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Divas impact



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yourself



Imposter Syndrome

Angie Leigh Monroe DIVAS IMPACT/VETERAN DIVAS FOUNDER

Have you ever put on a brave front? Ever acted more confident on the outside than you felt on the inside? Maybe you are a woman who has risen through the ranks and are doing well for yourself, but feel at any moment that you will be found out as a fraud.

These are all things I have had women speak extensively with me about. From the woman who acts like everything is perfect in her life, but in reality, her marriage is on the rocks, and she feels she is failing as a mother. To the woman who wears the mask of control because of the time she was sexually assaulted and had no control.

The phrase *“fake it till you make it”* has become a motto for many, but in reality, that motto only covers part of it. Many just park in the *“fake it”* part of this and for many reasons, lose site of the *“make it”* part. When I say that, I am not saying that they don’t make it, I am saying that they fail to recognize that they have made it. They still believe they are faking it.

A friend of mine, Dr. Courtney Baker, studied this extensively and interviewed the top ranking women in the medical industry. She found it amazing as she sat in these corner offices with women who had *“made it”* and still felt like at any moment, all the work they had done would be discredited, and they would be found out as a fraud. This is called *“Imposter Syndrome.”*

According to the Harvard Business Review, *“Imposter Syndrome”* can be defined as a collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist despite evident success. They suffer from chronic self-doubt and a sense of intellectual fraudulence that overrides any feelings of success or external proof of their competence.

Funny thing is, this is not reserved for the corporate office types. We see this played out with moms at the school or youth events. We see it play out at church and even in our friendships. With the onslaught of social media this has only gotten worse.

When we boil it all down, we find that many times the masks we put on all stem from one thing – that we are comparing ourselves to others. This is a dangerous practice for a number of reasons. If we are to be our true authentic selves, then we must be able to see that the comparisons we make between ourselves and others are detrimental to our own growth.

Here are some helpful tips to live a life without comparison and become totally unmasked:

- Stop comparing your life to the lives of others you see on social media. Most people only share their positive stories and not their struggles.
- Do not down play your successes; own them!
- When you feel less than, speak to that within yourself. Use positive words affirming yourself. Like the movie *The Help* emphasized: *“You is smart, you is kind, and you is important.”*
- Surround yourself with people you trust to speak into your life. Give them permission to hold you accountable to what you say and believe about yourself.
- Be focused on what your plan and purpose is for your life and don’t be distracted by what others are doing. The grass is not always greener on the other side.

It’s my hope and the hope of everyone on our team that within four generations from ours, we will begin to see young women who do not struggle with the same challenges we have and these things will be eradicated. We ask you to join with us today and hold us all accountable to live a life unmasked.



Contributors

- **ANGIE LEIGH MONROE**
DIVAS Impact and Veteran’s DIVAS Founder
- **MISSY HUNSINGER**
Coach and Consultant, Army spouse, mom and GG (grandma)
- **ELIZABETH LEVI**
Wife, Mother and Nurse
- **SUSAN SHAW**
Wife, Business Owner and HEB Chamber Board Member
- **KIM SLATER**
Biblical Counselor, Wife and Mom
- **SUE TRACEY**
A Wife and Editor Who Loves to Cook
- **CONNIE WYATT-COLEMAN**
Author, Speaker and Wise Choices CEO and Coffee Lover

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DIVAS Impact Team

We all have a tendency to put on a mask when we find ourselves feeling insecure or believe it's unsafe to be authentic. Whether it's putting on a fake smile at work or pretending all is okay at church when it's not, we all put on masks. We keep parts of ourselves hidden – ways we would naturally think and act. If we are going to be DIVAS in every area of our lives, we must get rid of expectations and any real or imagined pressures, and start to make our wants and needs a priority and shared with kindness.

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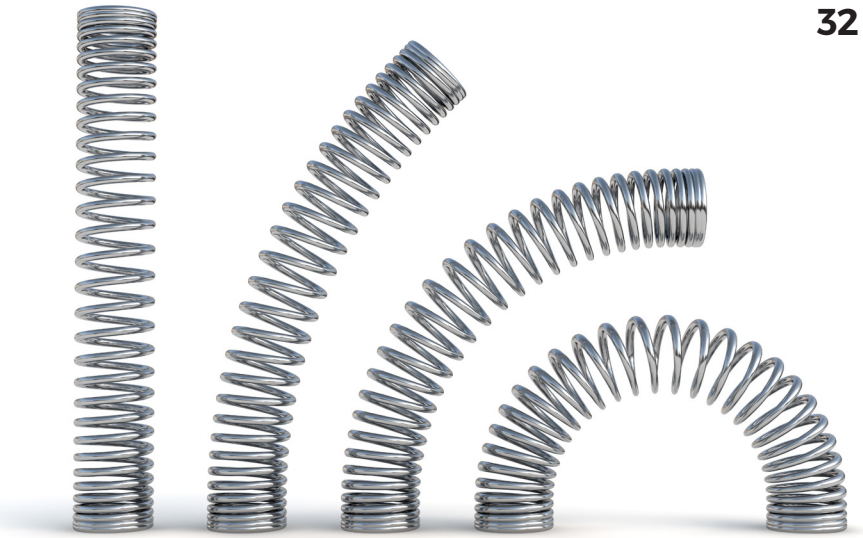
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Unmasked

Why do we wear masks and what does that mean? We all put on different faces for different life situations and admittedly, we do it for protection. We do it because we feel vulnerable or weak. We are actually performing for the group we are with, the situation we're in, or to impress our co-workers. We all want to feel special, don't we?

"You'd be surprised by how many times a woman sits in her car or in the shower, or in the laundry room, or at the sink and quickly cries because she's so stressed. Because when she shows her face again, she looks untouched and unbothered, manages to sport a beautiful smile and carries on like she's fine. Women are some of the most resilient creatures. ..."

lessonslearnedinlife.com

And haven't we all done that? But we want everyone who knows us to believe that we are perfect. We

Once we take off that mask and share our struggles with others, we find out that they have comparable issues. Nobody's life is picture-perfect.

• SUE TRACEY •

are the *"June Cleaver"* mom with the fake smile, the perfect hairdo and overly confident. We put forth the façade of being that perfect wife and mother with the little starched apron, but in truth, it's all an act.

We do that little act because we believe everyone we know has a perfect life, a perfect marriage and perfect kids. We don't want to let our guard down. Truth be known, once we take off that mask and share our struggles with others, we find out that they have comparable issues. Nobody's life is picture-perfect.

Ask yourself what mask am I wearing? Are you an over-achiever? Are you afraid your world will just simply explode if something goes wrong? Do you believe that your world will crash and burn if everything isn't perfect? Are you guilty of building

walls between you and your loved ones?

Maybe you are an individual who puts forth the idea that you are a strong person, and that you just have the ability to cope with anything and everything. People think that you can be all things to all people! Truth is, those people can't be all things to all people and neither can you. None of us have to pretend to be strong, and it's okay to lean on others or ask for help. Remove that mask!

Do you have a desire to be validated? Do you wear the mask of intellect? You want those around you to think that you are smart and superior. You love praise. You think you are better than others. But in point of fact, you are consumed with self-doubt and afraid that you will be outed. Superiority is nothing more than a misconception. Take off that mask and embrace humility!

Is your mask of choice being the *"Nice Person"*? Have you become a door mat? Maybe

you choose to be a Martyr? Perhaps you like being the *"Grumpy"* person! Or you like just knocking yourself. Or you have taken on the personality of the introvert or the social butterfly. Whatever masks you have decided to put on, there will be a moment when you decide to take off those masks and become a real person. Masks are a sign of limitation. By shedding ourselves of these fake masks, we can become authentic and gain peace in our lives.



Undeniably You!



Keys to Discovering Your Authentic Self

• DIVAS IMPACT TEAM •

We all have a tendency to put on a mask when we find ourselves feeling insecure or believe it's unsafe to be authentic. Whether it's putting on a fake smile at work or pretending all is okay at church when it's not, we all put on masks. We keep parts of ourselves hidden – ways we would naturally think and act. If we are going to be DIVAS in every area of our lives, we must get rid of expectations and any real or imagined pressures, and start to make our wants and needs a priority and shared with kindness.

AUTHENTICITY LEADS TO HAPPINESS

Are you aware that in those moments where you are experiencing true contentment and are filled with joy, you are most likely being your authentic self? It is from the deepest

parts of heart that passions are fueled and happiness springs. Each one of us has been hardwired by God to receive and give love unconditionally. Being authentic means feeling comfortable in your skin and in every situations in your life. This leads to greater acceptance in group settings and meaningful relationships.

Authenticity means you are being true to your purpose and the values you hold dear. It's the kind of confidence that blooms from deeply knowing that you are enough no matter what your particular feelings, needs or skills are. You know that you are valuable and important. When you believe that you are truly God's masterpiece as it says in Ephesians 2:10, you can be true to your own

personality, spirit or character despite the external pressures and internal thoughts that come your way.

RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE YOUR IMPERFECTIONS

Brené Brown, spent two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame and empathy, and is the author of five #1 New York Times bestsellers. In *The Gifts of Imperfection* (which we highly recommend reading if you haven't yet) Brown wrote, "Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we are supposed to be and embracing who we actually are." According to Brown, choosing authenticity means:

- Abandoning the need to look perfect and lead perfect lives
- Engaging with the world from a place of worthiness while allowing ourselves to be vulnerable
- Setting healthy boundaries and keeping them

"Even though most people believe they are self-aware, self-awareness is a truly rare quality. We estimate that only 10% to 15% of the people we studied actually fit the criteria."

TASHA EURICH

PhD, researcher and author of *Insight*

“Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It’s about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let out true selves be seen.”

BRENÉ BROWN, Author of *The Gifts of Imperfection*



AUTHENTICITY STARTS WITH AWARENESS

In order to live authentic lives, we must be willing to be intentional in understanding all of the unique and wonderful ways God created us. We are not to be self-centered, but we must be willing to be self-focused, willing to invest time in understanding what is going on in our hearts and minds. In your quest to becoming more authentic, some good questions every DIVA should put thought into and answer include the following:

- 1. What is my biggest strength?
- 2. What are my greatest weaknesses?
- 3. What is my proudest achievement?
- 4. What am I worried about?
- 5. What do I like to do for fun? Am I making time for fun?
- 6. What do I believe in? What are my values?
- 6. What do I have interest in but haven't tried?
- 7. How are my relationships with friends? Spouse? Children?
- 8. What do I like and dislike about my job?
- 9. What does my inner critic tell me?
- 10. What are the things in my life that cause me stress?

KEY STEPS TO TAKE TO LIVE AN AUTHENTIC LIFE

- Have awareness of what you feel and need and align it with what you say and do.
- Speak up for yourself and be sure to ask for what you want.
- Do something each day that reflects your passions and values.
- Never tolerate abuse of any kind.
- Never manufacture behavior based on your desire to be accepted/liked.
- Communicate clearly and maintain healthy boundaries.
- Press into those areas where fear shows up instead of running from it.
- Keep on learning and growing while pursuing your passions and purpose.
- Pursue your identity in Christ and consistently foster a trusting relationship with God.

Sources:

- Brown details taken from her book *The Gifts of Imperfection*.
- Eurich quote taken from a 2017 *Forbes* Article by Jeff Kauflin.

Un-fried Chicken

ADAPTED FROM A RECIPE ON ALLRECIPES.COM

This is a delicious substitute for the Southern fried chicken many of us grew up on. Baking and using cooking spray lowers the calories significantly. Serves 4.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 2 cups buttermilk | 1 TBSP onion powder |
| 1/2 to 1 TBSP hot pepper sauce | 2 tsps garlic powder |
| 4 boneless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces | 1 tsp ground black pepper |
| 2 cups panko bread crumbs | cayenne pepper (to taste) |
| 6 TBSPs grated Parmesan cheese | 1 tsp paprika |
| | Cooking spray |

The How: Mix buttermilk and hot sauce in a large bowl. Add chicken, stir and marinate in refrigerator at least 1 hour. Lightly grease a baking sheet. Mix panko bread crumbs, cheese, onion powder, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, and paprika in large shallow bowl. Remove chicken from marinade, shaking pieces to remove excess moisture. Discard remaining marinade. Gently press chicken pieces into the panko mixture to coat. Gently toss between your hands so any bread crumbs that haven't stuck can fall away. Arrange breaded chicken onto prepared baking sheet. Refrigerate breaded chicken at least 30 min. and then preheat oven to 400°. Lightly coat chicken pieces with cooking spray. Bake chicken in preheated oven until browning on top, 15 to 20 minutes. Flip pieces and continue baking until the chicken is cooked through and the coating is crisp, 15 to 20 minutes more.

For other recipes and useful tips, check out **Tuesday Tips** on our blog available at divasimpact.com/blog

Divas impact



Founder, DIVAS Impact/Veteran DIVAS
ANGIE LEIGH MONROE

Chief Creative Officer
KIM SLATER

DIVAS Impact Editor
SUE TRACEY

Chief Empowerment Officer
CARRIE GANT

Ad sales: For information ad placement, email editor@divasimpact.com

Printed subcriptions available: For details, email editor@divasimpact.com

www.divasimpact.com

817-571-7571
PO Box 1487, Euless, TX 76039

Unprepared

Life throws us challenges all the time and sometimes, we are not prepared for them.

The US Army reassigned my husband to Williamsburg, Virginia in June 2014, where we began adjusting to a new Army post. The first few months of a military move is all about setting up a new household, cable, internet, water, electric, trash - everything you need in your home. It can also include finding a job, setting up new doctors, dentists, finding a new hair salon, etc. Oh, and changing your address on everything! I explicitly remember on one of our moves having someone highlight my hair right before a military ball. When I saw my hair, it was school bus yellow. I wasn't going for a bunny girl look, just saying! So, when I say there are a lot of adjustments - trust me on this one.

• MISSY HUNSINGER •

I DON'T THINK I WILL EVER FORGET THE LOOK ON MY HUSBAND'S FACE WHEN HE SAW ME FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH THIS CAGE DRILLED INTO MY SKULL.

Shortly after arriving in Williamsburg, I had an appointment with my neurologist. I had established care with a neurologist, because I suffered from migraines, cluster headaches and vertigo. This new location was no different. I once again was having an episode of severe vertigo, which for those who aren't familiar with vertigo, is like riding one of those amusement park rides that spin at a high rate of speed. That said, driving was difficult from time to time, especially because I felt like I was drunk and hadn't even had anything to drink. I would need my husband to drive me when the symptoms were really bad, I didn't want to hurt anyone or myself. So, I had my appointment where I was given yet another MRI brain scan.

By the way, in addition to the migraines, cluster headaches and vertigo, I also had a condition called Pseudotumor cerebri. Imagine that rolling off the doctor's tongue while you're trying to absorb what they just said? I was diagnosed with this beauty in 2007 and have since figured out how to get by without medication. It is a brain condition that causes the same symptoms as a brain tumor - headaches, vision problems, nausea and dizziness, but it's not a tumor. It sounds scary, and it is when you realize the condition can cause you to lose your vision.

So, a week or so went by since my neurology appointment, when I had my husband drive me to Langley, VA for a dermatology appointment.

While we were in the waiting room, I got a call from my neurologist's office. The person on the phone said, *"Hi this is so and so from your neurologist's office, and we are calling to tell you that you have a brain tumor."* Wow, wait, what? What did you say?

We got disconnected as the reception was horrible. I was in a panic; I was in shock. Did I hear what she said correctly? She couldn't possibly have said a brain tumor. I called back, and we kept getting cut off. So, I left my appointment without ever seeing my dermatologist and called the neurology office back in a frenzy. I reached my actual doctor on the phone and she apologized for how I was notified and asked me to come in to discuss it.

How unprofessional and insensitive of them to tell me such terrifying news over the phone. Needless to say, I was in shock. Did I really hear that right? My emotions were all over the place. I kept thinking this cannot be real. Needless to say, I was so unprepared for anything like this. Did I mention it was on a Friday, which has to be the worst day in the world to find out news like this? The neurologist told me before the phone went silent that she believed the tumor was a Posterior Fossa Meningioma. The internet told me that Posterior Fossa Meningiomas are tumors that form near the base of the skull usually by the brainstem.

THIS WAS SO UNEXPECTED, AND I WAS SO PANICKED BY THIS NEWS.

The symptoms of difficulty walking, loss of balance, vertigo and nausea explained why I kept losing my balance while continually feeling like I was on a spinning amusement park ride. This was so unexpected, and I was so panicked by this news.

That weekend had to be one of the longest of my life. Let me just say, if a doctor gives you a diagnosis over the phone, don't look up anything on the internet. Seriously, do yourself a favor and don't do it. Looking at all of the ways they could remove it and the side effects from the removal was absolutely horrific. The way I was feeling was absolutely unexplainable. Unless you experience this, I just cannot put into words what I was feeling. The internet said they could cut it out. However, the risk for infection is great. There were also risks of strokes and other side effects I just wasn't prepared to see. I really just needed to wait and talk with my doctor. I wanted to call my daughter and tell her what was going on. However, my husband advised me to wait since we really didn't know what was going on or what was next. We had more questions than answers at this point, and we didn't want her to worry as we waited for them.

My neurology appointment finally came, and the doctor went over the MRI results with me. She explained what I was dealing with and then recommended a neurosurgeon. He was someone she would send her own family to see had she

been in the same predicament. Thankfully, I was able to get an appointment quickly with the neurosurgeon. He explained that the tumor was on my brain stem and how it was affecting the nerves in my face. The tumor was causing a condition called Trigeminal Neuralgia. It would activate the nerves in my face which caused twitching in my lips, eyes and even made my teeth hurt on one side of my mouth.

My husband prompted me to ask the surgeon a really good question. So I asked him, *"If this was your wife or daughter, what treatment you would recommend?"* My neurologist said Gamma Knife Radiation. I said, *"Okay then, that's what I want to do."* He encouraged me to biopsy the tumor, but I felt the risk was too high. I opted for Gamma Knife Radiation since conventional surgery posed such a high risk. He didn't know if it would work. He said if it was a specific type of cancer the Gamma Knife Radiation would actually make the tumor grow. If it shrank too fast, then it is a different kind of aggressive cancer, and they would have to go in and take it out. I just remember thinking is this really happening? I was having an out-of-body experience. I was definitely in shock. The surgery was scheduled, and I just kept thinking about my husband, my daughter, my grandchildren, my family and my friends. I almost felt numb!

The day of surgery, we got there as soon as the hospital surgical center opened. It was very early

in the morning when we arrived at the hospital. I, of course got into one of those horrible hospital gowns. I went to the bathroom 100 times even though I had not had anything to drink. Why was that? I'm sure it was nerves, but it was so annoying. As the doctors prepared everything for my radiation treatment, and the insurance companies sorted it all out, I was still not prepared. I had a neurosurgeon, oncologist, nuclear physicist and a team of doctors assigned to me for this procedure. I would have a titanium cage drilled into my head, then I would be placed into a space-age looking machine that would administer the pinpoint radiation to the tumor. The doctors even consulted with another hospital for the precise calibration of the radiation. Gamma Knife Radiosurgery is a precise and powerful treatment which has highly focused radiation beams that target the tumor.

The nurse began getting my IV line ready and my vein rolled. I told her I have problems with them, but she ignored me. When it was time, they gave me some meds to make me drowsy - did I mention I had to be awake for all of this? The only time I could sleep was when they drilled the titanium cage into my skull. As the nurse pushed on the top of my head, I told her to stop and get off, and the neurosurgeon opened the curtain with a drill. Some things in life cannot be unseen. That happened to be one of those things I will never be

able to forget. They called the anesthesiologist to give me something. I'm grateful I don't remember it being drilled into my skull. After having the cage drilled onto my skull, and as the team waited for the results, I went into a holding area. The pressure on my skull and neck was intense. I don't think I will ever forget the look on my husband's face when he saw me for the first time with this cage drilled into my skull. As I sat there with this contraption on my head, I couldn't stop thinking, we won't even know if it worked for two years. That's right, two whole years!

Despite all of that, I am thankful for all of the doctors and the nurses who helped me in this unimaginable situation I found myself in. The vertigo, nausea and facial pain subsided right away. I still get vertigo from time to time and still have migraines, but nothing like before. I truly am so grateful.

That was 5 years ago. Today, I still have the tumor, and it hasn't moved as it still sits on my brain stem. We have since named it *"Tumi."* My neurologist said everything went so well, because I had such a positive attitude.

In a world where I had prepared for so many things in my life, I couldn't have ever really prepared myself for something like that. I was truly unprepared.



Missy Hunsinger is the owner of Hunsinger Coaching and Consulting. I'm a God-following, t-shirt wearing, coffee loving, Army spouse, mom, GG (grandma), that just sounds old so we don't say that word. We live in Pennsylvania for a little bit until the Army tells us what's next! I love to inspire people to be their best selves. What about you? You like to travel? If you are curious come find me, on Facebook @Missy Hunsinger Coaching and Consulting and my Email is Hunsingercc@gmail.com. I look forward to chatting with you!

Unbroken

I have thought long and hard about addressing a time in my life that most people don't really know about (though they may think they do). I have some thoughts I feel could be really beneficial to other women down the line. Bear with me because these things are not so easily explained in a paragraph.

• ELIZABETH LEVI •

In January of 2017, I married a man I had been dating for nearly two years. I thought I knew him and knew his heart, and I thought his love for me was pure. I loved his family, I loved him, and I thought I could see what the foreseeable future held for us. Marriage, furthering our careers, becoming an aunt and uncle, eventually starting a family, etc. Growing up in the Deep South, this was the most traveled and accepted path. It was exactly what I wanted, and it was precisely what I pushed for. I tried to make someone whose path should have never followed mine fit into my cookie-cutter future.

I prayed relentlessly for this man. I dragged him to church despite his protests. I said I would marry him on the condition that after we were married, he would strive to further his relationship with Christ. Call me a dreamer, but when he promised he would, I truly believed him. Heart and soul.

We were married, and I remember thinking that his lack of enthusiasm on our wedding day was alarming. This was supposed to be the happiest day of our lives. My mom ugly-cried multiple times that day. I know now that it was because she was terrified for me.

Three months later, after another ugly argument turned the way they all had lately - into screaming and fighting and a hole in the bedroom wall, I walked out of our two bedroom apartment and drove to my dad's house around 11 PM. I tearfully told him about the past three months. I sobbed apologies out over how much he and my mom had spent on a wedding that was going to end in divorce. I fully expected him to advise me on how to deal with the problem and return to my

husband because in the Bible belt of Alabama, you don't just get divorced three months after marrying a man. I was surprised when he told me that he had seen warning signs and that he supported me. (Sorry, dad! I wasn't giving you nearly enough credit, and I should have known better, but I was scared). He never really felt comfortable with me marrying this guy. (Which is also totally what a dad is supposed to say). He wouldn't allow me to go back there, and I only went back to pick up my things.

I'm not looking for pity. My life now is everything I had always yearned for and imagined. I'm hoping to encourage you to speak up if you see these warning signs or have a gut feeling about a person. My mother had seen it in the way he looked at her when sitting at the dining room table in our home. There had been some conflict and instead of speaking kindly and resolving it, he ignored her and didn't speak.

Our wedding photographer saw it at our engagement session. He showed up and immediately told me in front of her and my



This is a picture from the photo session that my photographer later told me was one of the most chilling shoots she had ever done, because it just didn't seem right.

makeup artist that he didn't like my makeup, because I didn't look like myself. The picture attached is that girl who had been fighting back tears moments earlier when sitting in the chair after her fiancé crunched a Coke can, pitched it into the garbage and slumped into a seat beside two women she loved after insulting them to their face. I remember being so embarrassed, but I excused it because it seemed more like a compliment to my natural look. That girl was hiding pushing down her fears until she convinced herself she had just been overthinking it. I know now that my photographer and makeup artist cried after I left that day. They talked on the phone and were worried about saying something because they didn't want to offend me, but they were gravely concerned for me after watching the way we interacted that day.

So many relatives and family friends noticed the lack of joy in his eyes at our wedding. I had written it off as being a sign of his distaste for anything formal. Please, if you see any signs or red flags in a relationship, tell the person! They may get offended. They might blow you off. But if they hear it from enough people who truly know and love them, they might open their eyes and see it. After the fact, I had many people tell me they had seen the signs all along.

And finally, if you see that someone is going through a huge change such as a divorce after only 3 months of marriage - support them! You have no idea what they went through during those three months. You have no idea how many times they may have reached out to people they



This is a photo of my current husband, because he is the kindest man I have ever known, and he shows me every day how I deserve to be loved. And he is worthy of more recognition than I could ever possibly give to him.

trusted and were told they should *"just pray about it."* Did I mention I live in the Bible belt?

Not to sound like Hannah B (but also totally channeling my inner Hannah B), Jesus still loves me. And if you're reading this and crying in the bathroom somewhere wondering what went wrong and where you go from here, please understand that Jesus is still going to love you too. Signing those papers won't change that. Get out of that abusive relationship. Have a safe plan. And be careful about how you do it. Do not go through with it alone. I promise there is a better life out there for you.



Elizabeth Levi is 24 years old and lives in Cullman, Alabama. She is married to her husband, Dustin, and they have two of the sweetest babies, Annagrace and John Carver. She works full time as a Labor and Delivery RN in Birmingham three days a week. Her off days are spent at home with her family enjoying the outdoors on their farm.

Real talk for real women

WARRIOR

DIVAS

Are you sick and tired of hearing how women are being held back?

We are breaking through self-limiting beliefs, overcoming obstacles and encountering ceiling-shattering opportunities each and every day!

Learn how Angie Leigh Monroe helps women unleash their inner DIVA to make a positive impact in the world we live in. Tune in at:

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GET TO KNOW YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM AT

DIVAS *Impact*

ANGIE LEIGH MONROE

Certainly, we wouldn't have Divas Impact without the vision and hard work of our founder, Angie Leigh Monroe! She is a native Texan born and raised in Euless, where she still lives today. The entire Divas Team has been so motivated and inspired by her determination and her desire to help others.

As a child, Angie knew she wanted to be in front of people speaking. Of course she didn't understand what that meant exactly, but here she is today speaking in truth and love. She shares her own personal stories in the hopes of helping others avoid some of the missteps she has made along the way. She told us that she almost didn't realize that dream because a Drama teacher in High school told her that she sounded like a "Hick." She put her dream of speaking on hold for many years, but now that one word, "Hick," has become the driving force that keeps her motivated.

Along the way, she has had a number of mentors who lifted her up. She mentioned Carolyn Brewer who guided her to a different perspec-

tive on an unhappy marriage. And Carrie Gant who she says is a quiet storm of support along with her friend, Kim Yates who helped her learn relational conversation skills. Angie smiles as she tells us that Kim told her, *"Yes, you can say that, just not in those words or that tone of voice and certainly not with that look on your face."*

Angie says she has had to learn how to ask for help, learn how to receive that help and then stop sitting in her own suffering. She wants everyone to know that it is not wrong to accept help and to walk out of the dark places we have been trapped in. Being honest with yourself is the strongest thing you can do.

Angie's favorite quote is, *"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet,"* by Frederick Buechner, which matches up to her favorite Bible verse which is from Micah 6:8, *"He has told you what is good and what is required of you, to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God."*



Angie wants everyone to know that it is not wrong to accept help and to walk out of the dark places we have been trapped in.

Angie is a Navy Veteran and a mom of a current serviceman. So we were not surprised when she told us that her favorite book was *"Bonus Army,"* a story about veterans of World War 1, who marched in Washington to obtain rights for those who have served our country. Her favorite movie is *"Sergeant York"* about a conscientious objector who had to reconcile between giving unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's. In the end, that conflict led him to become one of the most decorated war heroes of World War 1.

Angie told us that she has worn many masks. She has pretended to be strong when she was weak. She put on a mask that said, *"I am better than others!"* In reality, she felt just the opposite. She portrayed confidence when she had none. She admits to pretending to be a friend when she wasn't. But she eventually opened herself

up to trust people and give them permission to speak into her life. She learned that she was living in fear which led her to don all of those masks.

Today, Angie loves helping others unpack truths and shift their perspectives to gain clarity and seek out a plan to help them move forward. She hopes that she will be remembered for her desire to help shift the way women of all walks of life realize their worth. She wants to teach them a better way to think and talk about themselves. She wants us all to walk in confidence.

Angie Leigh Monroe wants you to know that there is nothing that you could ever say to her that would make her think less of you. She is a safe place and she promises to connect you with the best people to help you.

Unfettered

• SUE TRACEY •

The dictionary says that the definition of unfettered is “*free or unrestrained.*” But do you know the origin of this word? It derives from fetter, which is a chain or shackle for the feet of prisoners. Or it is anything that confines or restrains us. It derives from the Middle English word feter and shares a connection with the Old English word “*fot*” which means foot. In modern day English the word unfettered suggests that someone is “*unchained or unrestrained in progress or spirit.*”

Job 39:5 says “*Who gives the wild donkey its freedom? Who untied its ropes?*” Ask yourself today if you have your freedom. Have you untied your ropes? Are you living with shackles that you have put upon yourself? Do you pretend to be something that you’re not? Do you fail to actually be yourself because you are afraid others won’t like you or accept you?

We have all, at one time or another, put on a mask to hide our weaknesses and missteps. We pretend to be strong when in fact, we are weak. We pretend to have our acts together when we don’t. We act like we have the strength to live victoriously when we don’t. We act like we are perfect when in fact, we are far from perfect. You know what I am talking about! We tend to gloss over all those things that make us vulnerable and weak. We all want the world to see us as strong, unshackled people who can conquer anything.

Have you pretended to be a perfect wife? A perfect mother? A perfect daughter? A perfect employee? A perfect follower of Christ? A perfect friend? Oh yes, we have all put on those masks and portrayed ourselves as “Perfect.” We all have those noble aspirations that have failed us. And we have all cried in secret because we can’t release ourselves from the shackles that restrain us from being our true selves. We continually hide our secrets from the world. We wear masks to hide and protect us from the truth of reality.

2 Corinthians 3:17 says “*Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*” And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all want freedom, don’t we? Freedom to be free of all those thoughts and past experiences that have convinced us that we need to put on all those masks so the world around us won’t see our

You have
so many
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if you will
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love yourself
and respect
yourself.

frailties. We haven’t found our liberty in the spirit of the Lord. Most of us have not figured out that if we belong to Christ, we can become a new person and our past life can be gone. We haven’t figured out that forgiving ourselves for past sins can free us to live a life of joy. We haven’t figured out that God is not done with us and that He has a bigger plan for our lives. Freedom is ours if we will seek it and take off those masks that restrain us.

God has given us all the promise of healing. Healing from our past or from someone or something that has wounded and hurt us. Mark 5:34 said, “*And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.’*” Ask yourself today, who is controlling and restraining your life? What are the masks you are wearing and why are you wearing them? There are so many forces that control us, but we have the ability to shed those shackles and control our own destinies.

George Fox summed it up this way – “*I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but a boundless ocean of light and love washed over the ocean of darkness and death, and in it I saw the eternal love of God.*”

God will lead you out of distress and pretense. He will assist you in taking off that mask if you let Him. He will bring you peace and joy if you have the will to become unfettered and free! You have so many gifts to give to the world if you will unchain yourself, love yourself and respect yourself.



Sue Tracey is a writer, editor and former owner of an advertising agency. She has a love of cooking and is always up for trying a new recipe. Sue has been married for 50 years to her husband Joe. Sue is a proud mom and even prouder Grammy.



Uncontainable

In a world focused on structure, protocol, political correctness and popularity, my prayer is that we are all **UNCONTAINABLE**. I don't know about you, but just saying that word in my head makes me smile. Life without limits, full to overflowing, unrestrained and unboxed. Possibilities are endless. Purpose is incomparable. Prayer is passionate. And plastic, rote answers and responses are unheard of.

"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21

If this scripture is true, and it is, then two things are **UNCONTAINABLE**:

First – the power of the Lord that works in us. There's an old adage in business that states, *"Never leave money on the table."* It means don't settle for less than what you or your service is worth – don't leave resources wasted. How often do we do that where the power of God has been promised to us? The song says it well, *"The same power that raised Jesus from the dead, is alive in us."* He is able to do things above all we can think or imagine and yet, we don't ask. How often do we choose the status quo or comfort instead of walking fully in His Spirit? How often do we *"leave money on the table"* because of our doubts, insecurities and feelings of unworthiness?

• CONNIE WYATT COLEMAN •

This leads us to the second truth from that passage and the second thing that is **UNCONTAINABLE**. You and me! You see the Word states that the Lord is **UNCONTAINABLE**, but He does His work *"according to the power that works within us."* His power makes us **UNCONTAINABLE**. His power. Our availability. Life lived beyond all we can imagine – **UNCONTAINABLE**.

One key to living **UNCONTAINABLE** is believing that He is able. *"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."* 1 Peter 1:8

You see, living **UNCONTAINABLE** doesn't mean everything will always be perfect, but it does mean that there is an unspeakable joy – a rejoicing; a life lived full of glory. Not ours – His. A life lived **UNCONTAINABLE** in order to point others to Jesus and proclaim His great name. Opens up all kinds of possibilities doesn't it? They are endless when we walk completely knowing He desires for us to live in His fullness. He wants us to apply that to our professional lives, our personal relationships and our own health. It makes our purpose seem a little more individually allocated and personally accountable, but also sets us on a course for an adventure with God.

Prayer life? If we truly believed that our prayers, and the power the Lord supplies through prayer were **UNCONTAINABLE**, how would that change the way we pray? The frequency? The intensity? And plastic, rote answers would be replaced with passion, testimony of His goodness, and life breathing words of encouragement, truth and love. The answer to *"How are you?"* would never again be *"Fine."* Our unspeakable joy would never be shoved down. The hope that lives within us would surely break loose.

That's where I want to live my life. I need His power working within me. I know that He is more than enough. **UNCONTAINABLE!**



Connie Wyatt-Coleman Connie is a Type A personality, (not just) self-proclaimed control freak and coffee addict. These characteristics have served her well in her career whether it be as CEO of a trucking outfit or her most recent role as CEO of Wise Choices PRC. Connie speaks and teaches with a passion to inspire "more" in others. More drive. More achievement. More of Jesus. More healing. Whatever she does, it will be sincere, from the heart, and without fluff. She is in love with Jesus, her husband, her kids and her coffee. Life has not been perfect, but it is good, and the Lord has called her to live out her testimony transparently as she speaks and writes about His goodness.



Unfriended

Have you ever unfriended someone on social media? Did you tell them you were going to do it, or did you go in all super-sleuth and push the unfriend button?

A bigger question I have is were they really even a friend to begin with? I know at any point during the day, I can sign onto Facebook, and I will see posts in my newsfeeds from "friends" that I don't even know, or I don't remember accepting a friend request from. Then, I have people poking me, or sending me messages about products they sell, but they really don't add any real value to my life. But then again, am I adding value to their life? Who knows!

What I do know is that of the thousands of people who are on my friends list, very few of them are actually people I would consider friends! Maybe acquaintances - but not true friends. To me, a friend is someone I share my life with in person - not just on social media. A friend is someone I know I can pick up the phone and just call and talk about life with. A friend is someone I can be real with.

I know it is not news to you that most of what you see people share on Facebook is the good stuff going on in their lives. Very seldom do you see people sharing their struggles, because we want everyone to believe better about us than we believe about ourselves most of the time. A real friend doesn't care how messy your life is; they know the real you that is behind all the mess and the success.

So why do we let social media stress us out? Why are we comparing ourselves to everyone else when we were not made like everyone else, and the call on our lives is completely different than everyone else's? I bet this article is not going the way you thought it was going to go. It's alright - bear with me.

My challenge to you is to be aware of who you include in your friend's list, both in life and on social media. Friends are investments that grow and mature with you like a good,

solid money investment. Friends have a great ROI (return on investment), because you are always getting back more than you put into it. This should be true for both parties.

Recently, I had a conversation with some women about the term "best friend." I hear it used often, but I'm not really sure I buy into the notion of having a BFF. Don't get me wrong, I too have used that term, but I can identify on a few fingers those people that I would actually claim as my best friends.

I am still not certain that I like the term. It sets up expectations for a relationship that might or might not be mutually agreed upon. I have had some amazing friends in my life; some of them I have battled with to save marriages, prayed over their children and even helped them

get through a day of work.

Then, there are the ones that I have failed miserably. They would never tell you that, but I will, because I know I could have and should have given more than I did to let them know how important they were to me.

When I look over the course of my life and all the amazing people I have called friends, I stand in awe of who I got to share my life with. I am thankful for their input into my life, and that I have a voice even if it is just a whisper into theirs. If you noticed, I said I am looking over the course of my life and not the newsfeed on Facebook.

I encourage you to take some time and look over your "REAL LIFE" friend's list. Make note of who is truly valuable to you. Who do you give permission

Who do you give permission to speak into your life? Who are you actively praying for and adding value to?



• ANGIE LEIGH MONROE •

A real friend doesn't care how messy your life is; they know the real you that is behind all the mess and the success.

to speak into your life? Who are you actively praying for and adding value to? Now, set some boundaries for yourself and come up with a mission statement.

Recently a friend shared that she was unfriending everyone on her friend's list that she did not personally know. She was locking her Facebook down so only her real friends could see what she was sharing. She said she was doing that to protect the privacy of her family. What boundaries do you need to set for yourself? Here are a couple of my boundaries:

1. No one can share to my timeline without my permission. Why? Because I have had too many people try to sell and promote things that I don't always agree with by tagging me in a post with about 50 other people I don't even know.

2. You cannot see my friend's list. Why? Because unscrupulous people have gone through my friend's list and tried to sell their products or services to my friends

saying, "I told them it was ok". **3. My most recent boundary is unless we personally know each other, you will not be on my friend's list.** Why? Because I have my business social media where you can connect with me. Then, if we should become friends through that connection, then I might reconsider having you on my friend's list - but until then, I intend to keep you at bay until we build a mutually beneficial friendship.

My mission statement for my friend's list both in person and on Facebook is this: I desire to interact with people about real issues that matter and to build mutually beneficial relationships where we both sharpen and grow one other, while engaging in open and honest conversation. When all is said and done, the "UNFRIEND" button can be your biggest tool to gain back your loyal friends! You don't have to like everyone, and they don't all have to like you. I am challenging each one of you to find the right friends to share your life with and then go all in.



Angie Leigh Monroe, a native Texan and Navy veteran, is the founder of D.I.V.A.S. Impact - a global movement set up to change the way women think and speak about themselves and others. She helps others identify and obliterate the obstacles holding them back from finding their purpose. Her ability to ALIGN others with strategic partnerships, ACTIVATE purposes and CALIBRATE other's potential makes her the consummate DIVA. Angie lives in Euless, TX, and loves time with her husband, children and grandchildren.

Unshakable

Shaken, not stirred. Most of us have been shaken and stirred through past life experiences. Maybe you are experiencing this right now. Perhaps you can't see past that and think this is just how your life is meant to be.

• SUSAN C. SHAW •

Let me assure you, that is not how your life is meant to be! You are meant for more! This is merely a chapter; this is not the whole book! Take every good book you have ever read - there are just going to be chapters that aren't as good as others, yet the book is great overall! When you are going through your shaken chapter, understand that it won't last forever!

Those that don't know me very well may not know some of my biggest "shaken" moments are also the moments or chapters that have made me unshakable. I was widowed at 23 years old with a two-and-a-half year old little boy. My College sweetheart - my 6'2" big handsome blonde love of mine, I had to watch wither away into a man that I would have to pick up to help get into his wheelchair or back into bed.

The man I was going to spend my life with was wasting away in front of my eyes and nothing I could do would bring him back. I prayed for God

to heal him; for him to be fully restored. I knew God could do it, I just didn't know if it was God's will for him to be healed. It wasn't His plan and although there was plenty of bitterness towards God at the time, my faith never wavered. I was mad - no, mad is not sufficient; I was infuriated about it. I remember people coming in and out of the hospital, and they were laughing, chatting with friends or family and eating. The nerve of them! They were living. So, at 23, I was shaken to the core. What I did realize early on was that I didn't have the luxury of staying shaken, and here is what I realized - My life could be shaken, but I was unshakable.

What does that even mean? To me it means that even though life hurts sometimes, it's unfair sometimes, and sometimes it really sucks, but it is up to me to decide how I am going to allow it to affect my life. It is my choice, not anyone else's. I had people in my life that helped to support me emotionally and although in the

Find the people who will be honest with you and allow you to be honest with them.

beginning, I didn't even know if I could afford to put food on the table for myself and my son, I worked hard to make it happen. In addition to my full-time job, I sold costume jewelry on the side putting every dollar from that towards a down payment on a duplex for us. I took him with me, so he had to learn to behave and be bored without even having a iPad or hand held gaming system to keep him busy. Ha! My big splurge at the time was a \$2.00 bottle of Maybelline Nail Polish.

To this day, my son, who is now 36 talks about how special our relationship is and has always been. The things I felt he was deprived of as a child didn't mean the same things to him that they did to me. He saw them as strength that developed his character and made our relationship so strong and unshakable.

My parents shaped me and taught me how to win. My father modelled how not to quit. They were strong and lived their faith daily. Another low chapter came around and this time it was from my father's illness and death, and my life was again shaken to the core. At 56 years old, he was too young to go; however, I had learned that lesson before.

You can fast forward a few years and yes, I did remarry. It was a long seven-year trial married to an abusive alcoholic. But through that trial came the most wonderful daughter anyone could ever hope for!

So, instead of beating me down in every way, I chose to be unshakable. Those are choices we make, and we can choose for life's circumstances to beat us down, or we can choose to rise. I encourage you to rise! Rise above your circumstances and know you are worthy! Many of you now know my 24-year-old daughter and know the huge impact she is making in the world, and I couldn't be prouder!

At the time as a single mom of two children – ages 2 and 14, I made the obvious career choice and went into a full time, 100% commission job! Unshakable, remember!

Fast forward, and I have now been married for 20 years to the most wonderful and generous man I could ask for! We have built a business together and have built a beautiful life together, and I am so grateful! He understands the grief I went through in becoming who I am today and loves me despite and because of all of it!

WHY HAVE I TOLD YOU ALL OF THIS?

What have I done with these experiences? I believe that when we are going through these trials or chapters in our lives and we don't understand why, we make the decision to survive in the moment to get through. Only after that can you look back and see the lessons and the growth from those experiences.

I also feel that keeping those lessons to yourself is a bit selfish and so I have spent the last 15 years making sure that I am in positions to

be able to share and counsel others that have been shaken to the core, maybe through their own choices, but many times by circumstances beyond their control. I have worked in Food Pantries, because I didn't know if I could put food on the table when my son was young, so I understand their fear. I have worked with women, young and old, that have been or are in abusive situations, because I know how they feel. I know you can't always "just leave" as many well-meaning people try to advise. There are many more layers than that. The underlying threats, the marks that don't show, the never-ending loop playing in your head that you are not worthy. I have counselled and mentored women who lost their spouses way too soon and they are angry. I understand that anger and can help them navigate through that to become a healthy woman and mom again.

If I chose not to use those bad chapters to help others, then the pain would have been for nothing. I could have played the victim, but I chose to be unshakable.

IN MY LIFE, I HAVE BEEN GIVEN PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SHAKEN!

While I may not have control or much control over the circumstances, I do have control over



Susan C. Shaw believes integrity is the most important key to her success. A true local, Susan grew up in Hurst before studying Business at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas. After spending several years in the real estate and title business, Susan and her husband bought a family-owned insurance agency in 2000 that has been serving the HEB community since 1981. Susan serves on the HEB Chamber Executive Board of Directors, currently chairs membership and is the Chair for WILD (Women Inspiring Leadership Development). She was selected as the 2018 Officer of the Year for the HEB Chamber of Commerce. In her spare time, she is an active member at North Park Baptist Church and avid volunteer and missionary. She plans to travel to Botswana/Namibia in 2020.

my responses to the situations. As a business owner, wife, mother and step-mom to three great adult kids, community leader, non-profit volunteer junkie, I must decide daily – even hourly at times, whether I am going to take a stand in a positive manner to benefit others or will I come across more as obstinate because I just want to be right?

You must have those "unshakable" rocks in your big jar. The rocks you don't move on. My father used to say, "Times may change, but morals never do" – so since my faith is most important to me, then I have certain rocks I am unshakable about. When you have your compass set, the answer is a little clearer to see.

FIND YOUR CHEERLEADERS.

Find those that boost you, not those who tear you down or tell you that you can't do something. Find the people who will be honest with you and allow you to be honest with them. Above all, make your decision to be unshakable. To be a person that can be counted on in all circumstances. Unshakable in your faith, unshakable in your relationships with your children and your spouse and most importantly unshakable in your self-belief that you are enough. You are enough, and you are worthy!

Unbendable

Honesty Is Always
the Best Policy

• KIM SLATER •

Back in 2000, I was sweating my way through a final interview for a job I really wanted when the hiring Creative Director asked me, “Have you ever been fired from a job?” This felt like one of those forks in the road - you know the kind when neither option feels right. If I told the truth, would this take me out of consideration? If I lied, could I live with it?

See, I was raised in a home that did not tolerate dishonesty of any kind. In fact, if one of us got caught in a lie, it was double punishment. Now as an adult, I was faced with a choice - would I own my past and face the consequences or would I lie, knowing it might increase my odds of landing the position?

THE UGLY TRUTH

I’m a blunt person, so I won’t sugar coat it. The truth is that whether it’s to ourselves or to someone else, we all lie. None of us is innocent of this sin. God’s Word is clear, *“There is no one righteous, not even one... Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit,”* Romans 3:10-13.

Even science confirms this: There was a 2010 study that concluded that the average person lies approximately 25 times a day!

And other study by University of Massachusetts psychologist Robert Feldman, who studied lying for more than a decade, discovered 60% of people lie at least two to three times during a typical 10-minute conversation.

Take a moment to ask yourself a few questions:

- 1. Have you ever exaggerated the details of a story to make yourself sound better or to make a point so you can win an argument?
- 2. Do you dodge questions and conversations you don’t want deal with by steering others away from topics that should be addressed?
- 3. Have you ever said, “I promise to...,” and then made zero effort to keep your word?
- 4. Have you ever said, “I’ll pray for you,” knowing you probably won’t?
- 5. Do you omit certain details of a story in order to make yourself look innocent in a situation?

- 6. Do you delay or refuse to have conversations you know will be difficult or tense?
- 7. Do you purposely make up stories or tell untruths thinking you are “sparing someone’s feelings?”
- 8. Do you deceive out of fear of being in trouble or judged? To avoid rejection?
- 9. Can you fully take responsibility for your actions or do you make excuses?
- 10. Do you intentionally speak words that, while not technically false, lead someone to believe something that serves your purposes?

If you answered yes to any of the questions, then you have engaged in falsehoods instead of speaking the truth at all cost. (Ouch - that convicts me too!) 1 Peter 3:10 instructs us that those who love life and see good days keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. Why is this so hard? Because in our human frailty, we are blind to our own sin. We can witness and instantly see the “masked”



WOMEN EQUIPPING WOMEN



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