

The purpose of this poem is to help you discover the power inside you. Power is having the ability to produce the results you desire. I will lead you through what I believe are the five steps to creating a powerful future so you can discover your own free spirit and let it blossom.

JOURNEY OF COURAGE: Change and Challenge

The journey of life is full of detours and road blocks,
somewhere in your journey the road divides...
you must choose which road to take.

You stop and think about your past and your future,
you make the choice to change...
change is hard; change is scary, but
change is the only road to the future.

You begin to focus on your future,
in the past you lived your life
focused on the needs of other people...
now you must think and create your future.

Listen to the things you learned in the past,
let your new thoughts create your future,
you are the only one who can create your future.

Think about what you enjoy doing and what makes you happy,
what you think and do is what you create,
what you put into action,
is what you will become.

*By Jackie Jacobi
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I'm going to break the poem down into its five parts and show you how to find the personal power that will lead you along your *Journey of Courage*.

I see this as five steps to creating a powerful future. My purpose is to help you discover the power inside you. Power is having the ability to produce the results you desire. Power is created by discovering how your thoughts and actions work together to create who you are. Power is the ability to be in control of your own destiny and future. When you discover the power inside yourself you will be able to achieve your dreams.

You have personal power, you may have never thought about it or used it but you do have it. In 1994 I was a Regional Director for the National Association for Female Executives. I was in New York City for the annual Director's Retreat and saw this sign while riding the subway.

It's never too late to be who we might have been.

--George Elliott

Those eleven words have had a great impact on the way I have structured my life since then. I had begun my Journey of Courage but had not completed it or developed my personal power. It is a journey and it doesn't happen overnight but with perseverance you will have personal power.

The dictionary defines courage as, "*That quality of mind or spirit enabling one to meet danger, or opposition with fearlessness, calmness and firmness.*" My definition of courage is, "*Having a stubborn determination to be happy.*" What is Courage? Courage is:

C*onfronting the dragons*

O*vercoming the obstacles*

U*nderstanding the risks*

R*eally living*

A*lways believing*

G*oing the distance*

E*xpecting the best*

1. The journey of life is full of detours and road blocks, somewhere in your journey the road divides... you must choose which road to take.

What personal power do you have that helps you make it through the detours and road blocks of life? **Character.**

The dictionary defines character this way, "*Moral strength, self-discipline, good reputation, fortitude (refers to the courage that permits you to patiently endure misfortune and pain).*"

Your character is the very essence of who you are and what you value in life. It expresses the type of person you are and is the guiding force behind the way you live your life. When you make decisions about family or work your character determines the kind of choices you will make. Your character expresses your ethics. Ethics is not an abstract or a static concept. On the contrary, ethics affects and gives meaning to, our everyday life and the decisions we make. We constantly apply our values and moral convictions to our actions and decisions, frequently without even being aware of the fact that we are doing so. The clothes we buy, the music we prefer, the way we treat our friends, the books we choose to read -- these and a thousand other everyday activities and decisions, if you analyze them carefully, ultimately relates to our character.

Your character is a good indicator of your future behavior. If you have good character then success will follow. Now each one of us has a different idea of what it means to be successful. What is your definition of success? Success to me is reaching the goals I personally have set for myself and living my life doing the things that I enjoy doing and that make me happy.

You develop good character by what you think, by the choices you make, and by always doing what you believe is right. Simply put, by treating others the way you would like to be treated. A person of character is trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring and a good citizen.

It's important to realize that we can't change the world around us, but we can change our reaction to it. Don't let other people influence you, if you believe strongly about something don't be afraid to stand up for what you believe in. Difficulty, challenge and adversity are the building blocks of character. Failure is nothing more than a learning experience on the road to success.

*People seem not to see that
their opinion of the world is
also a confession of character.*

--Emerson

**2. You stop and think about your past and your future,
you make the choice to change...
change is hard; change is scary, but
change is the only road to the future.**

What personal power do you have that helps you make the choice to change? **Intuition.**

According to the dictionary intuition is a "*direct perception of truth, or fact, independent of any reasoning process, a keen and quick insight.*" It has been described as a "hunch", a "gut feeling", a "funny sensation deep inside", a "knowledge that goes beyond all understanding". It is a private exchange of communication between you and yourself. Intuition is part of you; the knowledge it communicates comes to you through sensations, desires, emotions, and feelings. "*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb*" (Psalm 139:13).

Intuition is to know something without having any facts or data to back it up. Intuition gives you the wisdom to recognize that strong feeling in your inner spirit that tells you "something just isn't right about this". Then you begin to really analyze the pros and cons of the situation and recognize the strong urge that helps you come to a conclusion and a decision.

If you learn to use your feelings and intuition you will be able to think more clearly about new challenges, become a better decision maker and problem solver. Have you ever heard the term emotional intelligence? This

is really what intuition is and it will help you increase your intellectual capital. Knowledge is power. You will be wise to develop your information power, the power that stems from having special data and knowledge. The extent to which one has access to information is what makes her especially influential. Trust your intuition to be the source of truth, listen to yourself as you would listen to a loved one. Your own day-to-day information comes from individual perceptions, awareness, visual and hearing fields; in short, to whatever you give your immediate attention. You can learn more about your intuition by:

1. Acknowledging your feelings. Who you spend your time with and what you do says a lot about you. How do you feel when you are with a person. How do you feel when you are working, involved with your hobbies, or spending time with friends. Decide if you need to make a change and spend more time with the person and things that make you feel good and happy.
2. Listening to your inner voice. Go deep inside to a place where only you can talk with you. You have an incredible ability to create circumstances by your thoughts. Understand the law of attraction-- each day notice the things that are already working and pay attention to them.
3. Channel your feelings into constructive communication or action. You have decided you need a change, so what are you going to do about it? Get some support and walk away from the negativity in your life.

The really valuable thing is intuition.

--Albert Einstein

**3. You begin to focus on your future,
in the past you lived your life
focused on the needs of other people...
now you must think and create your future.**

What personal power do you have that helps you understand your past and focus on your future? **Self-knowledge (focusing on the inner you).**

Heather Whitestone, Miss America 1995 said, "*Just be yourself: each star in the heavens is different from other stars.*" Heather is deaf. Learn to love yourself first. You may ask, "*How do I love myself?*" The greatest love for yourself is to fulfill your dreams, carry out your vision and use the gifts you have been endowed with. You have the power to find your gift that is entirely within your capability, interest, and talent to do.

Have you ever wondered, "*Who am I?*" You may be a daughter, wife, or mother to other people but who are you to yourself? Are you working on the goals that you set for yourself or are you letting others take up all your time and energy so there is nothing left for you? You may be a different person than you were five or ten years ago but are you the person you want to be? Our culture puts an emphasis on doing and achieving; but stop and think, "*Are you getting out of life what you want?*" "*What do you want to accomplish, and "What do you want to be?"*" If you are depressed it might be that you have lost control and road blocks keep appearing that keep you

from doing what you want; the place where your inner spirit wants to lead you.

Make room for yourself and listen to yourself, exercise trust in your inner strength, that part of you which knows and manifests what you desire. Be truthful to yourself and accept yourself, you may have experienced abuse and lived in poverty, accept the truth about everything that has happened to you. Because the experiences you have had in your life are what makes you the person you are today. Now you can love yourself and set boundaries as to how you will allow other people to treat you. Loving yourself is to stand in the truth of who you are.

To help find out who you are take a walk or listen to music you like, you might even try dancing to it if you want. Listen to your body - notice what makes you tired and notice what picks you up. Your emotions are your inner guidance system, go toward the things you like and enjoy. Your goal is to be happy in your heart.

Self-knowledge isn't always so easy to uncover because we get all wrapped up in the roles we play. If you identify your own needs then you will know your priorities. One technique I use is to complete a five year plan of action. It incorporates the following five areas of my life:

Family, Education, Personal, Career, and Financial. I decide what is important for me to complete in year 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 in each of the above areas. For example:

Career

2010	Research ideas I have for my own business.
2011	Take classes in small business management.
2012	Decide on the type of business I want to develop.
2013	Write business plan.
2014	Obtain financing and start business.

If you will do a five year plan you will begin to see what you think is important to accomplish in your life, in turn that will tell you what your goals are and who you are.

Another technique is to start some form of a journal to give voice to the inner you. If you don't like to write, make a collage of your feelings by gathering images and words that "*speak*" to you from magazines and pasting them on a piece of paper with the date; collect quotes and jot down how they affect you; use crayons and "*doodles*" to express your mood and feelings; write a song, poem or story. Use your imagination!

To Thine Own Self Be True

--Shakespeare

**4. Listen to the things you learned in the past,
let your new thoughts create your future;
you are the only one who can create your future.**

What personal power do you have that helps you create your future?

Experience.

There's a saying I really like "*Good judgment comes from experience - experience, that comes from bad judgment.*" My definition of learning is a permanent change of behavior as a result of experience. You will discover your wisdom through your experiences.

Wisdom - how do you get it? Life gives us lessons all the time, we call them unpleasant experiences. Take these experiences and learn from them, what do you need to change? To change is also to create. As women we face many changes through out our life's journey: physical changes, role changes, emotional changes, spiritual changes.

Wisdom is not about insight or intelligence. Wisdom is a self appreciation of what things really mean. Researchers say you can absolutely identify the characteristic of a wise person: spirituality, compassion, an ability to step outside of themselves and have a firm purpose in life. You can see it in the young as well as the old.

You will have the power of wisdom when you incorporate your values with your talents and skills, then you will feel like you are moving in your

own special path. Identify your strengths and define your talents. You do have some so don't be afraid to brag on yourself. Because you also have weaknesses and you need to identify those also so you will know what areas you need to work on.

Remember something that happened to you that you thought was negative or bad at the time. But looking back now, what did you learn from the situation? Was it really bad or was it actually good? If you truly learned something you can turn the bad into good. Someone wrote: happiness is the only good, the place to be happy is here - the place to be happy is now - and the quickest way to be happy is to follow your dreams. Can this be the key to wisdom? It's not selfish; rather it is necessary to take care of yourself. If you don't take care of self - self can't take care of anyone else!

Happy people tend to use their passion to control their destiny.

- 😊 Why do you do what you do? Specifically, what is your dream?
- 😊 Are you playing to your strengths? Try different things and study where your successes are.
- 😊 Study people who have your strengths and learn from them.
- 😊 Don't focus on winning or being successful, focus on feeling good while you are working and the results will follow.
- 😊 Laugh and make someone else laugh each day.
- 😊 Love and be loved - generously and with enthusiasm.
- 😊 When bad events are happening to you try to find the cause and focus on just making that go away.

We should try to think about events in our lives in a neutral way. "Who knows whether it will be good or bad" at the time it happens; only time will tell for sure. It has a lot to do with how you view things. When things go wrong, don't give up. Instead just ask yourself these three magic questions.

1. How did this happen?
2. What can I do to fix it?
3. What can I do so it doesn't happen again?

*The best thing about the future is that
it only comes one day at a time.*

--Abraham Lincoln

5. Think about what you enjoy doing and what makes you happy, what you think and do is what you create, what you put into action, is what you will become.

What personal power do you have that will motivate you into action?

Determination.

Your thoughts are a powerful source of energy. Remember the little train that keeps saying "*I think I can, I think I can, I think I can*". Your thoughts will help you create the life you want. You can create something only if you truly believe you can. Things happen as you begin to think about them and look for them, not necessarily exactly when you are looking for them, or in the way you are looking. But something good will happen if you keep working at what you believe in, and it will happen when you least expect it. Perseverance is your investment and success is your results. The successful woman knows herself well and uses her talents wisely. The successful woman is not looking for success - it finds her - while she is reaching out touching lives and sharing herself with others.

You have determination if:

-  You are in control of your life.
-  You have discovered the person you want to be.
-  You make the choices that affect your life.
-  You have reasons for your decisions.

- ✚ You have taken risks to become who you are.
- ✚ You have learned to forgive instead of blame. Forgiveness does not mean it should not have happened. Forgiveness means you are not going to let what happened in the past keep you frozen from moving into your future. You forgive not for the other person; you forgive to free up yourself.

Let me be very clear about forgiveness, I mean it in the context of letting go of past hurts and fears in order to become the strong and powerful woman that's waiting to emerge. Most women would really like to have a loving relationship with a man. The problems usually occur because men and women sometimes have very different ideas of what a relationship should be like. It is a fact in our society that approximately 50% of all marriages end in divorce.

One reason many marriages end in divorce is because of emotional or physical abuse.

- ✚ Violence will occur at least once in two-thirds of all marriages. (Roy, 1982).
- ✚ Every 15 seconds a woman is physically assaulted within her home. (National Clearinghouse for Defense of Battered Women, 1988).
- ✚ Domestic violence occurs among all races and socioeconomic groups. (Schulman, 1979).

We seem to think that a physical fist is how we define an abusive relationship. But there is also emotional abuse and that's part of the

confusion of being in an abusive relationship. So often there are many good traits in the person. I would advise anyone who is wondering, "Am I in an abusive situation?" to ask yourself these ten questions:

1. Are you a different person than you were when you first entered the relationship?
2. Have you changed in order to accommodate your partner?
3. Are you afraid whenever you argue?
4. Who makes the decisions in your marriage?
5. Have you changed your appearance because he has insisted you do?
6. Have you isolated yourself by no longer seeing your friends or family?
7. Is your partner jealous and controlling?
8. Does he blame you or others for his mistakes and problems?
9. Does he expect you to serve, obey and remain at home?
10. Does he have complete power over the household finances?

If you need to talk with someone about the above questions I am available, you can also reach Women's Haven at (580) 252-5324, or the National Domestic Violence Hot Line (800) 799-7233.

"One research study (by the Center for Disease Control) showed that clergy were the second most often sought source for help after the police following the first battering incident. This study also found that none of the women who contacted the clergy found them most helpful. Another study claims that while the church is the institution most often contacted by battered women, clergy also had the highest negative influence compared to women's groups, psychologists, police, relatives, lawyers, and friends.

(Barnet and LaViolette, 1993 -- as quoted by Steve Storie, Chief

Investigator, Family Violence Unit, Dallas County District Attorney's

Office.)"

The following letter written to "Dear Abby" seems to hit the mark.

Share it with someone you love.

Dear Abby: I am a single, professional man in my late 20's. For about a year I have been trying to expand my circle of female friends. I have recently seen articles stating that many single professional women do not wish to marry. This scares me, because I am looking for someone.

A few weeks ago, it occurred to me that many men act like jerks by trying to push women around. I think some women would think about getting married if they found a man who treated them as intelligent human beings and not as objects. After giving it more thought, I came up with ten guidelines on how I believe men should treat women, and if this is printed, I would like some feedback.

Guidelines for Men

1. Respect her philosophies, goals and ideals. She has a brain. Listen to her ideas and remember them. Make her feel appreciated.
2. Talk with her, not at her. Don't push her. Don't boss her around. Don't make her do anything she does not want to do.
3. Ask for her advice and opinions. Let her talk. Don't interrupt. Be a good listener. Include her in decision-making.
4. Be honest. Never lie to her. Be open about feelings. Apologize for mistakes.
5. Give her space. Don't be a control freak. Remember that she has a professional life as well as other interests. Give her some support. Let her spend time with other friends.
6. Be sensitive to her problems. Help her. Show her you care.
7. Don't call her names. Never hit her. Treat her with respect, caring and trust.
8. Don't compete with her. The two of you have different goals. There is absolutely nothing wrong with a man seeing a woman who has more education and a more prestigious job.

9. Do fun things together. Don't bore her. Don't forget to make her laugh.
10. Should you meet that special someone and the two of you marry, I want to add these two cents:

- a) A wife is not a housekeeper. You need to get off the couch and cook, clean and do laundry. Help out. Remember, marriage is an equal partnership.
- (b) Should the two of you desire children, you should help raise them: Change diapers, clean up, feed them, get up in the middle of the night. Perhaps you could take some leave from work to stay home with the new baby.
- (c) Never force your wife to have sex. That is rape. No means no.

Thanks, Abby, I know this letter is a bit long, but I think it is important. That is how I was brought up to treat people.

■ **A gentleman in Texas**

Dear Gentleman: I agree that what you have to say important. I'm sorry you didn't sign your name. You wouldn't be single long. You'd need police protection from the horde of applicants. **Abby**

Believe in Your Dreams

-- Jackie Jacobi