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VOLUME 1
ISSUE 1

Persevere

Teaching and Inspiration for Better Health

Why We Persevere

With so many different illnesses and diseases arising everyday, it is good to be informed and recognize their reality. Certainly, there is more to health than just eating right. Sometimes, we have no control over the infection that takes over our bodies.

Persevere was created to inform and motivate anyone going through or assisting someone with a new test in their life. No one is alone and knowledge is power. We only hope that we bring some peace to the situation or the lack of knowing.

Learn to follow good advice

Whether we know it or not, we cause harm to ourselves by not listening to others. I have learned this the hard way in my experience with Crohn's disease.

Crohn's disease is a disorder that causes inflammation of the digestive tract, also known as the gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

Crohn's disease can affect any area of the GI tract but it most often affects the lower part of the small intestine, called the ileum. The swelling extends deep into the lining of the affected organ and can cause pain. The inflammation makes the intestines empty frequently, resulting in diarrhea.

Because the symptoms of Crohn's disease are similar to other intestinal disorders, such as irritable bowel syndrome and

ulcerative colitis, it can be difficult to diagnose. Ulcerative colitis causes inflammation and ulcers in the top layer of the lining of the large intestine. In Crohn's disease, all layers of the intestine may be involved even when healthy bowel is found between sections of diseased bowel.

Crohn's disease affects men and women equally and seems to run in some families. About 20% of people with Crohn's disease have a blood relative with some form of inflammatory bowel disease. Crohn's disease can occur in people of all age groups, but is mostly diagnosed in people between the ages of 20 and 30. People of Jewish heritage have an increased risk of developing Crohn's disease, and African Americans are at de-

creased risk for developing Crohn's disease.

I was diagnosed when I was twelve years old and, of course, I had to be put on medications and machines at night to keep my body healthy and disease free. Taking regular medication as a 12 year old was a huge responsibility and one that I didn't want to deal with. So, what did I do? I rebelled against the doctors, my parents and anyone else who tried to tell me what to do. The results? I have required several surgeries and had large amounts of my colon removed. Due to the number of surgeries I have had, I am now stable. If only I had listened as a child and taken my medication when I was supposed to, many of the surgeries could've been avoided.

- Tesha Prude

What exactly is my best life?

There's a lot of talk these days encouraging people to live their best life. From Oprah to *Es-sence*, we can't pick up a magazine or turn on the television without seeing the 7, 12 or 50 steps to "Your Best Life Ever"!

What exactly is my best life? What is it that I'm doing now that is keeping me from living the life that I was created for?

The best life has been explained in many ways. Some see it as a life of financial wealth. Some

include better health and more love. Overall, living your best life is about focusing on living the life that you were created to live. God created each of us with a purpose. We often get caught up in looking at the lives of others. We see their accomplishments and possessions and think, "I could never do that..." when that may not be what God intends for us to do. You cannot live the same life as your co-workers, your sisters and brothers at church or the individuals

you see on MTV Cribs! That's not your life! Your life is your own and is to be lived to the best of YOUR abilities...Your God given abilities.

So, read the books. Watch Oprah and Dr. Phil if you want. In the end, what you must truly do to live your best life is realize that God is the only one with the sure plan to bring you to that place where your success is defined by Him, not by the lives of those around you!

- Nina Ligon

Jeremiah 1:5-9

⁵ I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations. ⁶ But I protested, "Oh no, LORD GOD! Look, I don't know how to speak since I am [only] a youth." ⁷ Then the LORD said to me: Do not say: I am [only] a youth, for you will go to everyone I send you to and speak whatever I tell you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of anyone, for I will be with you to deliver you. [This is] the LORD's declaration. ⁹ Then the LORD reached out His hand, touched my mouth, and told me: (HCSB)

Phillipians 3:14

¹⁴ I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. (HCSB)

Matthew 6:33

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. (HCSB)

Stop Making Yourself Sick

*There is no one to trust!
The world is so cold!
I am better off keeping all my feelings inside!*

Why do you speak such to your soul? No, the world is not going to always give a warm welcome and offer a shoulder to cry on. In every situation, however, there is good. In all our lives, there is that one person or thing that brings relief. Even so, we still choose to hold on to pain. Holding on to pain, being stubborn plus always complaining about a situation will only bring more problems to your life.

By internalizing every situation and not releasing the frustration, you bring other things to light—past suppressed feelings, high stress levels, weight gain, anger, or insanity.

Do you really want to drive yourself crazy? Is that what life is really about? As you get

older the more health issues will arise from your intense stress level. Stress, over a period of time, can cause:

- Sleep disturbances
- Headaches
- Diarrhea
- Irritability
- Lack of energy
- Lack of concentration
- Increased risk of asthma and arthritis
- Skin problems, like hives
- Depression
- Weight gain or loss

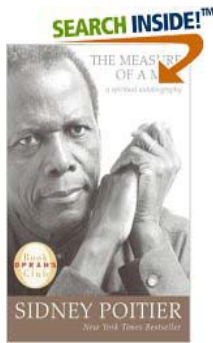
- Heart problems
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Neck and/or back pain

Do you really want to live like this? I think not. Starting now, challenge yourself to find that thing that will motivate you to change. Your health should be the number one motivation. If it is not, at least decide to move forward. If you cannot change a situation or a person then move forward. The more time you waste, the more you cause pain to yourself. There is too much joy in the world for you to stand back and destroy yourself over nonsense. Make today your day to take control and let go.

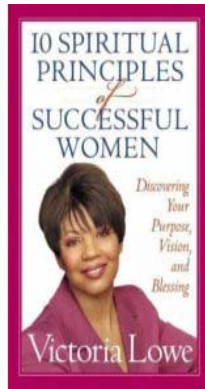
- Carla Thorpe

Suggested Reading

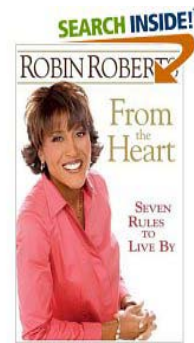
*Measure of a Man:
A Spiritual Autobiography*
By Sidney Poitier



From The Heart: 7 Rules to Live By
By Robin Roberts



10 Spiritual Principles of Successful Women: Discovering Your Purpose, Vision and Blessing
By Victoria Lowe



“Your life is your own and is to be lived to the best of YOUR abilities... your God given abilities.”

- Nina Ligon

Other Resources

CROHN'S DISEASE:

www.cdfa.org

www.livingwithcrohnsdisease.com

STRESS:

http://www.lessons4living.com/stress_test.htm

<http://www.4woman.gov/faq/stress.htm#4>

http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_signs.htm

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4568>

<http://www.homestead.com/selfhelpsolutions/stress.html>

www.biblegateway.com

Quick Tips To De-Stress Your Life

- Start a journal and write down your thoughts, feelings and activities
- Exercise Regularly
- Listen to music that relaxes you
- Take a warm bath or shower
- Learn a new hobby
- Drink green tea

DEDICATION

I thank God for helping me overcome my fears and letting His will be done. I wish to send love to the woman that inspires me everyday - Brandma. She is my light, best friend and role model.

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We welcome your ideas and input for making this publication better. Please let us hear from you!