POWERFUL GIRL JOURNAL

VOLUME 1

GINNY DYE

A Voice In The World Publishing
Bellingham, WA
www.PowerfulGirlJournals.com
www.AVoiceInTheWorld.com

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Hello!

You know, it doesn't matter what day of the year you start your journal – it will be with you for 365 days – until you're ready for your next one.

A Journal becomes even more of a treasure when it becomes even more than a Journal.

The **POWERFUL GIRL JOURNALS** are so much more than a Journal.

You'll find **POWERFUL GIRL STORIES** - amazing people who will make you realize you can do ANYTHING with your life. (52 stories for every week of the year)

Every single day you'll get a **POWERFUL GIRL QUOTE**.

You'll be challenged with **POWERFUL GIRL ACTIONS**.

And every day you'll have a place to write down your feelings, thoughts, challenges, hurts, disappointments, successes, celebrations, relationships, actions, experiences, adventures – all the things your life is made of.

THE POWERFUL GIRL JOURNALS WILL BECOME IRREPLACEABLE TREASURES AS YOU LOOK BACK ON YOUR LIFE!

Here's the thing… In my many years of working with girls I have watched as one after another falters when you reach the "Real World." You start out with such great dreams. You are full of energy and hope - determined to make your mark on the world. Then you face the reality of unkind people; cruel words; failed attempts; unforeseen obstacles; and a myriad of other "Real Life" situations.

Your dreams crumble before the onslaught. It doesn't have to be that way! You will meet incredible people this year, and have the opportunity to meet yourself in a way you probably never have before… You'll become a **POWERFUL GIRL** who can conquer everything that comes your way - making your dreams come true!

If you have a safe place to write down your experiences and all the things you learn along the way – NOTHING will stop you from living the life you dream of right this minute!

It's my honor to be part of your journey with you.

Let's get with it!

Ginny Dye

Before you get started, come over and join our FACEBOOK Community!

http://www.facebook.com/IAmAPowerfulGirl

Don't miss out on:

Friends
Contests
Games
Videos
Blogs

And one other thing:

Sign up for my mailing list so that you'll get special offers and "Insider Powerful Girl Information" that no one else will get!

Just go to www.IAmAPowerfulGirl.com and join the fun!

POWERFUL GIRL STORY # 1

She's On Her Way!

Eilleen was born in the tiny town of Timmons, Ontario in Canada. She grew up used to bitter cold and hunger. There were days on end when bread and milk was the entire diet for her and her 3 younger siblings. She learned to hide her poverty and hunger from friends at school but it didn't ease the suffering.

About the only thing that could do that was her music. When life was more than she could handle she would retreat to her bedroom with her guitar, singing and writing until her fingers ached. The music fed her soul even while her stomach was growling.

Her talent was recognized early and this little tomboy was shuttled all over to perform in clubs, bars, and anywhere else they could get her booked to make some extra money. Yet Eilleen never really thought music was her future.

When she could no longer stand the poverty she managed to convince her mother to leave their father and head for Toronto. The shelter they stayed in for a long time provided the first regular meals she had ever experienced.

Eilleen got her first job when she was 14, working at a McDonalds. Later, she spent summers working as the foreman of a dozen-man reforestation crew in the Canadian bush, where she learned to wield an axe and handle a chain saw as well as any man. She was tough because she had to be tough.

Then things got tougher. Both parents were killed in an auto wreck and suddenly she was the parent to her siblings. She managed to survive by getting a job singing at a local resort. The experience was invaluable – giving her exposure to every aspect of theatrical performance. It prepared her for what was to come.

In 1990, her siblings were grown and 23 year old Eillen was on her own. The first thing she did was change her first name to an Ojibway Indian name meaning ***"I'm on my way."***

Shania Twain was indeed on her way. She has turned the world of Country/Pop music upside down,winnig many awards along the way. Unless you live on another planet, you have probably heard of her!

One of her songs, *I'm Gonna Getcha Good,*

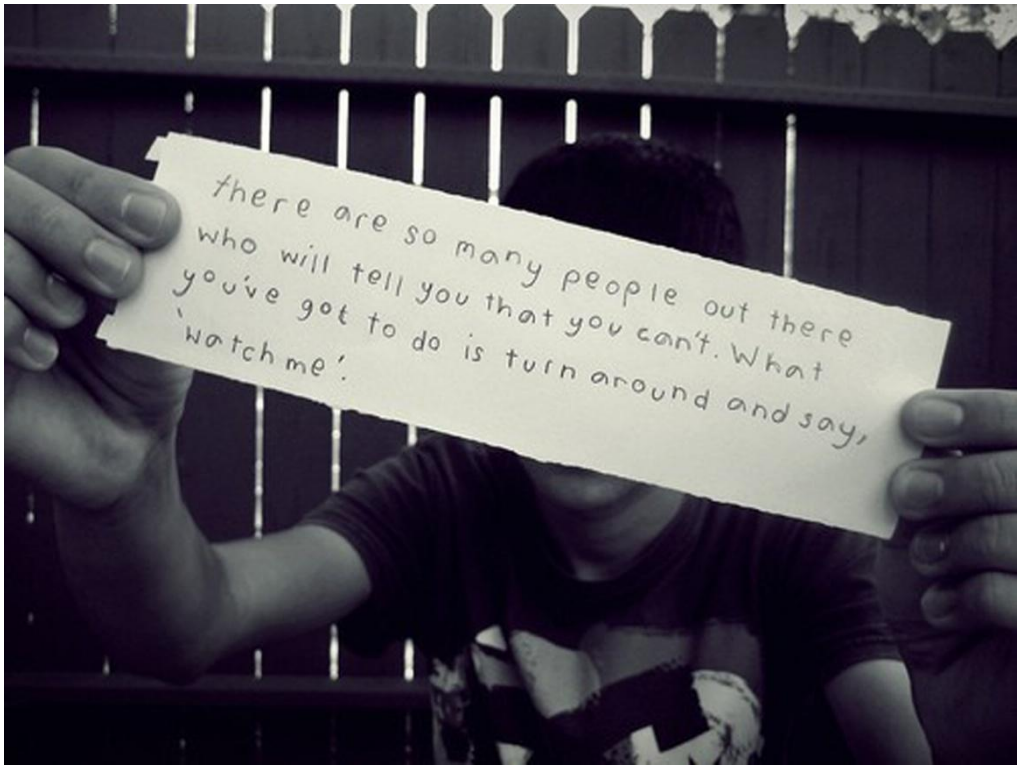
really sums it up. It's all about a girl who knows what she wants; she not only knows how to get it, but she's going to get it good.

All of us make a choice everyday how we are going to live our lives. No one would have been surprised if little Eilleen had simply become another person sunk in poverty – trapped by the reality of a hard life.

Shania Twain, however, saw her future differently. She was not content to stay where she was – she was determined to pay whatever price necessary to achieve her dreams. Each hard thing did nothing but strengthen her resolve and determination, teaching her how to press through to success!

She learned to do the hard things. She learned how to spot opportunity in every situation. She learned how to ask for what she wanted – and just keep asking until she got where she wanted to be. She learned how to fail, then pick herself back up and do it again.

You can be like Shania!



DAY 1: *"Develop an attitude of gratitude and give thanks for everything that happens to you, knowing that every step forward is a step toward achieving something bigger and better than your current situation."* *~Brian Tracy*

DAY 2: *"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." ~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

DAY 3: *"It doesn't matter where you have been; it matters where you are going."*

POWERFUL GIRL ACTIONS

One person can make a difference. In fact, it's not only possible for one person to make a difference, it's essential that one person makes a difference. And believe it or not, that person is you. As we go through this year together I'm going to share ways YOU can make a difference!

READ INDEED

Maria Keller was 4 ½ when she started reading. Her room is lined with bookshelves full of her favorite books – many that she reads over and over. She knows there is something magical about books; that they can take you anywhere you want to go. One day, when she was eight, her mother told her that some kids don't have a single book of her own. She decided to change that!

At age eight she started Read Indeed. She collects books, mostly through drives people hold at their offices or churches, and then distributes them to schools and other groups that help kids in need of a good read. Most of them stay local, but many have been sent all over the world. Her original goal was to donate 1,000,000 books by her eighteenth birthday. It only took her to age 13 to do it!

That's right. 13 year, 7-grader, Maria Keller has given away over 1 MILLION books. Go to her website to find out how YOU can help her or do something just like it in your area! www.ReadIndeed.org

ARE YOU INVOLVED IN A CLUB?

Encourage the club members to choose a project that will make a difference in your community or someone's life. For instance, a Robotics Club designed a special device that enabled a kid stuck in a wheel chair and unable to use his arms, to "throw" balls so he could play fetch with his dog.

FOOD BANK

Help at a food bank or food pantry in your town. There are a lot of people who need a hot meal or some groceries, and you probably have several organizations in your community who provide meals or groceries to folks who need them. Look in your telephone book, or ask a teacher or your religious leader for suggestions. Volunteer with some friends (or your club or youth group) and give a couple hours dishing out food or clearing tables. Help bag groceries, or carry them to the cars. Be sure to smile and talk with the people. They all have the same desires and needs that you do. You just might make a friend or two!

DAY 4: *Anyone or anything that does not bring you alive is too small for you.*
~ David Whyte

DAY 5: *"Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential."* *~John Maxwell*

DAY 6: *"What makes you more powerful than they are is what you can do that they can't, or what you're willing to do that they won't."*

DAY 7: *"Every person dies, but not every person really lives."*

POWERFUL GIRL STORY # 2

A Victor's Life!

Merri pulled the covers over her head, hoping that if she wasn't seen perhaps her adopted stepmother would ignore her. She could hear birds chirping outside the window. . . if Merri had only been a bird, she could have flown away from the torment a long time ago.

She could hardly remember the years she had been safe and loved. The death of both parents had resulted in her being adopted by her stepmom. Adopted – only to be terribly abused. Fearing the night and dreading the day, Merri could only dream of a safe, free, loving existence.

As she endured and survived, she also vowed that when she was older she would do something to help other adopted children live in safety. She fulfilled her vow… After 30 years in *broadcasting*, Merri Dee serves as Director of Community Relations at WGN-TV in Chicago, Illinois, USA. This enables her to supervise the programs that reach over 55 million homes. She also works as a manager of the TV channel's Children's Charities where over 25 million dollars have been raised. The monies raised have been given solely to children's organizations.

Because of Merri's efforts in raising awareness about the needs of orphans, the adoption rate in Illinois increased over 50 %. Credit is given to her and WGN-TV.

As the host of the United Negro College Fund's annual "Evening of Stars," Merri has helped raise over 30 million dollars for educational scholarships.

These 3 accomplishments are only a small representation of what she has accomplished. Her life is characterized by giving, and giving some more.

Merri lived a lonely and sad life as a child. Neglected and beaten, she knew no love. She could be bitter and angry. But she has taken her desperate past and made her present world better. By doing so, she has made not only her world better, but also the world of thousands of other children.

These feats take on even greater awe when you learn that Merri was kidnapped one night after taping a TV show. Her kidnappers shot her in the head and left her for dead in rural Illinois. She was abandoned, cold and bloody with two bullet holes in her head.

Miraculously, Merri's life-long will and fight to survive came to her rescue once again and she crawled for help. Finding a nearby highway she managed to flag down a passing car and received the needed medical care that would save her life.

Blinding headaches from the bullet shrapnel still left in her head gives her daily pain. But after more than a year of recovery, Merri returned to the journalistic life she loves. Her near-death experience fueled a new passion - victim's rights. Merri has been instrumental in getting the first Victims Bill of Rights legislation passed in

Illinois. That bill has since become the example for the rest of the USA's victim's legislation.

Today Merri lives a rich fulfilling life. A survivor's life. A life that has its scars on her body and her soul.

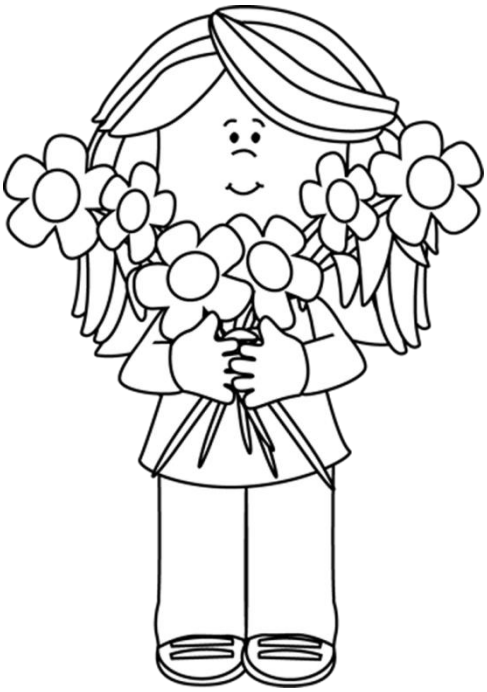
But it's a victor's life!

DAY 8 - *"Joy is only one thought away and that thought is up to you."*
~ *Miriam Evers*

DAY 9 *You will only have joy when you focus on having it and settle for nothing less. ~ Sanaya Roman*

DAY 10 *A ship is safe in her harbor, but that's not what ships are meant for!*

POWERFUL GIRL ACTIONS



SHARE BEAUTY

If you have flowers in your garden, share them with someone else. Take a bunch to an elderly neighbor who can no longer garden. Take some to a friend going through a hard time. Drop them off at a neighbor's house "just because".

PEOPLE ARE LONELY

Spend an afternoon with someone you know is lonely. You don't have to make it just once. Lonely people are in need of friendship. Decide to drop by every week. Send them notes. Become a lifeline for just that one person.

BE A MENTOR.

Older teens can contact Big Brothers Big Sisters, YMCA, or the local elementary schools to find out about mentoring. Meetings can happen at school: in the classroom, school library, school computer room, or other set location. School-based mentoring is not a tutoring program. It's just being a friend to a kid who needs one. Statistics show[4] that kids who are mentored one-on-one in a school setting:

- 58% improved their school performance
- 65% showed higher levels of self-confidence
- 55% had a better attitude toward school

DO YOU LIKE MUSIC OR DRAMA?

Why not volunteer at a local elementary school, YMCA or community center, and put on skits or mini-musicals? You could either enlist other teens and perform them for the kids, or better yet, cast the kids in the roles and work with them throughout the year. When they're ready to perform, arrange for a performance in the school auditorium (at the 'Y' or community center). Invite the other classes and parents (and grandparents!). You may foster future artists by "just having fun."

DAY 11 *You must do the thing you think you cannot do ~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

DAY 12 *It is everyone's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out. ~ Albert Einstein*

DAY 13 *Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.* ~ *Louisa May Alcott*

PROVIDE SOME CHEER TO SICK KIDS

Do you have a hospital nearby? Maybe even a dialysis center? Often these rooms are a little drab and could use some cheering up! Contact the Pediatrics ward, Oncology (cancer) ward, labs, dialysis center and tell them you'd like to help cheer up their rooms. You can provide cheerful, colorful artwork, DVD movies (you may also need to provide a DVD player), and little care packages. Kids (and probably adults, too) really like the sour Skittles to help with the nasty taste of chemotherapy.

LITTER TEAM

Take your lunch break to clean up trash. Enlist the help of your friends! You'll inspire others to keep your school cleaner and trash free if they see there are people who care.

FAMILY TRASH TEAM

Go out with your family at least 1 hour a week to clean up trash around your neighborhood, on your road, or somewhere else you know needs cleaning up.

BE A SECRET GIVER

Go to your local bowling alley, skating rink, amusement park, etc. and ask them to give you FREE coupons you can share with kids who need to know someone cares. Put the coupons in a special card or note that will let them know they are important.

START A SOUP & CEREAL CAMPAIGN

Did you know you can collect Campbell Soup labels and General Mills box tops for points to purchase things for your school? The school can get things like library books, art supplies, and overhead projectors. Why not challenge all the students, teachers, staff and their families to start collecting? You could even get a van for 1 million soup labels! Don't let all those people throw away all those labels and box tops! Start your campaign today.

DAY 14 *Cautious, careful people always casting about to preserve their reputation or social standards never can bring about reform. Those who are really in earnest are willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathies with despised ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequences."*

~ Susan B. Anthony

POWERFUL GIRL STORY

You're Not Going to Believe This

How many times have you been discouraged because someone else didn't see the brilliance of what you created, thought of, or wanted to do? How many times have you walked away from something because you decided it wasn't a good idea, too?

Consider these…

+ The movie Star Wars was rejected by every movie studio in Hollywood before 20th Century Fox finally produced it. It went on to be one of the largest-grossing movies in film history.

+ As a child, Sylvester Stallone was frequently beaten by his father and told he had no brains. He grew up an unhappy loner. He floated in and out of schools. An advisor at Drexel University told him that based on his aptitude tests he should pursue a career as an elevator repair person. It's not a bad profession but it's certainly not where "Rocky" ended up!

+ Einstein was criticized for not wearing socks or cutting his hair. He didn't speak until he was four, and didn't read until he was seven. One observer noted, *"He could be mentally retarded."*

+ An expert said of Vince Lombardi: *"He possesses minimal football knowledge. Lacks motivation."*

+ Beethoven handled the violin awkwardly and preferred playing his own compositions instead of improving his technique. His teacher proclaimed him hopeless as a composer.

+ Walt Disney was fired from his job as a newspaper editor for lack of ideas. He also went bankrupt several times before he created Disneyland.

+ Henry Ford failed and went broke 5 times before he finally succeeded.

+ Louisa May Alcott, the author of Little Women, was encouraged to find work as a servant or seamstress. She would certainly never be a writer.

+ In 1944, the director of the Blue Book Modeling Agency, told modeling hopeful Norma Jean Baker (Marilyn Monroe), *"You'd better learn secretarial work, or else get married."*

+ When Lucille Ball began studying to be an actress in 1927, she was told by the head instructor of the John Murray Anderson Drama School, "Try any other profession. Any other." Hmmm… Where would we be today without *I Love Lucy* reruns??

+ Liv Ullman, who was nominated two times for the Academy Award for Best Actress, failed an audition for the state theater school in Norway. The judges told her she had no talent.

+ Wilma Rudolph was the 20th of 22 children. She was born prematurely and her survival was doubtful. When she was 4 years old, she contracted double pneumonia and scarlet fever, which left her with a paralyzed left leg. At age 9, she removed the metal leg brace she had been dependent on and began to walk without it. By 13 she had developed a rhythmic walk, which doctors said was a miracle.

That same year she decided to become a runner. She entered a race and came in last. For the next few years every race she entered, she came in last. Everyone told her to quit, but she kept on running. One day she actually won a race. And then another. From then on she won every race she entered. Eventually this little girl, who was told she would never walk again, went on to win three Olympic gold medals.

+ Louis L'Amour, successful author of over 100 western novels with over 200 million copies in print, received 350 rejections before he made his first sale. He later became the first American novelist to receive a special congressional gold medal in recognition of his distinguished career as an author and contributor to the nation through his historically based works.

+ In 1953, Julia Child and her two collaborators signed a publishing contract to produce a book tentatively titled *French Cooking for the American Kitchen*. Julia and her colleagues worked on the book for 5 years. The publisher rejected the 850-page manuscript. Child and her partners worked for another year totally revising the manuscript. Again the publisher rejected it. But Julia Child did not give up. She and her collaborators went back to work again, found a new publisher and in 1961 – eight years after beginning – they published *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, which has sold more than 1 million copies. In 1966, *Time* Magazine featured Julia Child on its cover.

So… *what are your ideas? Your thoughts? Your dreams?* Who cares if anyone supports what you want to do?

The important thing is for YOU to believe. For **you** to ignore the people who say you can't do it – and *do it anyway*! It takes courage. It takes persistence. It takes believing in the "voice inside" when no one else does.

Ideas, dreams, and visions are planted within you because you have the ability to make them happen. You'll learn, grow, scramble, fail, and get back up again. The important thing is to simply never give up. The people I told you about never did – and they made great things happen!

DAY 15 *For what is done or learned by one class of women becomes, by virtue of their common womanhood, the property of all women." ~ Elizabeth Blackwell (The first woman in the U.S. to become a physician)*

DAY 16 *"We've chosen the path to equality, don't let them turn us around."*
~ Geraldine Ferraro (The first woman to be nominated as Vice President of the United States)

DAY 17 *"You can do one of two things; just shut up, which is something I don't find easy, or learn an awful lot very fast, which is what I tried to do."*

~ Jane Fonda

WHEELCHAIR SPORTS PROGRAM

Do a little research and find out if there is a wheelchair sports program in your community. There are a lot of fine athletes who are confined to wheelchairs, still active and very competitive. Besides basketball, some wheelchair sports groups play rugby, hockey, tennis and softball. Get some friends together and challenge them to a game. You might be surprised who wins!

HELP JUVENILES HAVE A SECOND CHANCE

Not all kids in juvenile detention centers are bad kids – many times they are kids who made bad choices and got caught. They deserve a second chance; and they deserve to know someone cares. Is there a Juvenile Detention center in your area? Why not contact them and see if there is something you can do for the kids who are incarcerated? It could be collecting gently used paperback books, DVDs, CDs, and/or magazines to donate to the center. Maybe you can get a pen pal group started. Or volunteer to sit on their Board that meets with the juvenile offenders and their guardians to determine the consequences for the youth. You'll have a voice in presenting options to youth and their guardians to help them accept responsibility for their actions and provide accountability to the community and the victim of their crime.

EMAILS OF GRATITUDE

Send at least one email a day telling someone how much they are appreciated; thanking them for something they did for you; or telling them something you like about them.

SHARE SOME JOY!

Not all senior citizens facilities are the same. They vary from having active seniors to bed-ridden individuals. But everybody has the same need – to know someone else cares. Why not throw a party for some folks in such a facility? It can be as simple as just bringing in some balloons and visiting with people (don't worry about what to say – most of them will be happy to do the talking!). Or it can be as elaborate as performing a "show" for them. If you have some friends who play music, sing, can do card tricks, read poetry or tell stories – put it all together and make some people happy! They'll talk about it for weeks. ☺

DAY 18 *"If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it." ~ Margaret Fuller*

DAY 19 *"Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got." ~ Janis Joplin*

DAY 20 *"Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose."* *~ Helen Keller*

DAY 21 *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." ~ Margaret Mead*

POWERFUL GIRL STORY

How She Got Her Crown

It's so easy to look at really successful people and think they just woke up one day that way. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every successful person I know had their share of failures and hardships. The "Queen of Television" was no different…

Born to teenage, unwed parents, Oprah had a lot of things going against her. She was poor, black, a female, and born to parents out of wedlock. Her early years with her grandparents were wonderful, but from age six to thirteen her life was full of abuse and trouble-making. Her mother's failed attempt to put her in a detention center landed her with her father. He helped her turn her life around and she went on to college and then moved into journalism.

Oprah was fired as a TV reporter because she broke the "cardinal rule" of journalism – remain objective. Oprah started crying while interviewing a woman who had lost seven children in a fire. That show of sympathy cost Oprah her job.

At age 22 and a new anchorperson, she was sitting around a table with men in suits when they suggested she change her name to Suzie. They counseled that it was a "friendlier" and more easily remembered name than Oprah. Oprah rejected their suggestion and decided to stay true to herself.

She knew she was different and liked it that way. So she worked hard to launch her own media career by creating a talk show with heart and a helping hand to people in need. The Oprah Winfrey Show was born. Today Oprah is a one-woman media empire worth billions of dollars.

If Oprah had listened to the "professionals" and followed their advice, I wonder if we'd even know who she is today. But because she rejected the "tested formula" of journalism and built upon her uniqueness, millions of people around the world have been touched and helped because of her.

Each of us is unique, with special gifts and talents. If others recommend you make changes, honestly consider if such changes would diminish who you really are. Some changes might be for the good – others might cause you to compromise your uniqueness. And your uniqueness might just be what the world is waiting for!

DAY 22 *A wise person will make more opportunities than they find. ~ Sir Francis Bacon*

DAY 23 *If there is a solution to your problem, then there is little need to worry. If there is NO solution to your problem…then there is little need to worry. ~ Dalai Lama*

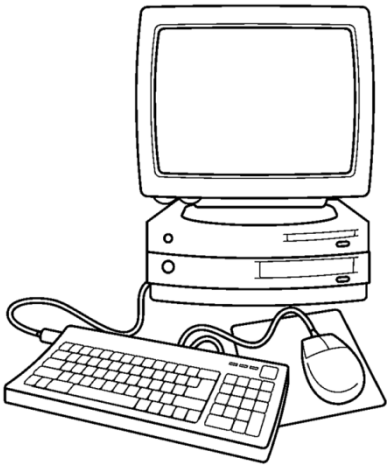
DAY 24 *If you can't, you must. If you must, you can.*

POWERFUL GIRL ACTIONS

COOKIE JAR BANK

Put a big glass jar on your counter. Have everyone in your family (even if it's just you) use it for all their loose change. Every 6 months decide who you are going to give it to – making a family ritual out of the event.

ARE YOU AND SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS "COMPUTER WHIZZES"?



Offer to teach a free class at the YMCA, a church, your school, senior center, or a community center. There are a lot of people who would like to learn about computers but either can't afford to take a class, or are embarrassed to let anyone know they don't understand how to use them. Go slowly and teach one-on-one as much as possible. Make it for all ages – kids through senior adults.

DO YOU LIKE TO HOLD BABIES?

Donate some time at the local hospital in the Pediatrics Nursery. Many hospitals are happy to have volunteers come in and just hold and rock the babies. Or there may be recovery type programs in your area that would appreciate you babysitting while their moms take classes and training.

ARE YOU GOOD AT PHOTOGRAPHY?

Offer your services for free to organizations that need publicity but can't afford to hire professional photographers. It might be a food bank, a homeless shelter, humane society, etc.

VOLUNTEER AT THE LOCAL ANIMAL SHELTER

Many animal rescue groups are short on funding and greatly appreciate any help they can get. They can use help in many areas: cleaning cages, feeding animals, answering phones, doing computer work, etc. The adoration you get heaped on you every day from the animals will give you back more than you can ever give!

DAY 25 *Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.*

DAY 26 *The only impossible journey is the one you never begin.*

DAY 27 *If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door! ~ Milton Berle*

DAY 28 *"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eyes."* ~ *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

POWERFUL GIRL STORY

She Was The First!

The sun rose and Wilma awoke. Pulling herself together she faced the glowing sunrise. Breathing in the fresh morning air she thought to herself. . . *"No more days watching the old way of life die. No more days feeling the pointed barb of despair."*

Wilma was alive in a time when the Native American culture was at a low point. Want to guess when that was? No, not in the 1700's or even the 1800's but in the 1980's! Less than forty years ago!!!

In fact, Wilma Mankiller is still alive today. Although retired now, her dreams of a time where the men and women of the Cherokee nation returned to the traditional way of working together was very much realized because of her lifelong work.

For the Cherokee, teamwork and working together - both men and woman - for the common good of the whole tribe was a traditional and an honored way of life. However, deep discouragement, broken promises and a completely male dominated culture had replaced their historical ways. Now the women were cast aside and forgotten. They lived hopeless and powerless. And the whole culture fought alcoholism and unemployment.

The year was 1987. Yes, that is right. . . 1987!!! Remember she is the most celebrated Cherokee person in OUR lifetime. . .

Wilma dressed as the morning sun warmed the air. Preparing for her first official day as the elected Chief of the Nation, all of her life's work, hopes and beliefs lay around her mind. Her anticipation of a brighter future began to bubble up.

This day brought the end of much prejudice and ridicule, hardship and skepticism. She dressed and remembered. Wilma knew the sweetness of life could be short.

She remembered the car accident that killed her best friend and nearly killed her. She carries the scars of 17 surgeries. Each scar reminded her as she dressed, that life can only give back to you what you put into it.

She remembered the death threats she received as her popularity with her people grew and the tension grew with her enemies. She remembered buying new tires for her vehicle when its tires were slashed in protest.

She remembered 1985, when she first "inherited" the position as chief of the Cherokee nation. Inherited it because her boss left the position and she was the next in command.

However, this year, 1987, she was freely elected. . . and the very first female ever to hold that position. She knew her people had high expectations for her. She had high expectations. . . for all of them.

As she left for her office, her head held high with pride and hope, she offered silent thoughts of respect for the people who had gone before and deep gratefulness and sincere appreciation for the opportunities ahead of her. She knew her day had finally come. She knew her Nation's day had come as well. Her high expectations, hard work and deep commitment paid off as she was elected twice more as the Nation's chief.

Although her health no longer permits her from officially leading her people, her influence is still felt within the Nation. The Cherokee Nation is a vast organization, with over 140,000 in population, an annual budget of more than $75 million, and more than 1,200 employees spread over 7,000 square miles!!

Wilma's election and her tackling of their problems did much to restore and revive the Cherokee economy, education and equality. She restored faith to a desperate people.

She didn't take the easy way or the quick way. She took the way that was necessary and needed.

So many times we look for the quick way. Wilma is a wonderful reminder that often times it takes a willingness to work within the existing structure. It takes patience to wait for the opportunity that we desire to present itself. But by doing those two things, Wilma created an environment where now, present day young Cherokee girls dream of becoming chief. Before her election, those girls would never have believed that possible.

Today I encourage you to be willing to take the slow road. It just may be the road you are looking for to make that difference in your life. I encourage you to dream like Wilma did of the changes coming.

SEAL OF THE CHEROKEE NATION