and distractions came at me. But I refused to be taken off mission.

YOUR DREAM HAS TO BE SO
POWERFUL THAT JUST THE
THOUGHT OF FULFILLING IT
CAN SHIFT YOUR MOOD.

You see, it goes back to knowing about the *why*. Having a goal and a dream is only a part of the picture. How do you follow through on the steps necessary to accomplish the goal? You need to maintain a level of enthusiasm and energy to do it. You have to get to that point where your dream occupies the majority of your thoughts. Your dream has to be so powerful that the thought of fulfilling it can shift your mood instantly, no matter what state of mind you're in. You could have just had the biggest argument of your life, you're ready to go ballistic, when suddenly you think about that dream and *poof*, like magic your feelings turn from rage to rejoicing. You won't want to argue or fight any more. You'll regain your composure – and control of your thoughts and behavior. You'll summarily direct all of your thoughts, will, and energy back to the task at hand. It's a beautiful thing, knowing your dream. But it's just masterful knowing *why* that dream is so important to you – how it will change your life and how will it change the lives of those you love.

You might be thinking right now, well how will my having my dream be so great for everyone else? It's simple. Being satisfied with who you are and your accomplishments changes you – and when you feel joyfully satisfied, you bring a different perspective to everything and everyone around you. They may be the same, but you are not – and just as taking good care of your health benefits you and your loved ones, so does your reaching your dream benefit others around you.

It's in your why. I keep telling you that because it's crucial to your acquiring the life you desire and deserve.

See, I am clear about why I must change my circumstances. In addition to all those wonderful adventures I plan to enjoy with my grandchildren, I'm fully committed to never being a burden on my family. At no point do I want to create havoc in my sons' lives by placing them in a position of having to interrupt their lives to take care of me. They can do what they want, but it's important for me to know that they won't have to. I also can't stand hypocrisy. So when I'm advising my grandchildren or anyone else, but especially them, on the principles of getting things done, I must be able to point to examples of how I've practiced what I preach.

- If I speak of overcoming fear, I do so with the authority that comes from my personal experiences of pushing beyond fear.
- I am always afraid of something going wrong, but I do it anyway if I believe that it is for the right reason. That's one of the keys to opening the door to success.
- Tennis great Arthur Ashe said, "Every time you win, it diminishes the fear a little bit. You never really cancel the fear of losing; you keep challenging it." Coming from this mindset, which I do, I can't allow those I mentor to wimp out on themselves by using the fear excuse – because it's simply not a good one to use.
- You can't allow yourself to use it either. Your dreams and goals have to be way too important to you – you can't back away from them.

- So know the answer to the almighty *why* and you will move mountains out of your way to get what you want.

The entire online world was foreign to me, and much of it still is. With the exception of google searches, emails, and my website, I was clueless about business opportunities. I left that to the Mark Zuckerbergs of the world. In fact, I was so intimidated by it that I worried I would hit the wrong button on my keyboard and delete everything in the google world. But guess what? Like with anything else, your confidence grows as you tinker around the system, familiarize yourself with the language and associate with others who are fluent in whatever field you happen to be interested in. Learning makes you feel like a kid again. So if you've been itching to start a business, do it.

DON'T EVER DISCRIMINATE
ABOUT ANYTHING –
ESPECIALLY EXCELLENCE.

It won't matter that you've never done it before; everyone started somewhere. How did they ... where did they? Who were their teachers and coaches? Who's doing what you want to do? Find out and study what they did, adapt and customize the process to suit your own endeavor. Stop overthinking it ... just go for it! Customizing means *create your dream* in your own image. Use your authentic voice.

I've found what I love doing. In fact it's more accurate to say that I've added more to what I already loved. I'm an actress, a playwright, producer, mentor, lifestyle enhancement coach and now – *TA-DA* – an author!

Financial freedom. You don't have to be a billionaire to be free of financial worries. However, if that's your goal and you know why, then I say go for it. As for me, in order to explore and develop other projects of interest to me and to work with more clients, I need the peace of mind that comes with financial freedom. When you eliminate concerns over bill payments and life's essentials, all things are easier and more doable. Abraham Maslow described this as the "Hierarchy of Needs." Securing your basic needs sets you up for success.

What about you? Are you really doing all that you can to ensure that your basic needs are met? Are you really committed to your future? Can you afford to stay at home with a broken leg while it heals, or would you still have to hobble to your job so you don't get fired? Have you set deadlines for your goals? Bottom line, how far are you willing to go to create a life of joy and prosperity or to stay home to heal that leg?

In October of 2011 I attended Tom's Internet Marketing Retreat in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he hosts a small group of mentees at his mansion three or four times a

year. However, his mentoring program is available year-round. If you want to learn about all things internet marketing, check out greatinternetmarketingtraining.com for a comprehensive learning process with an end result that can yield huge profits. What you get out of the program, like anything else, is determined by the time and energy you are willing to put into it.

I also attended Craig Duswalt's 4-day "Rock Star Boot Camp" in Los Angeles, where I celebrated the completion of this book. This is the first of a series of lifestyle enhancement books, and I'm really over-the-moon excited about the accomplishments I've made so far.

In case you're wondering, "Why so much testosterone, Madeline?" It's because these men are excellent at the training they provide. I never discriminate about anything – especially excellence. You may recall that I took one of my biggest cues from Yoda, the little wrinkled creature in Star Wars!

However, I am expanding my network, and now that I am invested and a part of the internet marketing community, I'm discovering a great many women who are successful internet marketing entrepreneurs and coaches. I'll be blogging about them in the coming weeks at healthywomenrock.com

Terahshea and I hope that this book is only the beginning of a long and mutually beneficial relationship with you.

Life truly is beautiful. Every day is a special gift given to you. What you do with it to show your appreciation of the gift is entirely up to you. ~ Madeline McCray

LIFE LESSONS

I have learned these life lessons along the way from others who are much smarter and wiser than I am:

- Clear the path for growth and success by replacing your bad habits with good habits.
- Take care of your body; make time to exercise and eat the right foods.
- Work on creating a positive, productive mindset that will energize you; create a sense of excitement and feelings of goodwill as well as love for yourself and others.
- Every now and then, do a self-imposed checkup from the neck up. Keep yourself on point.
- Learn to forgive; it's hard sometimes but you must do everything in your power to free yourself of angry, bitter, toxic thoughts. They won't enhance your life. Toxic energy blocks your beauty, imprisons your spirit, destroys joy, and makes you mentally and physically sick.
- Always be honest with yourself.
- Every day, find a quiet place where you can be alone to breathe, give thanks, and rejuvenate your spirit.
- Take responsibility for your behavior – and especially for your happiness.
- Be a citizen of the world, travel, learn about other people and their cultures. If you can't afford to travel, go to a museum, or even watch the Discovery Channel or the Travel Channel.
- Feed your mind with thoughts that make you feel good about yourself.

- Listen carefully, because you can learn something from the most unlikely people and places. Especially pay attention to young people; they're way smarter than you think!
- Don't worry about being perfect. If you spend time trying to make it perfect, it will NEVER get done!
- Play hard and laugh often.
- In business and in life, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- It's okay to make mistakes; everybody does. All you have to do is fix them.
- Meet new people and get to know them
- Don't just talk about it, *be* about it.

Be a risk taker. If you love to play softball, you have to get on the field to play. Sure, you might get hit in the head, then again you might not. One thing is for certain, it'll be a heck of a lot more exciting on the field with the team than it will be cheering from the bleachers.

Your health or your job: Which would you choose?

It won't be an easy decision to make, but at some point you may have to choose between your health and what you do to earn a living.

Mamie McDonald rocked that decision over twenty-five years ago when she left the job that she realized was making her sick. She awakened one morning with a severe asthma attack and couldn't breathe. After she was revived, Mamie knew that the choice between working at that company or finding something that she'd love doing had been made for her. It's also when she began the soul-searching journey that permanently changed her life.

For many years now Mamie has been the go-to skincare specialist for celebrities Angela Bassett, Beyonce, Jay Z, David Bowie, Iman, Queen Latifah, and James Gandolfini – the list goes on and on. She's been written about in *Essence Magazine*, *People Magazine*, *Jet Magazine*, *ELLE Magazine*, *Harper's BAZAAR*, and many others.

Dreams are renewable. No matter what age or condition, there are still untapped possibilities within us and new beauty waiting to be born.

~ Dale E. Turner

Mamie was raised in the St. Nicholas projects in Harlem by two loving parents. Her mom worked as a domestic and her father was a handyman. The dream they had for their daughter was much like that of many American parents ...get a job as a secretary, a teacher, or a nurse. Being a business owner wasn't a part of the conversation.

Opting for an executive position in the corporate world, Mamie was subjected to the acceptable behavioral practices of the times when disrespectful bosses could slap female employees on the butt and make inappropriate comments throughout the day without fear of endangering or losing their position. Like most women who endured this unwelcome behavior, she felt powerless to change it. No wonder she was unable to breathe that morning.

She resolved to change her future by breaking free of the inherited mindset that taught you to work at a job that after thirty years of service would award you with a gold watch. This isn't a knock to hardworking people who did what they had to do to support their families. Many of them didn't have the choices that are available to us today. They also didn't realize that working under those distressing circumstances might cause you to spend your remaining years being treated by a physician for ailments derived from being in a setting that made you miserable for that many years.

Mamie's advice is to dig deep within yourself to pinpoint what it is that you enjoy doing most. Then allow yourself the freedom to head toward your dream. "I never thought of becoming an Esthetician," she says. "I thought I wanted to be a make-up artist, and it turned out to be skincare. Along the way I discovered that I love making people feel good about themselves by helping them achieve healthy skin."

Don't get it twisted – Mamie works her expert skincare magic on all her clients, not just celebrities. In her chair, everyone is treated like a star!

Mamie's Skincare at Joseph's Hair Styling

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You've heard it before: Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift ... we urge you to use it to jumpstart your new journey; to dance, see a play, start a diet, join a gym, hire a personal trainer or a coach, see a therapist or a doctor, practice yoga, laugh out loud, flirt, say I'm sorry, say I love you, sing your song!



Do whatever it is you should do to create a better day for yourself to be a Rocker, living a life you deserve.

Surround yourself with those who'll love, protect and be honest with you. In the presence of my sons I know that I am safe.

Accept advice, but be careful not to allow someone else's

bad experience sour your decision to move forward. No two people are alike, therefore each individual will render a different result. Everyone's approach to any given situation will be different, because each person enters with their own unique perspective. Someone else will pitch the same idea in their style, using their voice, and not be successful, but you might succeed at what the other person didn't. So do your own research and take your own shot at it.

Do not let others dampen your dream. Sometimes it's best not to tell certain people what your plans are. In fact, you'll be much better off seeking a community of people who share your interests and are successful at doing what you want to do. Or find a group of positive people working toward their dreams, people who believe anything is possible. Feed off that energy – they will encourage you and teach you. Tell the naysayers *after* you've launched and can thumb your nose at them!

Help others realize their dreams whenever you can. Share information, connect them with people who can help to further them along. It's just the right thing to do, and helping others helps you!

Be persistent and patient with yourself. Understand that as long as you draw breath upon this earth, you will remain a work in progress. The first day that I walked into the Bikram Yoga studio, I was not prepared for the intense 105-degree heated room, but I knew I wanted to be there. To some it seemed to be an odd place to look for the balance I felt I needed in my life. But not to me. I'd come there to nurture my bruised heart, to rediscover my center, and refocus my world. I'd gone there to offset the negative events that had consumed far too much of my attention and to replace them with those that would strengthen and empower me.

Sweat dripped from my every pore as I turned to watch the other students balancing on one leg in a standing bow pose. Looking at my fellow yogis so graceful and strong while I could barely stand, I began asking myself how long had it taken some of them to successfully achieve that position. I decided that rather than take a survey, I would simply apply myself until I was able to do it too.

Nearly two years later, I continue to work toward perfecting that one as well as others. I'm proud of the progress I've made so far; my confidence increases each time. I found the balance in my spirit that I went looking for. To this day, my instructors have no idea how their dedication and commitment to their Bikram yoga practice helped me heal. Their style of instruction may differ, but the message they deliver is identical. Developing a strong yoga practice is the same as life – it requires time, determination, practice, and patience. This is my personal choice to learn patience. You must find the one that best fits your personality.

One of the many things that I enjoy doing is sharing accomplishments made by women whose incredible stories have been grossly undertold – or they get shared only with specific groups. I don't believe in that. I believe that the more we can see and identify with the trials and triumphs of those who came before us, the more likely it is that we will see our own possibilities. Here are a few women who did their thing ... and so can you!

Madam C.J. Walker (1867 - 1919) is listed in past editions of the Guinness Book of World Records as the first self-made American woman millionaire, who neither inherited her money nor married someone who was a millionaire. Ms. Walker was an African American, born dirt-poor, and in spite of all odds she built a cosmetics empire.

Dorothy Shaver (1893 - 1959) stunned the fashion world when she created a program called "The American Look" to promote the work of American designers. Her visionary approach to retailing resulted in a position as president of Lord & Taylor – the oldest upscale specialty-retail department store in the country. She held the position from 1945 to 1959. Imagine that – a woman as president of Lord & Taylor back when only men held those positions.

Bessie Mae Coleman (1892 - 1926). This is my girl! Bessie Coleman picked cotton alongside her family in Waxahachie, Texas. In 1915 she went to live in Chicago where she first decided she would become a pilot. Everyone laughed and no one would teach her. Refusing to take NO for an answer, Bessie learned French at the Berlitz Language School and sailed to France in 1920. She returned to America in 1921 the first female Black pilot in the world, and the first internationally licensed Black pilot, male or female.

Side note: I wrote a play about Bessie Coleman called *A Dream to Fly* and I've performed it at universities throughout the country. She was amazing. Talk about a winning mindset – this woman was the embodiment of courage and tenacity.

The list goes on and on, but all these women were obviously fiercely independent and determined to succeed. They burned with definiteness of purpose, bringing their dreams to fruition – they scored and soared in spite of the era they were born into. They believed in their abilities; they planned and persevered and won.

There's nothing written anywhere today that states you shouldn't or can't do the same. It's time you listen to that voice in your head that's saying, "I'm a smart, talented, amazing woman capable of doing anything that I set my mind to." If you did nothing else except repeat that to yourself three times a day for thirty days, you'd be amazed by how much better you'd feel.

Check this out –

Somewhere in your makeup there lies sleeping the seed of achievement which, if aroused and put into action, would carry you to heights such as you may never have hoped to attain. Just as a master musician may cause the most beautiful strains of music to pour forth from the strings of a violin, so may you arouse the genius which lies asleep in your brain and cause it to drive you upward to whatever goal you may wish to achieve.

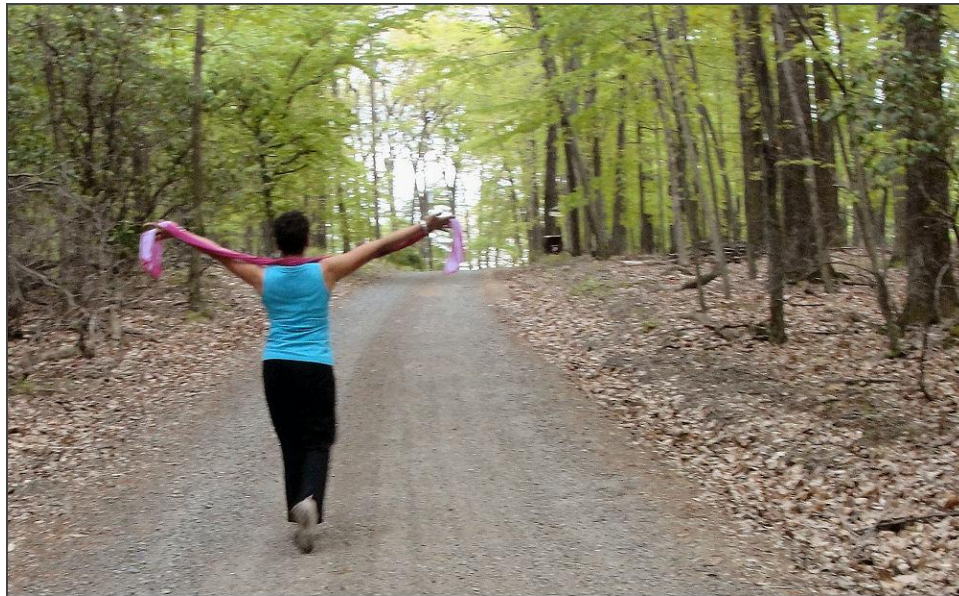
~ from the book *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill

I hope you've enjoyed reading this material as much as we enjoyed creating it. As a woman I hope that the experiences I've shared with you here will somehow make a positive difference for you and ultimately for your family.

Tap into your inner winner and live the life you desire and deserve.

I leave you with this food for thought. Whatever you want to do, you have the power to do it. Don't let anything or anyone stop you from going after your dreams. Always remember that age doesn't matter, neither gender nor race matters, and existing circumstances don't matter.

All that matters is that you are willing and ready to invest the time, energy, and resources required to live joyfully on your own terms.



About Madeline McCray



Author Madeline McCray is a practicing lifestyle transformation coach, actress, playwright, people relations consultant and producer. She is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, Actors Equity Association, New York Women in Film and Television and the National Association of Professional Women. She began her show business career at the Henry Street Settlement in New York City; while there studying, she and a group of her fellow actors founded the OLAC Ensemble. The company performed at various underground venues around the city, and each experience fueled McCray's ambition and broadened her interests in writing and producing.

At the Capital Repertory Theatre in Albany, New York, McCray co-starred opposite Emmy-nominated actor John Amos in August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Fences*. One critic hailed McCray's portrayal of Rose as "the finest performance seen on Capital Rep's stage in the theatre's ten-year history." Director Seret Scott said, "I have directed Madeline in two very different pieces and I am proud to have been a collaborator with such an extraordinary actress."

At BACA Downtown-Brooklyn, McCray played Mrs. Smith, a blind Army wife in Imperceptible *Mutabilities of the Third Kingdom*, a play written by Pulitzer Prize-winner Suzan-Lori Parks. McCray's work in this production prompted one critic to write, "McCray's Mrs. Smith was played with dynamic simplicity and a remarkably believable blindness." Director Liz Diamond described McCray as "a brave, disciplined and inventive actor."



She wrote and produced *A Dream To Fly: The Bessie Coleman Story*, a solo play based on the life of the first female Black pilot in the world. Her performances at colleges and conferences around the country have been hailed as "an extraordinarily powerful portrayal of the human spirit" and "electrifying, spellbinding and very moving." Director John Amos wrote, "The life Madeline breathes into the world's first female Black aviator is tangible. She has brought

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to the stage an historical figure who represents the essence of liberated femininity.” Madeline continues to produce and perform the play at various venues upon request.

McCray’s other written works include *Caribbean City Chatters* and *The Southern Jezebel*, originally read at the National Black Theatre Festival and later produced in the Caribbean. Madeline also blazed a trail for the popular reggae group Midnite. As manager she secured engagements and toured with the group throughout the U.S. and in Namibia, South Africa. She later moved to the Virgin Islands, where she founded the non-profit performing arts organization, St. Croix Center Stage. Under her leadership the organization produced two international theatre festivals. Producer Woodie King Jr., poet/activist Sonia Sanchez, actors Danny Glover, Glynn Turman, Cameron Mathison (*All My Children*), and Tony Award winner Lillias White were among the luminaries who participated.

McCray’s producer credits include: Amos’ critically acclaimed one-man play, *Halley’s Comet*, and a soon-to-be released documentary film for Step and One Half Productions that explores the experiences of a group of African American WWII veterans who served on Iwo Jima. She is also producing a New York theatrical debut of *Sam and Laura*. The two-act play, written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ron Powers, is part of a tribute to American icon Mark Twain.

McCray was born and raised in Harlem by her single mother Gertrude, a fiercely proud woman. She was 14 years old when her mother died suddenly of an asthma-induced heart attack. From that moment forward, McCray chose to live life on her own terms. She refers to her one-night jail stay as a youthful misstep that was not to be repeated. Still, she ran the streets, married young, produced two beautiful sons, escaped a drug world unscathed and survived domestic violence at a young age. Whether mentoring gang members or victims of rape and abuse, McCray’s message is consistent: “In order to create a better future you must BELIEVE you deserve one.”

She is the proud and devoted mother of two sons, Uhuru and Terahshea, and she's "NaneMa" to grands Khalil, Nadir, Minkhara, Elijah and Kyla Arianna.

Email her at madeline@madelinemccray.com

About Terahshea "TJ" McCray

Fitness/Sports, Strength Conditioning and Nutrition Expert

Serving clients in New York City, central New Jersey, and online

Terahshea is a Sports, Strength Conditioning, and Nutrition expert, and motivational speaker. He's a graduate of Rider University with a B.A. in Communications



and Television production. However, it was his Human Biology course studies that deepened his interest in anatomy and kinesiology, and ultimately shifted his career ambitions from entertainment to holistic wellness.

Terahshea has received numerous certifications by the industry's leading international health and fitness organizations, including: Clinical Exercise Specialist and Advanced Health, Fitness Specialist and Certified Personal Trainer from the American Council on Exercise; Specialist in Performance Nutrition and Specialist in Martial Arts Conditioning from the International Sports Science Association; Sports Fitness Specialist from the National Academy of Sports Medicine; Holistic Lifestyle Coach from the C.H.E.K. Institute; and Certified Strength and

Conditioning Specialist from the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

While living in the Caribbean, Terahshea used his television studies background to write, produce, direct, and star in his own 30-minute fitness show called *Back in Shape With T*. The show aired on an ABC affiliate station throughout the island nations of St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, and Puerto Rico.

Since launching his career in 1995 Terahshea's commitment to excellence, compassionate approach, and creative training style have earned him a reputation for being an extraordinary fitness trainer.



Terahshea designs and customizes safe, effective exercise programs for patients who have been discharged from medical treatment and for individuals who are working with diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and obesity – as well as those with AIDS, cancer, and neuromuscular disorders.

Terahshea also creates nutrition programs for beginner, elite, and professional athletes, including boxers and kick boxers, to coincide with advanced strength and conditioning programs. As an advanced fitness professional, he's also designed training programs for baseball, softball, basketball, tennis, and soccer teams.

Terahshea is the proud father of three children: Nadir, Elijah and Kyla.

He provides onsite training in central New Jersey and New York City and works with clients over the internet.

- Private Personal Training (In-home, office or studio)
- Private Group Training (In-home or Outdoors)
- Sports Performance Training
- Pilates - Kickboxing - Step and Body Pump Instruction
- Customized Nutrition and Diet Plans

Email: terahshea@healthywomenrock.com

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Elmore Cisco James ... wherever you are, Tu sei mio fratello, Du är min bror, Tu es mon frère, Du bist mein bruder, You are my brother -- much love always.

Arriving at this place took a village of special, amazing people who share with me boundless love, laughter, time, compassion, meals, money, prayers, shelter, hugs, wisdom, words of encouragement, and hope. For all that and so much more I am eternally grateful to:

Dolores Snowden, my sister and cherished friend, I love you and I hope you dance!



Celeste Fahie, my sister from another mother, may the spirit of Omena bind us together forever

Cousin Betty Foster, bearer of wisdom and enlightenment

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I send wishes for prosperity, good health and happiness to the mothers of my precious grands: Erica Blocker-Gordon, Tanaya Thomas-Edwards, Shalimar Hodge-Thurland and Sharon McCray.

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Being healthy and fit begins in the mind, fueled by a heart with a burning passion for life!

~ Terahshea McCray