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HATS OFF TO YOUR BRILLIANCE

THE CROWNS WE WEAR WITHIN

BY: Linda Hannah
GENERAL

We don't usually think about the invisible things we put on each day—but they shape how we show up more than anything hanging in our closet.

A hat can be practical or stylish, but it can also be symbolic—especially when we pay attention to what we're wearing on the inside. Our thoughts shape our attitudes, and those attitudes determine which figurative hats or crowns we shift in and out of. If a hat is too loose, a gust of wind can send it flying. If it's too tight, it won't stay on for long without causing pain. But when it fits just right, even strong winds may only tilt the brim—and we can steady it in time. Life brings unexpected gusts daily. The question is whether we know how to steady our crown. There are four crown characters I often share, but two rise to the top here: the Crown of Knowledge and the Crown of Confidence.



The Crown of Knowledge **Effort Counts Twice**

Angela Duckworth models the Crown of Knowledge beautifully. As a teacher, she noticed that students who showed consistent effort often outperformed those with natural talent. Her research led to a powerful formula:

Talent × Effort = Skill
Skill × Effort = Achievement

Effort doesn't just matter—it multiplies. Duckworth calls this grit: passion plus perseverance over time. I saw this principle firsthand in my mother. In her 50s, she began attending community college, excelled, and was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa. At the time, I didn't realize her journey would ignite mine. I had quietly believed I "wasn't college material," despite earning good grades. I pursued a career, married, and raised a family.

Years later, while working full-time and raising three teenagers, I returned to school at night, earned my associate's degree, and was also inducted into Phi Theta Kappa. I went on to earn my bachelor's degree with distinction from the University of Michigan–Dearborn, just shy of my 50s. Effort truly counted twice. Starting matters less than persevering.

The Crown of Confidence

Misty Copeland wears the Crown of Confidence boldly. She began ballet at 13, far later than most, and faced criticism about her race, body type, and background. Yet through discipline and belief, she rose to become the first African American Principal Ballerina at the American Ballet Theatre. Her confidence was built not by ignoring obstacles—but by dancing through them.

That lesson resonates deeply with me.

From Self-Consciousness to Confidence

At 14, I was tall and very slim, often teased about my clothes. I wore what I now call a Hat of Self-Consciousness. Knowing how to sew, I added fabric to my pant hems. The next day, instead of ridicule, I received compliments. In that moment, confidence replaced insecurity. Solving my own problem changed how I saw myself.

Perhaps the invitation is this: notice what you're wearing on the inside. A crown of knowledge strengthened through effort. A crown of confidence built through courage. These crowns are available to any woman willing to begin, persist, and steady herself when the winds come. Often, we discover we've been brilliant all along.



Linda Hannah is an award-winning speaker, author, and founder of Linda Hannah Speaks. She is the author of The Hat Chronicles - Scripture Powered Insights to Embrace Every Role You Wear and co-author of A Widow's Resilience. She is a retired Senior Commercial Contract Analyst at ITC Holdings Corp.