

Chapter 5:

Aspire to Be Accepting of Yourself.

Sometimes, we spend more time being critical than accepting when it comes to... ourselves. We have all berated ourselves at some point and time, whether it is about our capabilities, talents, appearance, or personality. We well know what that dialogue “sounds” like.

- EVERYONE LIKES HER AND ALWAYS WANTS TO BE WITH HER. WHY DON'T PEOPLE WANT TO ALWAYS BE AROUND ME?
- EVERYONE THINKS I AM _____.
- I FEEL REJECTED. I BET THEY DON'T REALLY EVEN CONSIDER ME A FRIEND.
- THINGS ARE NEVER GOING TO GET BETTER.

- I AM SURE THEY DON'T WANT ME HERE, ANYWAY.
- I WISH I COULD BE A PART OF THAT GROUP FOR JUST... ONE MINUTE.
- I WOULD LOOK HORRIBLE IF I EVEN ATTEMPTED WEARING THAT OUTFIT.
- _____ BARELY DID ANYTHING AND RECEIVED 99.99999% MORE RECOGNITION.
- EVERYONE ELSE HAS A(N) _____ AND I DON'T. THEREFORE, I'M NOT COOL ENOUGH.
- _____ ALWAYS LOOKS PERFECT ON INSTAGRAM.
- I AM TOO (QUIET, NERDY, UNDERWEIGHT, OVERWEIGHT, SHORT, TALL). I AM NOT (SMART, ATTRACTIVE, TALENTED, FAST, OR POPULAR) ENOUGH.
- WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?!

In light of these statements, I have three words of advice— **ENOUGH is ENOUGH**. In spite of whatever circumstances you face or have faced in the past, you must accept yourself. Give yourself credit where it is due, because you deserve it. Cut yourself some slack. *Nobody* is the best at *everything*, liked by every single classmate, or exempt from facing awkward or embarrassing moments. *Everyone* feels rejection at some point. *Everyone* faces moments where they must make difficult decisions.

Sometimes, we come face-to-face with jealousy when we see peoples' photos, read their updates on social media, and hear about their experiences. We hear about what others *have* that we *do not*. It is human nature to ponder about being accepted by others and feel sadness when we see people who were once our friends opening up to new friends.

Comparing ourselves to others is one of the worst things we can do, although people do it without thinking first. Negative self-talk is the other worst thing we can do to ourselves, because then we underestimate our potential. We also sometimes focus on the past and not the future.

Some very successful people faced pretty major moments of self-doubt, like David Bowie, Lady Gaga, John Lennon, Emma Watson, Oprah Winfrey, and tennis phenom Serena Williams, who often compared herself to her sister Venus. Beyond that, though, their accomplishments have been monumental and impressive.

Historical figures like Helen Keller, Abraham Lincoln, and Albert Einstein faced moments of doubt as well and ultimately succeeded. Although you likely know general information about Helen Keller—that she was both deaf and blind—you may have never realized she grew up to be a renowned speaker and author who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Helen Keller learned to believe in her capabilities because of an educator named Anne Sullivan who made a profound impact in her life.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO THAT MAY HELP GUIDE YOU IN YOUR SELF-ACCEPTANCE "JOURNEY"—

- ✦ WRITE OUT AFFIRMATIONS ON POST-IT NOTES (POSITIVE QUOTES, "YOU CAN DO IT" NOTES). POST A FEW IN YOUR ROOM THE MORNING OF A TEST, DAY OF A CONCERT OR SPORTING EVENT, DURING

TIMES WHERE YOU ARE ENCOUNTERING STRESS, ETC. I AM PROVIDING A FEW PHRASES TO GET YOU STARTED.

STAY FOCUSED TODAY BECAUSE IT WILL MAKE A MONUMENTAL DIFFERENCE. DO NOT FORGET TO TAKE DEEP BREATHS AND PACE YOURSELF.	DO NOT FORGET TO TREAT OTHERS WITH KINDNESS. MAKE SURE YOU MAKE AT LEAST ONE OF YOUR CLASSMATES FEEL ACCEPTANCE AND RESPECT.
YOU POSSESS MANY EXTRAORDINARY TALENTS THAT THE WORLD NEEDS TO SEE. TODAY, RESOLVE TO SHOW OTHERS WHAT YOU STAND FOR.	TREAT ALL YOUR TEACHERS WITH RESPECT AND EXERT YOUR BEST EFFORT IN EACH CLASS TODAY. RESPECT EACH TEACHER'S STYLE OF TEACHING AND MAKE SURE YOU GREET OR THANK THEM, AT THE VERY LEAST.
YOU ARE THE KIND OF FRIEND SOMEONE NEEDS IN THIS WORLD. THE WORLD WOULD BE DIFFERENT WITHOUT YOUR LIGHT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.	COMPLIMENT AT LEAST ONE OF YOUR CLASSMATES TODAY FOR EXERTING HIS OR HER BEST. YOUR WORDS BEAR IMPORTANCE.

I AM STRONG IN SPITE OF FACING DIFFICULT MOMENTS AT TIMES. MY STRENGTH CARRIES ME THROUGH.

DO SOMETHING AWESOME TODAY THAT PROVES TO OTHERS THAT YOU DESERVE THEIR RESPECT.

REMEMBER THAT AFFIRMATIONS ARE SHORT AND NEVER USE ANY WORDING THAT IS CONSIDERED NEGATIVE. THINK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THIS WORLD.

- ★ UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES, AND HUMBLY APOLOGIZE IF SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG. BE VERY OPEN WITH YOUR PARENTS.
- ★ LET YOU BE YOUR OWN "VOICE OF REASON". SOMEONE (OR A FEW SOMEONES) MAY SAY, "YOU WANT TO GO TO HARVARD OR MIT?! YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT!", "YOU SHOULD NOT ENTER THAT CONTEST BECAUSE YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE," OR "YOU WILL NEVER SUCCEED AT SPORTS BECAUSE YOU ARE A LOUSY RUNNER", YET IT IS UP TO YOU TO PROVE THEM WRONG.
- ★ ALTER YOUR SELF-TALK. INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE, FOCUS ON WHAT YOU DO HAVE. THIS PHRASE IS POWERFUL—"I MAY (NOT) BE (INSERT ATTRIBUTE YOU CONSIDER NEGATIVE), YET (THREE

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES) _____, _____, AND _____ ARE A FEW OF THE ATTRIBUTES THAT MAKE ME AN INCREDIBLE PERSON."

★ KEEP A SHEET HANDY WHERE YOU WRITE DOWN A LIST OF WHAT YOU ARE PROUD OF OR TALENTS THAT MAKE YOU UNIQUE.

★ UNDERSTAND THAT BEAUTY COMES IN MANY FORMS.

BEAUTY IS NOT JUST SOMETHING CONNECTED TO ONE'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE. PEOPLE POSSESS BOTH OUTER AND INNER BEAUTY.

★ MAKE A LIST OF A FEW "SETBACKS" YOU HAVE

EXPERIENCED IN YOUR LIFE. NEXT TO EACH SETBACK, EXPLAIN HOW THAT EXPERIENCE MADE YOU STRONG. HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES.

I KNOW I WAS NEVER THE BEST DANCER, SINGER, OR ACTOR IN HIGH SCHOOL.

WATCHING OTHERS DO A PHENOMENAL JOB ON STAGE SHOWED ME I HAD SOMETHING TO WORK FOR. I BECAME FUTURE- AND GOAL-ORIENTED BECAUSE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS. THEY ALSO MADE ME APPRECIATE THEATRE.

I WAS VERY MEAN TO MY FRIEND IN 8TH GRADE ONE DAY. THAT MOMENT TURNED OUT BEING ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL I EVER EXPERIENCED IN SCHOOL.

THAT MOMENT TAUGHT ME TO VALUE AND RESPECT MY FRIENDS ON A MUCH DEEPER LEVEL. NOBODY WANTS ANYONE TO DE-VALUE THEM. THAT MOMENT MADE

<p>(IT STEMMED FROM JEALOUSY. TO THIS DAY, I AM EXTREMELY SORRY.)</p>	<p>ME REALIZE THE SANCTITY OF FRIENDSHIP AND NEVER LET FRIENDS GO.</p>
<p>MY 12TH GRADE ENGLISH TEACHER AND MY HISTORY PROFESSOR IN COLLEGE DID NOT GIVE ME THE GREATEST SCORES ON A FEW PAPERS.</p>	<p>I HAD ROOM TO GROW, AND LOOKING BACK, I CONSIDERED MYSELF A STRONGER WRITER THAN I ACTUALLY WAS THEY TAUGHT ME TO PERSEVERE AND NOT BE AS "WORDY" IN MY WRITING. THEIR CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM WAS NECESSARY.</p>
<p>I AM AN INTROVERT.</p>	<p>IT IS OKAY TO BE AN INTROVERT AND PREFER QUIET, "ALONE" TIME SOMETIMES. NOT EVERYONE FEELS "COMFORTABLE" IN THE SAME WAY. IT'S ALSO OKAY TO BE QUIET AT FIRST WHILE GETTING TO KNOW OTHERS. BOTH INTROVERTS AND EXTROVERTS POSSESS TREMENDOUS VALUE.</p>



ENCOURAGE YOURSELF TO TRY SOMETHING

COMPLETELY NEW. JOIN A CLUB OR TRY OUT FOR A SPORT. LEARN HOW TO MAKE A WEBSITE OR VIDEO. PAINT A MURAL. BECOME STRONG AT KICKBOXING OR TAE-KWON-DO. GO HORSEBACK RIDING. SEE IF BEING IN A

PLAY OR MUSICAL IS FOR YOU. YOU GET THE IDEA. RISK-TAKING IS NOT A BAD THING IF YOUR INTENTIONS ARE RIGHT.

★ UNDERSTAND IT IS OKAY TO NOT BELONG TO A CLIQUE, TRIBE, OR SQUAD. VOW TO BE SOMEONE WHO BRANCHES OUT AND BEFRIENDS PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS DIFFERENT "GROUPS" AT SCHOOL.

★ SET SHORT- AND LONG-TERM GOALS. I WILL SAY THIS MORE THAN ONCE IN THIS BOOK, BUT THIS IS IMPORTANT. WHEN YOU FIGURE OUT WHICH COLLEGE(S) YOU DESIRE TO ATTEND, SEE WHICH CLUBS AND ATHLETIC OFFERINGS INTRIGUE YOU. BEYOND THAT, THINK ABOUT THE PLACES YOU DESIRE TO SEE OVER THE COURSE OF YOUR LIFETIME AND EXPERIENCES YOU DESIRE TO HAVE. HERE ARE JUST A FEW (OF MANY) EXPERIENCES I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED AND HAVE YET TO ACCOMPLISH.

NOTE: ALWAYS FOCUS ON AT LEAST A FEW GOALS YOU HAVE ACCOMPLISHED.

<u>GOALS I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GO TO THE TOP OF VARIOUS SKYSCRAPERS AND ATTRACTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES (CHECKED OFF MY LIST: ST. LOUIS ARCH, WILLIS TOWER, JOHN HANCOCK BUILDING, SPACE	<u>GOALS I HAVE YET TO ACCOMPLISH:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• VISIT DISNEYLAND.• HEAD OUT ON A BIOLUMINESCENCE KAYAK RIDE.
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NEEDLE, WASHINGTON MONUMENT, AND EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. THAT'S PRETTY INCREDIBLE!)

- VISIT THE OPPOSITE COAST OF THE UNITED STATES AND DIP MY FEET IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN.
- BEEN TO A BARBRA STREISAND CONCERT (TWICE) WITH MY MOTHER (WHO IS HER BIGGEST FAN). (NOTE: SEE WHO YOUR PARENTS' FAVORITE ARTISTS OF ALL-TIME ARE AND GO TO CONCERTS WITH THEM.)
- SEEN FIREWORKS IN AMERICA'S OLDEST CITY ON THE FOURTH OF JULY.
- VISITED AT LEAST THREE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
- BEEN TO CALIFORNIA AND HAWAII.

- VISIT BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.
- PUBLISH A NOVEL FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY/ MIDDLE SCHOOL-AGED STUDENTS.
- LEARN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE, AT LEAST TO AN EXTENT.
- TRAVEL TO EUROPE, PARTICULARLY THE UK, FRANCE, AND ITALY.

★ AND, AS MR. FEENY FROM BOY MEETS WORLD STATED IN THE LAST EPISODE OF THE SERIES, "DO GOOD." REALIZE YOU HAVE THE POWER TO HELP OTHERS AND MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE. VOLUNTEER FOR AN ORGANIZATION LIKE GIVE KIDS THE WORLD OR RUN A RACE FOR CHARITY. HELP IN A SOUP KITCHEN OR ENCOURAGE TEACHERS TO START A FUNDRAISER AT SCHOOL. OR, ON A BROADER SCOPE,

START A FUNDRAISER OF YOUR OWN. HELPING OTHERS IS EMPOWERING.
THERE ARE A LOT OF IDEAS LATER IN THIS BOOK.