**Shout out to the Ladies!!!!**

“You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.” – Mae West

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

“Don’t be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have. Since God assured us, “I’ll never let you down, never walk off and leave you,” we can boldly quote, God is there, ready to help; I’m fearless no matter what. Who or what can get to me?” – Hebrews 13:5-6 The Message

“To be beautiful means to be yourself. You don’t need to be accepted by others. You need to accept yourself.” – Thich Nhat Hanh

“I love to see a young girl go out and grab the world by the lapels. Life’s a bitch. You’ve got to go out and kick ass.” – Maya Angelou

As women we often define ourselves by the feedback that we receive from our many different relationships. As a child we soak up whatever our parents tell us and say about us, good or bad. As a teenager we judge ourselves based on what our friends are doing or what they have. As romantic partners we mold ourselves around our mate to keep the peace and to ensure that the relationship lasts. When do we stop and listen to our own voice within us?

If much of this relationship feedback has been negative, it can be manifested in our lives as perfectionism, being overly competitive, acting happy and successful when we are actually afraid of failure. We may act defiant or rebellious as if the rules don’t apply to us or as if other’s opinions do not matter. We may blame others when we are at fault, have trouble making decisions and lack assertiveness. We could also be chronic underachievers and lean heavily on others to lead us vs. forging ahead on our own.

Other signs that tell us that we have been defined by someone besides ourself, are fear of change and new experiences, a need for material possessions or putting others down/gossiping to feel better about ourselves, feeling hopeless, having an inability to set boundaries with people, being overly critical of yourself, and engaging in negative thinking/self-talk.

The good news is that you don’t have to live this way forever. You can begin to discover who you really are at your core, what your own personal likes and dislikes are, how to speak up for yourself, how you see yourself in the future and strive to be that woman. It doesn’t matter what anyone has told you, what anyone has done to you or even what you have done to others, change is possible and you have a responsibility to yourself to do better when you know better. And since **you** have to spend the rest of your life with **you**, why not love the woman that you’re with. Believe in her, tell her positive things, do good things for her, take care of her, change the way that you look at her, stop letting people talk down or bad to her, protect her, love her, be kind to her, trust her, forgive her.

Start today…. If no one has ever told you before that you are awesome, that you are beautiful, that you are powerful and that you are brave, hear me now…. You are awesome! You are beautiful! You are powerful! You are brave! So act like it!