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Strength



Strength
doesn't come
from what you can do.
Strength comes from
overcoming
the things you
thought you couldn't.

A CONSORTIUM OF NEW VOICES

Kalliope



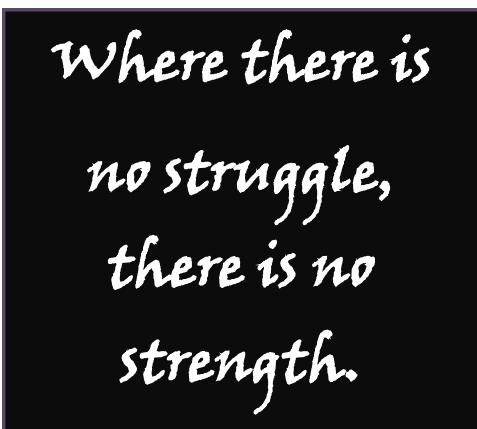
From the Guest Editor Caitlen Welch

Before officially landing on this topic of strength, I initially wanted to focus on confidence. I knew I wanted this to be an encouraging issue that would spread the message that being yourself and loving who you are was an aspirational goal that is possible over time. I also wanted to get the message across that regardless of what other people think, you are capable of much more than you know. You just have to believe in yourself.

I realized with the help of the managing editor, that confidence was actually too limiting; as most people think of physical appearance and arrogance upon first hearing the word. I wanted to go beyond the idea that physical beauty and fitness is all that makes up self worth, and

instead focus on self esteem and inner strength, which impact self worth yet are invisible to those around us.

Ms. Berry suggested the word “strength” and it fully embodied everything I envisioned for this issue. Being able to push on



even when you don't want to or

believe you can, brazenly being your true self, regardless of what others think, and even learning to love yourself are just some of the topics covered in the Strength issue.

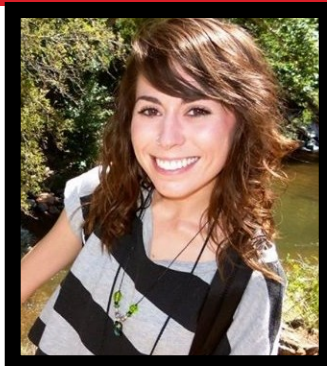
I chose to focus on strength because it is ubiquitous and will never go away. Regardless of your social background, your gender, or your goals, emotional strength and self worth need a firm foundation in your life in order for you to be successful. I hope these articles will touch you the way they touched us writing and editing them. While it is difficult to juggle college, part or full time jobs, as well as having personal life, it is possible. For times when it feels impossible, I hope you find comfort on these pages, and in realizing you aren't alone.

Interns' Bios



Donald Tripp is a Junior majoring in English Literature with a minor in European History. His favorite authors are J.

K. Rowling and John Green, and his favorite poem is “Digging” by Seamus Heaney. He recently returned from a study abroad semester in London. He enjoys reading and writing, and aspires to become a writer. In his spare time, Donald enjoys playing video games and travelling. He has a daily video blog that can be found on YouTube.



Mara Michael is finishing her last semester at ASU this fall, and is about to graduate with a BA in English Literature. She is excited to graduate and explore what the world and writing field have to offer. Mara is interested in fiction and poetry, yet also loves investigative journalism and sharing her opinions and

experiences through the written word.

Caitlen Welch is an ASU senior studying Film and Media Studies and minoring in English

Literature. Her passion and obsessive need to correct grammar and spelling has led her to believe editing is her true calling, but she does have some guilty pleasure reads that include the Harry Potter series, Meg Cabot books, and anything Jane Austen. She hopes to one day be a book editor for a major publication company.



Whatever Doesn't Kill You, Makes You Stronger

Shavawn M. Berry

My mother's the strongest person I know. What's made her that way? Life's trials and vicissitudes. Death. Divorce. Loss. Illness. Terrible tragedy.

My mom, who is now 78, comes from a childhood of domestic violence and abuse. She married my father at 19, and had her first child at 20. My sister, Roxanne, was born with a congenital heart defect that caused her to store her body's sugar in her heart instead of her pancreas. As a result, she couldn't get enough oxygen from her blood and she turned blue. She died when she was 18 days old. My mom not only endured that loss, but she was forced by her in-laws to have an open casket funeral for my sister. I cannot imagine the kind of strength it took to bury her first baby.

And her losses kept coming. She lost her mother at 29 and her father at 37. She lost a close friend to murder when he was in his 40s and her best friend to a brain aneurysm at 45. She worked at low wage jobs in order to put food on the table after my dad left her for a younger woman.

I don't tell you this to make you feel sympathy for her. Rather, I tell you that she forged her strength in the fires of life. Not an easy, hand-me-the-crème-brulee sort of life. No, she's lived the rough and tumble, grit and grace,

keep-going-no-matter-what sort of life. She takes a licking and she keeps on ticking.

Last Christmas she nearly died from a blockage in her intestines. She lost 30 pounds in one week because she couldn't keep anything down. She slept on the floor because she was too weak to



stand up. Even pulling up her pants was more effort than she could manage, she was in such a state. In the middle of the fog of that illness, a part of her realized that if she didn't get help, she would die. So, she finally went to the hospital where she was given fluids and other medication for 16 hours. It has taken her nearly a year to recover, but she's survived.

I wish I could say that my mom's story was unique. But it isn't. It is a story that is playing out in throughout this country and the world, every single day. In small towns and inner cities, mothers are going without food so their kids can eat. They are barely scraping

by but never allowing their children to realize they are poor.

Life is a feast. It's a banquet table of plusses and minuses. Birth and death. Fires. Floods. Broken promises and flattened hearts. Tender mercies and small joys. Yet from that broad menu of experiences comes a capacity for happiness, and an appreciation for beauty, art, and the natural and spiritual world.

This is a world that contains contrast. And the contrast we experience tells us what feels right to us and what doesn't. If you'd never experienced weakness, you would not recognize true strength. As my mom learned when she was still a tiny child, true strength is not physical force or dominance. True strength is kindness, gentleness, grace. She learned from the animals and people she loved, and from the books she read, that the world she knew was not the only world there was.

True strength understands and endures physical and emotional agony. True strength seeds in loss, in the crevices that pull open and reveal our grit whenever we experience something we don't believe we can survive. Like water falling onto a rock gradually pierces that rock, our life experiences soften and shape us. They make us stronger than we ever imagined we could be.

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Me, Myself and I

Mara Ray Michael

There's a revolution going on out there. Or rather, it's going on *within*. Have you heard? It's all about a crazy little thing called love. *Self-love*.

I grew up watching movies that center around a girl waiting for her true love to make her dreams come true. We have all had these fantasies. And it's only natural as we get older to be curious about romance. But as you've probably already figured out, that romance you've been waiting for isn't going to ride in on a white horse.

No, the romance you've been waiting for starts with the person in the mirror: You.

Personally, it took awhile for me to realize that the problems people have in relationships stem from a lack within the self. People go through relationships like socks, thinking that once they find the right person, they will feel complete; they will have found their happy ending.

But it doesn't work that way. People get so wrapped up in that dream of a happy ending, they forget about where to begin.

Love begins with the self. It's simple when you finally realize it. How can you possibly love another if you never learned to love yourself? You can't. And that's okay. There's nothing wrong with that. It's a process. Your entire life has actually prepared you for this very journey. Past heartbreaks made you stronger, wiser. They have exposed you to your own heart, so that you may see just how wild and truly beautiful it really is.

Guy Winch, a psychologist,

speaker, and author compares self-love and self-esteem to an emotional immune system. He claims that the higher our self-esteem, the more resilient we are to rejection, stress, and anxiety. "In other words, when our self-esteem is low, our emotional immune system functions less effectively in a variety of ways, making it harder for us to deal with common

"The romance you've been waiting for starts with the person in the mirror: You."

psychological assaults when we encounter them."

Winch offers three different kinds of exercises that can help with boosting self-esteem and generating self-love. These



exercises revolve around self-compassion, self-affirmations, and personal empowerment.

The practice of self-compassion begins with the elimination of judgment. Basically,

cut yourself some slack! Self-love is all about accepting yourself completely, allowing you to try new things without constant criticism.

Self-affirmations help with compassion because they help to rewire unhealthy thought patterns. Listen to the way you talk about yourself in your head; be kind. By creating and stating positive affirmations to yourself, you put your own attitude in check. For example, next time you look in the mirror and find yourself putting down your body, say to yourself, "I am beautiful just as I am." Individualize your affirmations; keep them simple and specific and say them with passion.

The next step is taking action and establishing personal empowerment. Do things you've always wanted to do. Try new things. Take interest in your health and wellness. Embrace your unique interests. Speak your truth. *Make time for yourself*. Write. Take a bubble bath. Go on a walk. Treat yourself to coffee or tea and just ponder. Explore the vast being that is *you*.

Only when we begin this journey can we embrace our full potential as individuals. Only when we explore ourselves freely with love and care are we ready to share ourselves with others. Only then will we attract other individuals that our hearts are able to connect with.

You are everything you want to be. You are all you need. *You* are the person you've been waiting for.

So go on and live happily ever after, you sexy beast you.

The Little Deer

Shavawn M. Berry

By all accounts, Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo, had a life that was bittersweet.

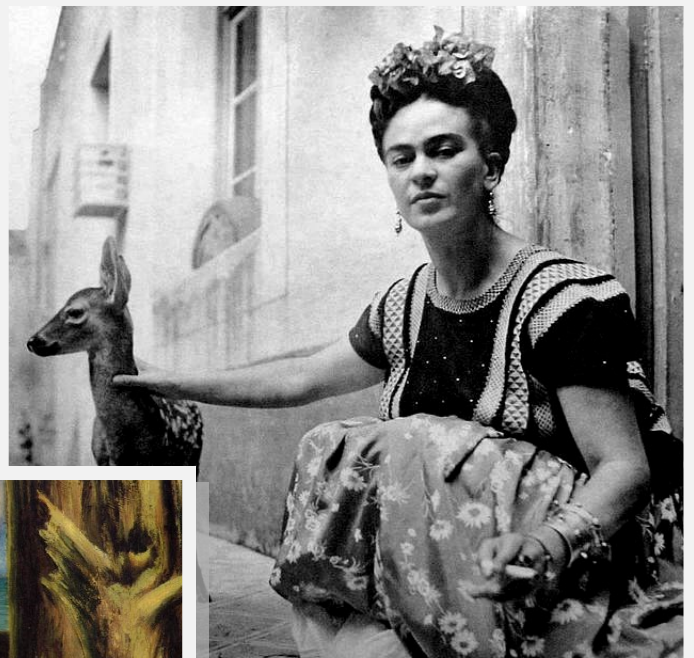
Kahlo's life changed forever while she was still quite young, when a trolley accident left her crippled and, for most of her life, bedridden from her extensive internal injuries. She did nearly all of her paintings while wearing a body cast around her torso, propped up in bed in such a way that she could see herself in the mirror that hung at an angle above her.

The accident made it impossible for her to have children and forged her life-long love for exotic pets. She treated her pets like children, and featured them in many of her self-portraits.

If you know Kahlo's work, you know it centered around her pain, her desire to give birth, and her tumultuous relationship with her husband, Diego Rivera. I discovered Kahlo's work while living in New York City. They did a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1990 that brought many of the most well-known works together. Of all of Frida's paintings, the one that most spoke to me was *The Little Deer*.

In it (above) Kahlo depicts a deer in a wooded area, shot with many

arrows. Kahlo's head replaces the stag's, indicating her identification with the badly wounded animal. Life shot her. It pierced her skin repeatedly and left her for dead. Her accident defined her life. Her physical



agony colored all that she did as an artist. Yet, her ability to translate that pain, that terrible brutality, is a large part of why her work still feels contemporary and important. Kahlo's strength — as a woman and artist — was in her ability to bridge those two worlds. The world of isolation and despair she felt trapped in a physical body that no longer served her, and the ability to take that pain and make it real for anyone viewing her paintings.

I remember standing in front of *The Little Deer* for quite some time, gingerly pulling the arrows out of my own chest as I stared into her haunting face.

Frida understood the agony and the ecstasy of life. She 'winked at me' from that canvas. In the corner of it she painted the word 'carma' as if she understood that aspect of her personal suffering as well. It was as if she knew she'd been branded by all of life's terrible fires, but she'd lived to tell the whole world.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Joel Armijo

Have you ever wondered why you're with your partner? What makes you want to stay? What happens when you aren't happy anymore? Dysfunctional relationships can sometimes develop from something that seemed perfect at first. All the sudden, the relationship takes a turn for the worse. When that happens, what are some signs that can pinpoint trouble?

Warning Sign #1: Trust issues.

Ultimately, trusting your partner is the basis for a prosperous relationship. If you have the inclination to constantly check their phone or e-mail, what does that say about you? Without trust, you cannot ever fully appreciate the person you're with. Communication is key. Talk to your partner, don't let your

imagination run wild. Opening up the lines of communication within your relationship will allow you to be more understanding of each other's needs and wants.

Warning Sign #2: Stagnancy.

Relationships have to be fluid. You cannot expect to stay the same or always be happy. Life changes and you have to be willing to adapt. Every day is not great and your partner is a flawed human being.

Try a new hobby with your

partner to refresh your relationship and learn more about each other. Doing new things together bring you closer and allows you to share more positive experiences together. Be willing to try new things. When your relationship is moving, it cannot become stagnant.

Warning Sign #3: When it's good, it's

worst, is also where you have to call forth your inner strength. Staying with someone and working through whatever issues you're having can make you strong; however, you must be able to say enough is enough. You have to look at the relationship, at yourself, and what you want in life and decide: is it worth it?

As for me, my once dysfunctional relationship has improved. I've been with my



great, but when it's bad, it's horrid.

Maybe you don't see it as drama- it may just seem like ordinary life to you, and therein lies the problem: You have become so accustomed to a certain difficult situation that it seems natural to you. It's time to recognize what's dragging you down and it's time to do something about it.

This may be the hardest part of all. Should you stay or should you go?

When things are at their

boyfriend for almost nine months. Although we've had our ups and downs, we have managed to stay together. For the longest time, I didn't understand why we couldn't talk about our feelings. Finally, we sat down together and discussed exactly what we wanted and what we needed from each other in order to continue our relationship. We are now much more honest and accepting.

I'm not saying it was easy, but in the end, we had the strength to stick it out.

I, for one, am glad we did.

Building Strong Bonds

Sarah Anand Anma

We are a bootstrapping culture.

Generally, we see a problem as being external to us then we tackle it head-on.

This is only so effective. In relationships, 99.9% of all problems stem from within the individual. While it is much easier to spot someone else's wrongdoing, there is very little we can do to change the other.

All relationships are mirrors that reflect back at us something inside which could use some attention. If you are feeling neglected, what small part of you has upheld the belief that you don't feel supported or lovable? If you are feeling angered by your beloved, how are you also angry with yourself? Without even realizing, we can be angry with ourselves for simply being in that situation, or picking someone who "would do that to me!"

In the realm of relationships, we are emotional and irrational creatures. When we try to solve relationship problems with the intellect, it is the wrong tool for the job. Too often, the rational part of us tries to figure out what to do or how to fix things. When we reside only in the intellect, we neglect the emotional part of us that simply wants some attention—usually a part that has been requesting attention for decades.

If we can simply open up to the idea that perhaps all we need is to sit quietly and allow for the discomfort of the experience, then

all sorts of miraculous things can happen.

This is not for the faint of heart. It demands a commitment to being fully human. As a culture, we go to extreme lengths to avoid these feelings: over eating, over spending, drug and alcohol addiction, constant use of electronics, to name a few.

I recently heard a couple who had been married for fifty years that their secret to success was that



In the realm of relationships, we are emotional and irrational creatures. When we try to solve relationship problems with the intellect, it is the wrong tool for the job.

they knew they were simply two imperfect people who refused to give up on each other.

Embedded in that is also a refusal to give up on oneself. A great way to do that is to allow yourself the fullness of your humanity without inflicting it upon others.

Sharing one's imperfections without blaming others for them, is

a beautiful gift to the world. When we come from a place of vulnerability *and* responsibility, opposing 'sides' in our relationships can be eliminated and replaced with deep, heartfelt connections. That is how we forge strong relationships. That is how we reveal our strength.

Credit: Art Work, "Heaven" by Christian Schloe

Elizabeth II: Fate's Queen

Donald Tripp

When you're the Queen of England, you need to have some sort of a backbone.

Elizabeth has not had to deal with, say, the invading French like her ancestors did. She did not have to lead the English Navy against the Spanish Armada. She hasn't had to deal with the threat of being beheaded by a certain robust Tudor monarch. But does that mean she is not as strong as any of her predecessors? Of course not.

Born in 1926, Elizabeth never really had the throne in her sights. She was third in line for the throne, but given her father's young age at the time could have easily been ousted by a brother.

She lived through one of the most atrocious times in English history – the London Blitz – and set an example for thousands of children across the country in their time of need. She famously said, at age 14, “We are trying to do all we can to help our gallant sailors, soldiers and airmen, and we are trying, too, to bear our share of the danger and sadness of war. We know, every one of us, that in the end all will be well”.

Elizabeth served in the Royal Army in 1943 at the age of 16. She became a mechanic and a driver. She married Prince Phillip Mountbatten, of Denmark and Greece. In 1952, her father, King George VI passed away and, given that she had no brothers, she was



thrust onto the Throne at age 26. Since then, Elizabeth has ruled the country with a very amiable hand. She will, in 2015, become the longest ruling English monarch in history.

So what about all this makes her a strong person? Leading the country, after all, is left to Parliament and the Prime Minister. But the Queen has quite a position in her own way. She is the person that calls for a Prime Minister to form a government. She has led the country through times of trouble in the past 60 years, including Irish Republican Bombings in the 1980's, the Cold War, the Korean War, Vietnam, and now the wars in the Middle East following the attacks on

September 11, 2001.

Still, there are other people who have done the same. Presidents, Prime Ministers, Chancellors... they all have had their fair share of issues to lead a country through. But Elizabeth has seen it all, maintained a level head through it, and kept her family – and her country – together. She has numerous children and recently became a great-grandmother with the birth of Prince William and Kate Middleton's son. Like her, he will one day rule the country. Hopefully, he will look to Elizabeth and her reign as a guide on how to handle himself – and the monarchy – in a progressive, level-headed fashion.

Some people would scoff at the Queen because of her private tendencies, her small demeanor and her sometimes-unpopular actions and viewpoints. Despite that, Elizabeth II has stayed strong and kept the now infamous saying – Keep Calm and Carry On – true to herself and to her country.



Elizabeth I: The Golden Queen

Donald Tripp



When your father is King Henry VIII, you need strength to take over the kingdom. Especially given that he considered you illegitimate and had a hand in your mother's murder.

Elizabeth I came to power in England in 1558 and ruled for 55 years. Her reign was based on trust in her closest counselors to make decisions for the country.

While she was a Protestant and came to power after years of bloody conflicts between Protestants and Catholics, she was moderate in her beliefs. Unlike her sister Mary, she did not carry out systematic extermination of her Catholic rivals.

Elizabeth's reign is known as the Elizabethan Era. It stands for a time in which drama, literature, and sea power flourished. Her greatest victory came with the defeat of the Spanish

"I have the heart of a man, not a woman, and I am not afraid of anything."

~ Elizabeth I

Armada in 1588. This is considered one of the greatest sea battles ever fought.

Elizabeth was a strong woman. She spent her entire life without a husband or children, choosing to devote herself fully to the crown.

She took control of a country split by religious warfare and quelled the fighting, setting a moderate and accepting example for her people. She led the English Navy to the height of its power and brought about huge advancements in the cultural and social lifestyle of England.

It is fitting, then, that the present day Queen of England named after this great matriarch. She took the title of Queen Elizabeth the second when she ascended to the throne.

You're Stronger Than You Know

Shavawn M. Berry

Face it.

It is easy to give up.

It takes no real talent or effort to collapse in despair. It's a simple proposition to pretend that you cannot call forth your inner reserves or stand up and fight for your life. That requires nothing of you.

Whether you believe it or not, strength (the ability to persevere in the face of difficulties) is actually a quality we are all born with. Just making it through our own birth proves it. Birth is one of the most stressful experiences we go through, and yet we survive. Our heads may be a tad pointy and our eyesight a tad blurry, but we *arrive*.

So.

That must mean something. We must have a certain amount of strength, a certain amount of *wild oomph* that allows us to join the river of life. We must have a certain amount of grace, fortune, and sheer will to make that incredible journey.

Courage is, therefore, our birthright.

Yes. It's true that once we are here, we face a myriad of



obstacles and difficulties that sometimes stymie our happiness. *Why did that happen? What the hell went wrong? How on earth did I end up in this mess?* We seem to think that troubles only happen

to *other people*.

Not us. Not today.

All of this is as understandable as it is short-sighted.

“Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Life is about confronting problems. It just is. The sooner we realize that and get cool with the fact that we will be dealing with backed up plumbing, and cars breaking down, and babies with dirty diapers, and casseroles

that we inadvertently torched, the better we will actually feel about the vicissitudes of our lives. What makes a real difference in all of this is our attitude, and our willingness to call forth the strength we possess, in order do battle with our lesser selves. (That whiny 'why me' part of us. The monkey mind that thinks that we should spend our days mapping pointless back roads in search of our egomaniacal twin.)

Humanity would never have survived for hundreds of thousands of years if we are, in fact, a bunch of lily-livered

Simply believe
you are strong enough
to handle
whatever happens to you.

weaklings. Fear would have wiped us out a long time ago while we sat huddled around a campfire inside a damp cave. However, you and I both know, that didn't happen.

Instead, we did what we needed to do to survive. We brought forth grit and we took one-step forward, one day at a time. We flexed our interior muscles and strengthened them. We learned to forge our spirits, our bodies and our minds. We believed in our ability to not only survive, but to thrive. We polished our inner lives even when facing illness,

devastation, or death.

Mind you, I am not saying go it alone. I am not saying don't ask for help. I am not saying don't reach for someone's hand when facing a crisis. We all need help from

time to time. Asking for help when you need it is, in fact, a sign of real strength.

Over the long course of history, we shaped ourselves and built steely, flexible backbones. As a result, there's nothing we cannot accomplish or change.

There's something comforting and soft about our inherent strength. It stretches us and pushes us, every single day.

It wakes up the best in us. It lets us go out into the world as *an example* rather than a cautionary tale.

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Keep Going, It Gets Better

Darrell King

I have always wondered what it would take to commit suicide. How much pain would I have to be in to think of ending my own life? How alone would I have to feel?

In September of 2010, media coverage reported on the suicides of five gay teenagers who took their lives in response to the bullying from their peers for being gay. The five teenagers included Billy Lucas, Tyler Clementi, Seth Walsh, Asher Brown, and Raymond Chase whose ages ranged from 13 to 19 years old.

Though not the first, Tyler Clementi's suicide was the most popularized story reported by the

media after news spread that Clementi committed suicide after his roommate broadcast his private sexual interactions on the Internet. A student at Rutgers University, Tyler was just 18 years old when he jumped off of the George Washington Bridge. Tyler told his parents he was gay just days before leaving for university; two weeks into his first semester, he committed suicide.

Perhaps if these teenagers had felt there was someone they could turn to whom they believed would listen to and understand their pain, the suicides of these young teenagers could have been prevented.

Dan Savage, noted for his advice column, "Savage Love," launched the *It Gets Better Project* along with husband Terry Miller in response to the suicide of another gay teenager, Billy Lucas. *It Gets Better* aims to reach out to LGBTQ youth who are currently dealing with the same types of bullying that Tyler Clementi, Billy Lucas, and thousands of other gay teens are facing all across the world.

LGBTQ persons continue to face the bias and cultural stigma of not being "straight." "Straight" continues to represent the norm, or rather, the expected definition of what it means to be normal in popular society. After all, if a man happens to be gay, that becomes



STAY
STRONG
IT
GETS
BETTER

“One life lost in this senseless way is tragic. Four lives lost is a crisis. Things will get easier, people’s minds will change and you should be alive to see it.” ~ Ellen Degeneres

his signifier despite other definitive qualities and personality traits. And, though society continues to progress towards more acceptance of LGBTQ people, equality remains at the forefront of current social issues within our own government.

Since its founding, *It Gets Better* has attracted the attention of public figures who have in turn contributed to the project by recording their own version of an *It Gets Better* video, where they offer words of encouragement and elaborate on their own personal experiences with bullying. These videos show that the suffering and pain of being bullied is only temporary.

People such as Larry King, Zachary Quinto, Lady Gaga, Kathy Griffin, and even the likes of President Obama and his wife Michelle have contributed videos encouraging at risk youth to stay strong, to stick it out no matter how bad it may seem because later in life, it will get better.

Cultural change cannot rely on the efforts of celebrities to push forward the message of hope. A quick YouTube search shows roughly 19 million videos, which in some way reference the *It Gets Better Project*. Regular people like you and I have the ability to contribute to and discuss difficult topics such as our own personal

experiences with bullying, whether for being gay, overweight, biracial/multiracial or otherwise non-Caucasian, handicapped, or mentally disabled. Our voices can save lives.

Though Lucas had never come out or admitted to being gay, his peers teased him mercilessly. Billy’s body was discovered in his grandmother’s barn where he had hung himself.

The discussion of equality continues to weigh on the American conscience. As a topic, it has been discussed since well before our nation was founded; we broke away from King George III of Great Britain and founded a nation based on equal principles, followed by the emancipation of slavery, and established the foundation of African-American and women’s rights. Now, as we continue to discuss the validity of legal marriage in the United States as being a free and equal opportunity for all citizens, despite sexual preference, the topic of equality is more important than ever. Just as we as a nation have overcome many of these regrettable inequalities historically, we will continue to overcome the new and equally unjust realities of ignorance until they no longer exist.

It is an inscrutable reality that we as a culture are continuing

to stereotype and categorize people in this day and age. It would seem that all of the hard work of founding a nation that is based on equality is in vain, for we as a nation still have a long way to go in the journey of becoming a truly equal state. There is ambivalence amongst people who remain ignorant to the need for change, which we as a nation must continue to go through. Lives can be saved and inequality can only be remedied by learning to support and encourage the youth of the world to keep moving forward despite the obstacles that they may face in their lives.

Suicide is an unnecessary and regrettable action, however, we can learn from these tragic incidents. The suicides of the five teenagers, Billy Lucas, Tyler Clementi, Seth Walsh, Asher Brown, and Raymond Chase, have sparked a discussion that has begun to influence the way that people think of, and see people who are different than them. The world is not black and white, and people are capable of change. Although we can’t see it right now, one day the world will right itself. And when it does we’ll love each other the way we should. **Right now, if you’re hurting, I love you. Keep going; it gets better.**

The Places You'd Never Think to Look

Mara Ray Michael

Do you remember being a kid on that first nerve-racking day of kindergarten? Do you remember shyly trying to make friends on the playground? Or if you weren't all-that-athletic, the absolute torture abbreviated as P.E.? I do. When we're children, we think that as we get older we'll get stronger by losing that innocence and vulnerability. Well, we were right about one thing: innocence does fade. But vulnerability is something that never goes away. Not in the least. Life is just one big first day of school.

We all know vulnerability. But we pretend not to. We often ignore it, numb it, and avoid situations that trigger it. We distract ourselves and have plenty of ways to do so. Social media. Television. Alcohol. The list goes on. But here's something you need to know: Vulnerability has gotten an undeserving bad rap.

There is no life without vulnerability. To be alive is to be vulnerable. Brene Brown, an American scholar, author, and public speaker, gave a *Ted Talk* on this very subject. Since its initial release it has become tremendously popular, attracting over 11 million views.

The talk is titled *The Power of Vulnerability*, and in it Brown reveals that we cannot hope to ever have a true connection, with ourselves or with anyone else, if we are not willing to be vulnerable. "In order for

things to happen we have to allow ourselves to be seen. Really seen."

Her whole message is about embracing vulnerability and realizing that what makes us vulnerable makes us beautiful. But it often doesn't feel that way. The



shame and fear that come along with vulnerability usually manifests in thoughts that center around us not being good enough. These feelings strip us of our sense of self-worth. Often subconsciously, we accept the lie that we are unworthy of connection.

"You cannot selectively numb emotion," Brown explains. So when we numb these

unpleasant emotions associated with vulnerability, we numb everything else, too. We lose our full capacity to feel joy, love, compassion, and intimacy. In her ten years of research on vulnerability, Brown has

discovered the remedy by studying people who fully embrace vulnerability. She calls these people "whole-hearted"; they have the "courage to be themselves" and "the compassion to be kind to themselves and then to others", because we can only love others as much as we love ourselves.

Whatever you are feeling, love yourself for feeling it. You are one of a kind. Everything you feel exists to teach you something. So, instead of

feeling guilty for feeling scared or insecure, really observe those emotions. Don't react to them right away. Just take a deep breath. The only way to get through it is to *get through it*. We all have insecurities and by realizing you're not alone, that your vulnerability is not only natural but essential, you invite in opportunities for growth. You allow the full spectrum of life, with all its richness and vibrancy, to radiate through you.

It won't be easy at first. But the hardest things in life offer the greatest rewards. All the challenges and insecurities are there to strengthen you and reveal your full potential.

Show up for the lessons life throws at you and the rewards will come, often from the places you'd never think to look.

"It's quite ironic that in life, the trait that brings out the best in you and makes you strong, is actually your weakness."

Be Your Own Hero

Caitlen Welch

“It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.”

~ e. e. cummings

What he should have said is it takes *strength* to grow up and become who you really are. In a world filled with advertisements of what we should look like, celebrities we constantly fail to measure up to, and social media sites that reinforce our inadequacies, it's no wonder teens and grown-ups alike have less self-esteem than ever before. According to a recently conducted study by the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, 676 women and 335 men were surveyed to help determine the link between Facebook usage and self-esteem. The average age of both men and women was 32, and the study found inscrutable evidence that the more a person used Facebook, the lower their self-esteem.

This link was seen because spending time on Facebook means constantly setting yourself up for comparison through a bombardment of pictures, status updates, and “likes.” While comparison is inevitable, it never encourages us to become better versions of ourselves, and instead places emphasis on what we lack.

Historically, it was

Be the heroine of your life, not the victim.

~ Nora Ephron

together of heroes-*demigods*- and role models is common and problematic. We not only adore our heroes; we now long to be them.” This is true for many women who long to be famous actresses or models and true for men who desire to be rich, professional sports players.

The best

remedy to counteract this archaic role model ideology is to become your own role model and best version of yourself. The way to do this is to contemplate what values and ideals are important to you. What traits do you admire in other people? Figure out what these are, then apply them to your life right now. By doing this, instead of using other people as measuring sticks, you focus on what's most important. You. If we all did this, we'd be a lot happier, stronger, and less hateful. Just think, if we stopped idealizing others and holding them up to role model status, people



like Miley Cyrus could catch a break from all the hate. Who said you have to be a role model for others?

advisable to find a role model to emulate, look up to, and adore, but not anymore. According to Donna Furber, author, public speaker, and psychotherapist, having a role model is detrimental to one's self-esteem. She adds, “This merging

Be your own hero.

Contributors' Bios



Sarah Anand Anna, Intuitive Relationship Coach and founder of Art of Relationship uses a proven process to optimize all relationships, especially in one's love life. Whether you are a single person, frustrated by your current results or in a loving relationship that yearns for deeper and more meaningful connection, Sarah's compassionate and effective step-by-step approach will get you the results you crave. To get your free CD, "How to Attract and Grow the Love of Your Life," and receive weekly tips and tools visit <http://www.artofrelationship.net>.



Maria Banuelos is currently a student at the School of Letters and Sciences in Arizona State University. In May 2012, Maria received her Associate's degree in General Business from Chandler-Gilbert Community College. When Maria is not working or studying, she enjoys fishing and leading a rather adventurous life. Although Maria has absolutely no idea how to swim, she still has managed to go tubing on the Salt River and the Colorado River. Maria also spends her time driving around her home state of Arizona. She enjoys

discovering secret spots that no one else really knows about.

Joel Armijo is a junior at ASU majoring in Communications and minoring in English. He first started editing in his AP Journalism class in High School, and ever since, he's been passionate about writing and grammar. He also likes to get dirty. He goes hiking and camping in his free time. The fresh air and nature refresh him in a way that nothing else does. Each hiking trail or hidden cave or desert oasis fuels his enjoyment in life.



Darrell King is a junior English Lit major at Arizona State University with a soft spot for YA fiction; one might even call it a guilty pleasure! In an attempt to graduate early and begin a career in publishing, he has taken full credit loads each semester, including summer sessions. He even has a study abroad foreign language immersion program under his belt. This past summer, he travelled to Quebec City where he completed two semesters worth of French in just five weeks. Darrell is an Arizona native and hopes to move to New York City post-graduation.

Julianne White is a fulltime instructor at Arizona State University in the English Department. While Dr. White really loves the literature of the British Victorian and Modern periods, she is especially devoted to the poetry of Yeats and the idea of metaphor. She loves Shakespeare, Native American literature, film studies, and analyzing the rhetoric of soap operas and game shows. In spite of all that, she says that if she could go back and live her life over again, she would have a tough time choosing between becoming a forensic pathologist/medical examiner and a wildlife biologist, devoted to the study



and conservation of the world's tiger population.



Shavawn M. Berry, Managing Editor is also a writer and a poet. Her work has been published in *Journey of the Heart—Women's Spiritual Poetry*, *Black Fox Literary Magazine*, *Olentangy Review*, *Rebelle Society*, *Vagina—The Zine*, *Poet Lore*, *The Cancer Poetry Project 2*, *Ebsco Poetry database*, *Westview*, *California Quarterly*, *Synapse*, *Poetry Seattle*, *Blue Mountain Arts*, *North Atlantic Review*, and *Concho River Review*., to name a few. She teaches writing and editing fulltime at Arizona State University. Her blog, *Falling Into Wonderland*, has thousands of readers throughout the world. *Kalliope* has been, and continues to be, a labor of love for her.

"You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have."
~ Bob Marley

Like My Post!

Maria Banelos

Have you ever met someone who is in desperate need of attention and relies on a social network to gain it? It's like they can't function without it; they are glued to their computer, phone, and tablet, anything with an Internet connection. They allow the social networks to govern their everyday lives and feel insecure without it.

I see this firsthand with my little sister; she is always on her social networks sharing her life with the world. Her whole life revolves around her social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Myspace, the list go on and on.

During family dinners, she's the one on her phone while everyone is enjoying their meals. She posts a photo of the meal which includes a quick description: "I am currently eating with the family. Look at my delicious lobster tail. So yummy! Aren't you jealous?!" God forbid somebody comments on her photo! Her sporadic laughter when there was nothing funny mentioned during dinner is really something else.

Here's the thing about my sister. She is currently sitting at over 2,000 friends on Facebook and over 600 followers on Twitter. Talk about celebrity status! Not only is she constantly using her phone applications, computer and tablet to share her life with the world, she absolutely loves the attention she receives and is glad so many people are interested in what she has to say.

Life for her is all good and



"She associates her self-worth with the attention she receives through social networks."

dandy until she loses a follower. At that moment, her life is slowly coming to an end. She simply doesn't know how to properly react; she can't think straight, can't eat, and doesn't go out. Nothing is right. An average person would simply let it be but she goes off and tells the whole household. My parents know, my brother knows, even my cousins know! You can tell that her emotional strength is disintegrating. When she finally finds out who stopped following her, she emotionally explodes; she gets into arguments with the person who stopped following her and ultimately stops talking to them completely.

Her obsession with her social networks creates a huge impact in her everyday life, as she associates her self-worth through the attention she receives.

This social media mania has been getting out of control and users tend to forget the true importance of it. People need to remember that the purpose of these social network sites is to share your life with your friends and have fun. Remember, social networking doesn't have to control you. If you need it, sporadically take days off and unplug. Do other things. Remember, in 2013, with this oversharing world, less is more.

Strength and How I Got It

Julianne White

Starting in February of 2009, my husband began to notice a constant pain in his left side, low, in between the waist and the hip. He kept asking me, “What’s on this side of the body? Is that my appendix? Could I have appendicitis?”

We had no idea, of course, that this was just the beginning of a long, painful odyssey. Ten emergency room visits, more CT scans than I can remember, about 7 or 8 surgeries, and 2 life-threatening complications left us exhausted, but glad to be alive. It became second nature for us to leap off the couch at the first sign of a twinge in his side, grab the “go bag,” and drive as fast as possible to the hospital.

In the midst of all this, I would: drive to school in the morning; teach my classes, hold office hours, chat with students after class, and go to meetings; drive to the hospital after school, sit with him and grade while he watched TV; chat with the nurses, orderlies, doctors, x-ray technicians, and sometimes social workers or people bringing in therapy dogs; eat junk out of the “patient care” room or have a meal tray from the cafeteria; then drive home in the evening, clean up after the pride of cats and make sure they had their food, water, and clean kitty boxes, and then finally, sleep. I put thousands of miles on my car, but I can barely remember any of it. We did this for nearly *two years*. Just when we thought he was on the road to wellness, something else would happen, landing us right back in the hospital. For *two years*. During that entire time, it never occurred to me that I could have—or even should have—asked for a substitute teacher to cover my classes. I

promise you, I am not bragging here; I am stating the facts. It never occurred to me, for one minute, to not go to school and do my job. It never even entered my brain.

I was reminded of all this when I was called upon to substitute for another instructor who missed 5 classes due to her husband’s sudden illness. She could not possibly, she said, come back to school two weeks after the emergency. She needed more time. The thought of doing so was more than she could bear, even though her husband’s surgery was over, he was home, and the emergency had

mental commitment to her family. She has been my role model, my strength, and my example.

Her own mother, my grandmother, had my mother during the depths of the Great Depression, in 1931. This was a time when all of her siblings (13 of them) lived together on the farm in a two-bedroom clapboard house that had no indoor plumbing, no electricity, and a wood stove. They lived on vegetables from the garden, eggs from the chickens, and milk directly from the cow. The women all slept in one bedroom, and the children in the other. The

[My Mother’s] two mantras were, “We make the best of what we are given,” and “We do what we have to do.” She lived these mantras, every day, never wavering in her emotional, physical, and mental commitment to her family. She has been my role model, my strength, and my example.

passed.

I have been asking myself for the last couple of days, why and how was I able to do what I did?

I credit my mother, who is Strength Incarnate. My childhood was marked by having just enough—just enough food, shelter, and clothing, just enough school supplies, and just enough medical and dental care, *but never any more than that*. Her two mantras were, “We make the best of what we are given,” and “We do what we have to do.” She lived these mantras, every day, never wavering in her emotional, physical, and

men either slept on the floor of the living room or kitchen, or in the barn. They left every day in search of work, and would come home at night with pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters to show for their efforts. With that change, they would purchase flour, sugar, and coffee. They survived those trying times, went to war, saved the world from the Nazi threat, and carried on.

Apparently, strength is in the very DNA I inherited. Like my family before me, I do whatever I have to do.

Kalliope: Beautiful Voiced

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