



We Got Issues! Presents:

The Ten Point

Visionary

Platform for Young Women

a product of 1+1+1=One

intro

“...we all want better lives for ourselves and our families and that requires us to be involved in how decisions are made—especially those that affect us.”

We recognize that every young woman who picks up this booklet may not be interested in politics and probably has no burning desire to become an activist.

However, we all want better lives for ourselves and our families and that requires us to be involved in how decisions are made—especially those that affect us. We can make real changes when we vote in elections. The alternative is to complain from the sidelines about how politicians are ignoring us. By getting involved in our neighborhoods we can reduce crime, get new jobs created, and improve run-down schools. But if we can't be bothered to come out to a local meeting and tell our elected leaders how raggedy things are, it's crazy to think that they are going to be concerned about us and our needs.

For a minute, let's forget about politicians and political parties. Think about the things that are important to you and that would make your life better and more comfortable. You could be concerned about finding affordable housing, childcare, or health insurance. Perhaps you wish that your neighborhood was safer or that the public schools were better. Maybe you need some tuition assistance to further your education or want organic food available in your community—it doesn't matter what your interest is. Whatever you're concerned about, if you're willing to pay attention to that issue and make your voice heard, even in a small way, you've taken a step toward improving your life and the nation.

We Got Issues! (WGI!) is a project of $1+1+1=ONE$, and is an organization dedicated to developing a new type of *feminine*-centered leadership. Feminine-centered leadership uses power to build up people and communities, not tear them down. *WGI!* also seeks to strengthen the collective, not just a few hand-picked individuals.

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Feminine-centered leadership lifts folks up—spiritually and economically. Feminine-centered leaders are not interested in maintaining the status quo. These are visionary women elected officials, visionary women activists, and visionary average Janes who are working to create a world that equally honors and appreciates the spirits, lives, and contributions of men and women.

The *WGI!* National Dialogue & Tour began in 2004 as a series of personal and truthful conversations among young women around the country facilitated by Founder Rha Goddess, JLove Calderon, and the *WGI!* team. Rha Goddess and JLove have each worked for more than a decade as activists. Rha, an internationally known musical performer and playwright, and JLove, an author and educator, both use the arts as a way to impact social justice. Using creativity as a springboard, young women talked about social and political power—who has it and who doesn't.

In these spaces, young women had the freedom to “rant” and “rave” about how they could influence the world by contributing their voices, hearts, minds, and concerns to matters that impacted their lives. They also exchanged ideas about how they can first make changes in themselves that will allow them to take their rightful places at the decision-making tables, in their homes, in their communities, and in our country. In the middle of one session, speaking about things that needed to get resolved, a young woman said point blank, “We got issues,” and an organization was born.

WGI! has spelled out what it stands for in its 10 Point Visionary Platform, which addresses a wide range of topics: Work, creativity, education, sexuality, motherhood, health & well-being, civic engagement and immigration, the isms, spirituality, relationships, finances, and violence against women. In 2005 *WGI!* started its Leadership Institute which each year educates and helps young women to become the leaders that they were meant to be. As of this year, *WGI!* has been the catalyst for change for thousands of young women leaders, *whose* leadership has the potential to impact over 20,000 people across the United States.

WGI! is all about helping young women to tap into their power to make things happen in their lives.

Only You will rescue you...

"I am not a great believer in fairy tales. Every woman should fight hard for her own happy endings. Although occasionally it is nice to wake up as a princess"
— **fashion designer, Donatella Versace**

Women have been conditioned to believe that someone, usually a man is going to "rescue" them from their circumstances. However in order to truly improve the quality of your life, you have to be willing to be responsible to yourself. As young women we have to be willing to step into our own lives and make important choices about who we are and what we want for ourselves. These decisions involve all aspects of our lives, including our personal relationships, families, jobs, finances, health, and communities.

For the longest time, civic engagement has only been focused on voting in political elections and being a responsible member of your community. This means that for a lot of young women, civic engagement is only about electing politicians, paying taxes, and obeying laws, but not about improving their lives. On the real, civic engagement is about deciding the kind of life that you want to live and what kind of country you want to live in. It requires that you decide what you are willing to do to make those dreams a reality. Women have been fighting the system to better their lives and our society for hundreds of years.

In the 19th century suffragettes fought so that women could vote in elections and like men, have a say in how the country was being run. In the 20th century feminists fought so that jobs were no longer either "women's jobs" and "men's jobs." Most importantly they worked to make sure that women got paid the same as men for doing the same work. Today, if a woman's qualified she can be a construction worker, a firefighter, a police officer, an astronaut, or even a race car driver.

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Although there is still a gap between what men and women earn overall, because of these visionary women, employers can't arbitrarily decide to pay a woman less than her male co-worker—just because she's a woman. Feminists also championed reproductive choice so that all sexually active women can choose when or if to have children. For the millions of women who were down with these social and political movements, changing the way our elected officials dealt with job discrimination, as well as access to contraception and safe, legal abortions was important to improving their quality of life.

“New School” civic participation is about envisioning the type of country that we want to live in. To do this we'd have to ask ourselves, “How would our new United States be different from the one that we actually live in?” We'd also have to think about what our new relationship with our elected officials would be. In the past when we've talked about change there have been only two camps: the folks who support political activities like voting and lobbying and the folks who favor activism in the form of boycotts and protests. In our new United States, young women would recognize the need for both: electing politicians who represent their interests and publicly opposing unfair law and public policies.

Women who are down with “New School” civic participation are also creating environments that support their visions about how the country and world should look. Let's be clear, “new” is a state of mind, not a point in time. In 1976, Body Shop founder, the late Anita Roddick, created a company that sold “green” cosmetics. She built a company that didn't test products on animals, and she purchased materials from small communities in underdeveloped countries as a way to boost their local economies.

Feminist scholar Barbara Smith founded Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press in 1980 so that the overlooked literary work of African-American, Latina and Native American women would be published. Kitchen Table Press published many important works including *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, edited by Smith and *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*.

Princeton University student Wendy Kopp, created a plan for a new national corp of teachers who would be part of a movement to end educational inequity.

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In 1989, after graduation, Kopp founded Teach for America, which recruits the nation's most promising future leaders to teach for two years in the country's most disadvantaged urban and rural schools. There are now 7,500 alumni who have opened innovative schools and/or continue to fight for education reform.

Our country responds to citizens who act, who raise their voices on issues important to them. Unfortunately many young women don't feel comfortable flexing their citizenship, so their concerns are never addressed by elected officials. To become more confident so that we take part New School civic participation, young women have to move beyond television sound bites. This means investigating how political and social issues actually affect our daily lives.

To do this means being willing to lift up the skirts of female leaders and look beyond the race of male leaders to judge who's just talking out of their ass and who's really down to represent our interests. All of that said, we can't expect politicians to do all of the work. If we want better lives and a better society, we need to partner with like-minded elected leadership and activists to make it happen.

Partnership means working together for a common goal. It's New School civic participation—you holding down your end, while elected leaders and activists hold down theirs.

So, are you willing to be a full-fledged citizen by:

1. Empowering yourself with information?
2. Forming an opinion about issues that affect you?
3. Voicing your decisions?
4. Putting money & time where your mouth/heart are?
5. Holding your leaders accountable?

Now let's check out WGI's plan for a new country—
Our 10 Point Visionary Platform

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For Young Women

10 POINTS:

1. We envision a world where our salaried work is infused with the same honesty as our personal creative expressions. Where our creativity is considered as valid as our paid work, & where excellent public education is a birthright, not a political battlefield.

2 We envision a world where women have a right to celebrate our own individual & unique beauty, where we are empowered by our innate sexuality, free to fully express ourselves in public or in private.

3. We envision a world where motherhood is deemed a sacred calling, where affordable childcare and family supports are readily accessible and we can raise emotionally and physically healthy children regardless of our incomes.

4. We envision a world where our mind and body are in tune, where clean water, fresh food, affordable healthcare and local mental health centers are priorities, where the natural bounty of the earth nourish us, and sustain our power.

5. We envision a world where women feel compelled to go into a voting booth, confident that their concerns are being addressed and that they have a role in her country's direction, where citizenship is not a struggle for our rights, but a passionate engagement of our civil liberties.

6. We envision a world where phobias and isms are not our daily practice, where we acknowledge the infinite possibilities in each identity, where institutions foster the growth of this ideal.

7. We envision a world where our spiritual manifestations vibrate to the core of this earth, where we celebrate the existence of many paths to inner peace.

8. We envision a world that is abundant. Where women are financially literate and able to exercise financial independence, where we live and use money to improve our lives and our communities.

9. We envision a world where women feel safe in every environment; walking home, entering into personal relationships and birthing their visions for their lives.

10. We envision a world where women can create families, communities and tribes that value, honor and respect the endless possibilities in our lives.

vision I

We envision a world where our salaried work is infused with the same honesty as our personal creative expressions. Where our creativity is considered as valid as our paid work, and where excellent public education is a birthright, not a political battlefield.

“People don’t understand the kind of fight it takes to record what you want to record, the way you want to record it.” –Billie Holiday

The fact is that most women work. According to the 2000 U.S. Census almost 63 million women, aged 16 and over, were employed, representing nearly ½ percent of the total workforce. To break it down further: 66 percent of all African-American women and nearly 70 percent of all Latina women are in the labor force. The majority of working women are married with children under 18 years of age. Working mothers with children under 6 years old more than tripled from 1960 to 2000.

What are we saying about ourselves or teaching our children when we slave away at jobs that we hate, where we are not respected, and where our contributions are ignored?

Going to work shouldn’t be about selling your soul. If we are being true to ourselves we will chose work and work environments for the joy and fulfillment that we receive, not just for a paycheck. There is a Buddhist principle called “right livelihood,” and it is defined as work that is ethical and helps one’s spiritual development. It’s no surprise that people are usually richer financially and spiritually when they find work that aligns with their personal values.

Right livelihood can mean many things including: going green, giving back to the community that buys your company’s goods and services, using fair business practices, providing employees with tuition assistance or onsite child care, committing to socio-economic, gender and racial diversity, or simply doing work that enhances NOT devalues people’s lives.

Education is important to providing young women with options that allow them to choose or create “right livelihood” over taking a dead-end job that helps them “just to get by.”

In Point 1, we state our right to ethical workplaces that allow us to create and produce goods and services that benefit society. For all citizens to prosper, financially and emotionally, we understand that they must be educated and encouraged to be life-long learners.

vision 2

We envision a world where women have a right to celebrate our own individual and unique beauty, where we are empowered by our innate sexuality, free to fully express ourselves in public or in private.

“Just because you’re blind, and unable to see my beauty doesn’t mean it does not exist” –Comedian, Margaret Cho

If you believe Madison Avenue and Hollywood, beautiful women must be: young, White, blonde, blue-eyed, large breasted, and wear a size 0. To get those “beautiful” looks women, prompted by make-over reality shows, now go to plastic surgeons to get shot up with botox to reduce wrinkles on their faces, get liposuction to suck out the fat from their stomachs, butts, hips and thighs, and to get implants to make their breasts bigger. Hell, there’s now even cosmetic surgery to make your va-jay-jay tighter and more youthful looking.

There’s a bunch of “beauty experts” who make a living appearing on television shows and writing for magazines whose job is to instruct women how to look better. The experts tell women how to dress and “what not to wear,” how to style their hair, how apply their make-up, and even how to smell better. There’s nothing wrong with wanting to improve your appearance. The operative word though is YOUR appearance. Changes in your appearance should be done to be a better YOU, not to be a clone of some celebrity. Each woman has a special beauty that she should be take pride in and let shine. A more open society embraces the notion that a woman is beautiful when she is being true to herself.

We also need to be open about sexuality and gender—it’s more than just heterosexual or female and male. Some people move very easily between male and female energies, other folks identify as gay, while some people call themselves transgendered. A person’s gender and sexuality must be defined by the individual, not by society. Society’s role is to respect how individuals choose to express their gender and sexuality.

In Point 2, we state our right to love ourselves as we are. To look, dress, walk, talk, move, smell, eat and feel in ways that please us. Our sexuality is also part of our natural beauty and we have a right to explore that part of ourselves without fear or disapproval. We seek freedom from people who want to police, judge or bully us into changing or disliking who we naturally are.

vision 3

We envision a world where motherhood is deemed a sacred calling, where affordable childcare and family supports are readily accessible, and we can raise emotionally and physically healthy children regardless of our incomes.

If you bungle raising your children, I don't think whatever else you do well matters very much.” –Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Society says that families are important, but we don't really value the contributions of mothers. It's almost impossible for a working-class woman to get maternity leave. Although federal laws give new moms (and dads) 12 weeks of unpaid leave, according to a 2000 US Department of Labor Study the US Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) doesn't apply to 40% of non-government employees. An organization must have at least 50 employees and workers have to have worked at least one year and 1,250 hours to qualify. This means that if you work for a small-business, are a new hire or work only part-time—tough luck. Those not covered by the FMLA must depend on company policies, which vary widely.

Motherhood is on the back burner—it's not sexy and it doesn't pay. As our society rushes to get mo' money and mo' things, a woman's status increasingly is based on her ability to rake in the dough, not raise healthy, responsible children. Many women don't even have the choice to be full-time mothers. These women work so that their children can eat and have a place to live. Nearly 12 million children under age 5 are in some type of regular child care each week.

Child care isn't cheap. According to the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, average child care fees for one infant range from \$3,803 to \$13,480 a year. To afford this a two-parent family spends about 10.6% of their household income each year. Single mothers pay nearly 33% of what they earn. The availability of affordable and reliable childcare is especially important to single mothers. Most at risk are low-income women who often work jobs that don't provide paid leave. For them, any day that they don't have childcare is a day that they don't get paid. These women can easily lose their jobs if they spend too many days at home, caring for their children.

In Point 3, we state our right as mothers (and future mothers) to networks and resources, such as on-site childcare and mandatory unpaid leave that support us in raising well-rounded children and creating strong families ready to take their place at the decision-making table.

vision 4

We envision a world where our minds and bodies are in tune, where clean water, fresh food, affordable healthcare, and local mental health centers are priorities, where the natural bounty of the earth nourish us, and sustain our power.

“The act of putting into your mouth what the earth has grown is perhaps your most direct interaction with the earth.” –Activist, Frances Moore Lappe

Let’s take a look at where we’re at. To drink clean water, you’ve got to buy it bottled. To get pesticide-free and hormone-free meat and produce you’ve got to go to a special organic food store. For many Americans, clean water and fresh food have become expensive luxuries.

On top of that if you get sick in this country you’re basically screwed. In 2007 the U.S. Census reported that 47 million Americans lacked health insurance coverage in 2006. The number of uninsured has increased for six straight years. It’s even tight for the majority of Americans who have health insurance through their jobs. A 2005 study by Health Affairs, an academic journal, says that about 30 percent of people surveyed said they filed for bankruptcy because of an illness or injury, even though most of them had health insurance when they first got sick. Some people had to file for bankruptcy because they missed work due to their illness. Subsequently they lost their jobs along with their health insurance. Others had to go the bankruptcy route because they faced thousands of dollars in co-payments and deductibles for medical services not covered by their insurance. We need real healthcare reform now!

In low-income communities, particularly those of color, there are frequently high rates of alcoholism and drug abuse. In too many instances people in the ’hood are living extremely stressful lives. They’re trying to stay afloat with too few resources and trying to stay alive in dangerous communities. Too often people who need to be treated by a mental health professional are self-medicating their illnesses with drugs and liquor. According to the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003) and the Surgeon General’s 1999 Report on Mental Health, people of color are less likely than Whites to have access to appropriate mental health services. We need more mental health professionals where poor and working class people live.

In Point 4, we state that we have a right to free clean water and food produced only with organic ingredients and strong minds and bodies which requires universal access to physicians and mental health professionals.

vision 5

We envision a world where women feel compelled to go into a voting booth, confident that their concerns are being addressed and that they have a role in her country's direction, where citizenship is not a struggle for our rights, but a passionate engagement of our civil liberties.

“God gives nothing to those who keep their arms crossed.” –African proverb

The number of women buying electronic gadgets is surpassing men. Women are buying more of everything—houses, video games, motorcycles and tools. Women increasingly are using the power of the purse to change how products are made and sold. So can we translate the skills that it takes to be a savvy consumer into skills that produce savvy citizens? If more women voted couldn't we change our political system? In their study, “The 2004 Youth Vote,” Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) found that young women in the 18-24 year old category outvoted men by six percentage points, 50 to 44 percent, the largest gender gap in that demographic since 18 year olds became eligible to vote. The downside is that CIRCLE found that only 47% of all 18-24 year old voted compared to 66% of citizens aged 25 and older.

In short, millions of young women (and young men) aren't voting. Single women, the fastest growing demographic in the country, are the group least likely to vote. In the 2004 election 20 million single women (never married, divorced, widowed) did not vote. These women are 1/4 of the voting-age population and the largest group of non-voters. Many single women tell researchers that they skip voting because they don't know enough about what's going on to make an informed choice. In comparison single men are more willing to follow the issues, form an opinion, and vote.

Experts say that more women could be encouraged to vote if candidates raised issues relevant to women like security, health care, and jobs. *WGI!*, however, has found that before many young women will raise their voices, especially when it comes to politics, they need and want permission—and some acknowledgment that they matter. Most importantly, even though many young women fear power, particularly young women of color, they hold great aspirations for themselves and their communities. It would be wonderful if young women would form support networks that would affirm their right to take action and vote. Otherwise by continuing to be invisible and silent young women are sending politicians a clear signal NOT to pay attention to their dreams and interests.

In Point 5, we state our right to vote, even if we are not political experts; our knowledge as concerned and informed citizens is enough. We also assert our right as first class citizens to take advantage of opportunities for leadership that exist in our homes and in our communities.

vision 6

We envision a world where phobias and isms are not our daily practice, where we acknowledge the infinite possibilities in each identity, where institutions foster the growth of this ideal.

“Prejudice is like a hair across your cheek. You can’t see it, you can’t find it with your fingers, but you keep brushing at it because the feel of it is irritating.” –Legendary opera singer, Marian Anderson

Is everyone in your inner circle just like you? The same race, the same sexual orientation, the same religion, the same income level, and about the same age? Despite not knowing any personally, do you dislike: immigrants, Muslims, or gay people? We live in a society where racism, sexism, classism, look-ism, homophobia and xenophobia and a bunch of other isms are part of our mainstream culture. This means that even the most kind hearted of us is prejudiced. We have been programmed to look at people as stereotypes rather than as human beings. Every Asian person isn’t a math whiz; every African-American isn’t a criminal; every Latino isn’t illegal; and every White person isn’t rich. We fight isms by learning more about people who are different from ourselves.

We are quick to say people are part of a “community” when their only commonality is their race or sexuality. This leads to a teacher feeling comfortable asking the only Black kid in class, what does the “Black community” think about gangsta rap? The kid may like rock and has never listened to rap. Unfortunately since he’s Black it’s assumed that he’s spokesman for all Black Americans. This is the same ism thinking that leads people to believe that all Muslims are down with jihad and should be profiled. It’s because of this ism thinking that many men think that Asian women are subservient sex kittens.

Although a person may belong to a certain group, she is an individual first. This person probably also identifies with several other groups. The bottom line is that this person is not an automatic spokesperson for any of group. Unless someone steps up and says that she’s representing the “blank community,” we should assume that she doesn’t. Singling a person out to answer a question of behalf of “their community” or assuming that they have a particular interest, skill or experience because they belong to a certain group is playing into isms. This leads to unintentional insults and a sense of marginalization.

Despite thinking that we are down for the struggle, we each have to ask our selves regularly: How am I embodying ways of being and viewpoints about others that are based on stereotypes? Asking ourselves this tough question is an important step in stomping out isms and creating a more fair and just society.

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We then have to demand that our elected officials, organizations and corporations engage in the same self-reflection.

Racism still exists in many forms from “innocent” jokes to assumptions about a person of color’s intelligence to straight up denying a person of color a job or a bank loan solely because of her race or ethnicity. People definitely need to work hard and take responsibility for their life decisions but don’t get it twisted—hundreds of years of racial discrimination means that today some folks are still playing catch up in terms of education, jobs and access to opportunities. To really even out the playing field, we have to do more than talk about it, we need to be about reaching out to folks and providing them with the education, tools and assistance to get in the game.

With Point 6, we state our right to get guidance on how to relate to one another based on trust, rather than on fear. We also assert our right to have our institutions—government, media, corporations and schools, treat and portray all peoples as valuable human beings.

vision 7

We envision a world where our spiritual manifestations vibrate to the core of this earth, where we celebrate the existence of many paths to inner peace.

“A religious awakening which does not awaken the sleeper to love has roused him in vain.” –The Quaker Reader, 1962

The more that we learn about other religions and spiritual beliefs, the more we will understand that all paths lead to a “Higher Power.” Every spiritual tradition—Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Santeria, Sufism, Rastafari, Yoruba and indigenous traditions—has something to offer. Each religion has its creation stories, codes for living a good life, holidays and soul filling songs. It is possible—it is even very realistic—to be rooted in your own faith and to be at the same time open for the others.

While many religions are very different, throughout history we find some core principles that keep showing up. We find the golden rule, “Don’t do unto others what you do not want to have them do to you,” in Chinese traditions 500 years before Christ. It’s also in the Jewish tradition 20 years before Christ in the teaching of Rabbi Hillel.

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In Islam in the Hadith, the idea is expressed as “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.” Add to the mix the directives: not to murder, not to steal, not to abuse sex—You get the picture; common global ethics.

No one religion or school of thought however has a monopoly on universal truth. Most important, while spirituality may include some element of religiousness, it can also be developed outside of religion. Unlike organized religions, which have rules about how to reach your Higher Power, spirituality is all about your unique expression. Spirituality means to experience and become one with your own soul. Spirituality really is about helping us to see each other as human beings worthy of life and happiness. Spiritual growth gives us more life energy, a feeling of being more fully present and whole. It’s a sense of being able to reach out to more parts of oneself, to more people, and to more of life. Experiencing the feeling of internal peace and calm that spirituality brings allows us accept another person’s differences.

Spirituality encompasses love, compassion and respect for life. A regular practice helps us to answer questions about our existence and our relationships and interactions with others. However each person’s beliefs about spirituality, as well as how they get in touch with their divinity is deeply personal. Each of us has to find a way that fills her heart with joy and peace. Some folks feel connected to their spirits when they pray. Other people believe that meditation gets their mind still enough to hear their inner voice. Listening to music helps many people to feel close to their higher selves. Others literally feel the presence of God when they are the process of creating art. For thousands of years people have found communing with nature to be a transformative experience.

So whether you feel your spirituality through yoga, chanting, gardening, or dancing—do your thing. Do whatever brings you closer to knowing your best self and the light of the Universe. Do whatever also gives you the confidence to be cool with how others experience their own souls.

In Point 7, we state our right to true spiritual freedom that comes from choosing to learn and to accept other’s beliefs and practices. We assert our right to follow and learn from any and all spiritual paths. We articulate our vision of a people unified under a global ethic that celebrates our differences.

vision 8

We envision a world that is abundant. Where women are financially literate and able to exercise financial independence, where we live in use money to improve our lives and our communities.

“I had to make my own opportunity... Don’t sit down and wait for opportunities to come; you have to get up and make them.” –Entrepreneur Madame C.J. Walker (*1st Black Female Millionaire*)

The world is abundant, it produces enough food and clean water for everyone. Ideas are free...so is love. Scarcity is man-made—you can buy into it or not. What we know is that if the masses believe that “there ain’t enough blank,” then those who possess or control blank become the masters of the universe. Folks are stressing \$4.00 per gallon gas and the Middle East because we didn’t wean ourselves off oil 30 years ago when the last oil crisis hit.

Accepting that the world is abundant requires a major shift in our thinking. We can blame “scarcity” on racism, sexism, capitalism, greed or a bunch of other outside factors. It’s realizing that people have succeeded and prospered even in the harshest of circumstances. Before becoming a multi-millionaire, J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter book series had been on welfare. She also had been diagnosed with clinical depression so bad that she contemplated suicide. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years before he was elected president of South Africa.

Before Oprah Winfrey hit it big as an internationally known talk show host she was a poor girl in Mississippi who endured years of sexual abuse that resulted in her becoming pregnant at 14 years old. J.K. Rowling, Nelson Mandela and Oprah Winfrey didn’t set out to be wealthy celebrities. They were everyday people who were determined to keep moving forward despite the immense pain that they had suffered and the insurmountable obstacles that they faced.

How do you believe that there’s enough to go around when so many messages blare out lack? You gotta build abundance internally. You have to find beliefs, people and resources that give you the faith and courage to follow-through on your dreams when others are saying that you’re crazy or that it can’t be done. Had Sen. Barack Obama listened to all the naysayers, he’d never become the Democratic nominee for President of the United States. Abundance is a state of mind.

With Point 8, we state our universal right to have enough, to live lives only limited by our perseverance and willingness to dream.... BIG.

vision 9

We envision a world where women feel safe in every environment; walking home, entering into personal relationships and birthing their visions for their lives.

“If I didn’t define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people’s fantasies for me and eaten alive” –Audre Lorde

What do women need to feel safer in their cities and towns? In some places more streetlights would help. In other places maybe a no loitering law would get rid of harassers. Some city neighborhoods need more cops on the street. In rural areas perhaps more regular bus routes would mean that women waited on empty roads for less time. These small changes could have a major impact on women’s lives. However to make these things happen, women’s voices have to be heard and respected in representative bodies—like the city council and in local decision-making processes.

We also have to find ways to make women safer on their jobs. Sexual harassment is a real and present danger for many working women. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In 2007, the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received 12,510 charges of sexual harassment in the workplace. 11,592 sexual harassment charges were resolved that year, resulting in more than \$49.9 million being paid to victims. Unfortunately home is not a safe haven, as millions of women are victims of domestic abuse each day. In 2001, 588,490 women were reported being victims of non-fatal abuse by an intimate partner. In 2000, 1,247 women were killed by intimate partners. 76% of women who reported being raped and/or physically assaulted since age 18 said that a current or former husband, co-habiting partner or boyfriend had committed the assault.

There are many theories about what causes domestic violence, but research shows that women at the highest risk for being the victims of it include those with male partners who abuse drugs (especially alcohol), are unemployed or underemployed, or have not graduated from high school. Men who have the mind set that women are property or sexual objects that they can control are more likely to be abusers. Men and women who grew up in a household in which domestic violence took place are more likely, as adults, to become either perpetrators or victims of domestic abuse. Getting and keeping the victim of domestic violence safe is a major part of treating domestic abuse. Treatment involves empowering women by providing them information, resources, and support. It also means using the law to protect them from further abuse and to punish their male batterers.

Women must stand up and demand protection from violence, sexual harassment and domestic abuse, not because we’re weak, but because we’re human.

In Point 9, we are stating our right to safety as a constant in our lives, whether we are on the streets, at work or in our homes. We understand that the guarding of our safety is an acknowledgment of the sacredness of our lives, which lays the groundwork for civic engagement and societal transformation.

vision 10

We envision a world where women can create families, communities and tribes that value, honor and respect the endless possibilities in our lives.

“Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.” –Novelist, Jane Howard

There are many different types of families and one kind is no better than another. Families include parents who are married, single, gay or straight and their children—biological or adopted. Adults who don’t have children can also be called a family. Your family isn’t just your blood relations. It can just as easily include your close friends who always have your back when life gets hectic.

It’s the same with your community or tribe. Community isn’t just the groups that you’re born into: race, gender or sexual orientation. It’s also not just the folks who happen to live in your neighborhood. Maybe your strongest sense of community comes from the groups that you voluntarily represent because they speak to your individual spirituality, talents, interests, and, yes, politics. Really your tribe is like-minded folks who you spend your time with and share your ideas, opinions and aspirations with. Your community or tribe, however you define it, resonates with who you are in your heart. These people connect you to your human-ness. Our family and our community or tribe help us to celebrate our victories and sustain us through the tragedies. Day-to-day they are sources for support, knowledge and information to help us move forward in our lives.

What will it take for us to strengthen our families and our communities so that we can create loving and supportive relationships? Back in the day, “being neighborly,” was about being concerned about the people and families who lived on your block. It was more than just being polite. People pulled together to help one another. People regularly checked on elderly and disabled neighbors. If a family was hungry the community pitched in to feed them. If someone were sick, the community prayed, cooked and sat vigil to aid her recovery. When someone was born, married or died, the community stood unified as a witness to the event. Throughout history, when government ignored them, communities, especially those of color, joined their sweat and dollars together to build schools, hospitals and businesses.

We should consider ways how we can revive the concept of “being neighborly” to our interactions with our own families, neighbors and to the various communities that we claim allegiances to. As caring collectives we can create sustainable families, communities and tribes that will foster our lifetime learning as well as our spiritual, economic and social needs.

With Point 10, we state our right to explore our humanity through relationships developed in our family and in our community or tribe. We understand that to grow, we must be free to build our family, community or tribe in ways that reflect our true spirits.

conclusion

Operate on two levels—as a private person and as a public citizen

Like we said at the door—we know that everyone isn't trying to start a revolution, but most of us want better lives. However just wishing for radical changes to happen in our country isn't enough.

Whatcha gonna do to improve how and where you're living? What would it mean to you to know that you could end hunger in the United States? Does it matter to you to know that you could prevent another child from being shot and killed by warring street gangs? Do you ever think about how far our kids could soar if you fought so that every public school was great? We've got to dream big and then take real actions to make those dreams a reality.

That being said, we're calling on everyone who reads this to make a move toward improving the quality of her life. The things that are going on behind the closed doors of our homes are important to who we are in the world. We each operate on two levels—as a private person and as a public citizen.

We protect the choices that we make in our private lives and create opportunities for positive change when we voice our preferences in public spaces—ballot boxes, town hall meetings, letters to the editor, teach-ins, petitions, marches and protests.

So, in order to make real, lasting changes, we gotta function on both sides of the fence. Here are some suggestions [see next page]:

The Ten Point Visionary Platform For Young Women

THE PERSONAL SIDE : 5 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

1. Start following current events on a regular basis. You can find news online, on the television or in print.
2. Pay attention to at least one issue that affects your life—in a perfect world decide what you would like to see done about it.
3. Talk to folks in your community about your issue. Go to community meetings that discuss it. Write letters to you local paper about the issue.
4. Donate goods or volunteer with organizations that are dealing with your issue. Raise money or write a check for candidates as well as organizations who are representing your interests, such as WGI!
5. Vote as a way to support candidates who are trying to do the right thing and to kick out the one who aren't

THE CITIZEN'SIDE: 5 WAYS TO USE THIS PLATFORM

1. Give a copy of this booklet to a friend.
2. Organize a book club-style conversation about it.
3. Arrange to have a WGI! representative talk to your group or organization.
4. Host a fundraiser, party, BBQ, brunch, and discuss the social issues going on in your neighborhood.
5. Mobilize your community to get out and vote in the next election.

CREDITS

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