

YOU GO, GIRL!
A Moms' Guide to Empowering Your Daughter

She has the power to change her world.

You have the power to help her do it...

The You Go, Girl!
Principles
Give your daughters the Tools to be Powerful Women!

You want to be SuperMom. The mom who knows all the answers, who can multi-task at the speed of sound, who empowers her daughter with a single word. However, picture this:

- Your five-year-old daughter runs crying into your house.
The little boy next door told her she can't play ball with him because she's not good enough. Because she's "a girl." What do you say to make her believe she can do anything?
- Your 12-year-old daughter's best friend has discovered boys and makeup and coolness. She has stopped talking to your daughter because she's too smart. Over the next few months, your daughter's grades start to plummet. What do you do to make her see her own potential and be happy in her skin?
- Your 16-year-old daughter comes home from school, work or softball practice, answers your questions with

- monosyllables and heads to her room. She shuts the door and shuts you out. How do you get her to talk to you again—and learn what is truly bothering her?

In any of these scenarios, you may want to demand an apology, or reprimand, threaten or nag until you get a response. Anger, doubt, frustration, indignation and desperation can cause aknee-jerk reaction resulting in more heartache, disillusionment and make any remnants of self-esteem unravel.

STOP. In any of these scenarios, think before you speak. Your next words or actions can affect your daughter **for the rest of her life.**

This is not an exaggeration. What you say or do can affect the way she looks at herself, how she sees herself in relationship to her peers and how she expresses herself when her world seems to be crashing in on her. Will that perception limit her dreams and aspirations? Or lift her to unlimited possibilities?

Your daughter counts on you, depends on you and listens to you for reassurance. She waits for guidance. Your response can affect her aspirations and where she fits into this world.

With one word, action or look, ***you have the power to empower your daughter.*** The question is "How?" Where do you even start?

By applying the ***You Go Girl! Principles*** in this book, you can find ways to empower and bring your parenting to a new level. Your

relationship with your daughter will positively change. You will both learn tools which will help her grow into an empowered young woman.

It all starts with communication. Being aware of how you react to your daughter is the first step to empowerment.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

My six-year-old daughter asked me: "Why has there never been a woman president of the United States? Can only boys be presidents?"

Her questions stopped me cold. I didn't answer right away. How would I respond? With male bashing? Snide remarks? Get on a soap box? Present statistics or the historical significance of what the possibilities might be in the future?

There was a lot riding on my answer. She would learn from my words, my tone of voice and from my body language.

We may not realize that *the way we answer* a seemingly innocent question will affect our daughter's perception of women in high ranking office and of her own potential—*for the rest of her life*. We help shape the perception our daughters have of the world and of their place in it.

What I wanted my daughter to know was that the way it is today is not the way it has to be tomorrow. So, instead of answering off the top of my head, I told her I didn't know but that I would get back to her with an answer.

After researching women presidents of other countries, I printed their biographies and placed them on the kitchen table for us to discuss at breakfast the next day. I was determined to show my daughter possibilities and not allow the history of U.S. presidents determine how she saw herself and her place in society. I was going to make sure that her aspirations reached the highest levels possible. I refused to be her glass ceiling.

We read the bios of these powerful women. She was so proud. I saw it in her face, heard it in her voice and felt it in her energy. She stood up from the kitchen table and asked: "Mommy, can I take this to school for show and tell today?"

With a sense of pride and a sigh of relief, I responded, "Of course you can. That would be a great idea."

It was. I could tell this was a defining moment for her, a moment that would help her shape her value as a girl and her future as a woman.

In my years as a specialist in communication I have learned the ***STOP Method of Empowerment*** and now apply this to the ***7 You Go Girl! Principles*** I developed.

You will learn to truly listen to your daughter and not give automatic, sometimes damaging and limiting answers to her all-too-innocent questions or heart-wrenching situations.

The principles are basic. The steps in the STOP method are simple yet effective. Implementing both into our daily interactions with our daughters will lead us on a journey to empowerment.

PUT IT TO THE TEST

In applying the 7 *Principals* and the *STOP Method* to your interactions with your daughter, you will see a difference in yourself, in the way you respond to her and in the way she reacts to you.

To become empowered, however, involves the alignment of a completely different way of thinking. Understand how you must change both your attitude and your behavior in order to positively affect those of your daughter.

It will take effort. It will take time. It will take trial and error. It will not be easy.

Anticipate points of frustration and disappointment. Think of these only as slight detours on this winding path to your destination. Once a commitment is made to empower your daughter, the journey begins. Like children going on vacation, we will find ourselves often asking, "Are we there yet?"

The beauty of the *You Go, Girl Principles & STOP Method*, however, is that you can empower your daughter whether you are a sixty-year-old mom or a twenty-six year old mom. The lessons can be applicable to a seven-year-old or a 17-year-old daughter. It's never too late to get fired up.

If your daughter has these empowerment tools in hand, she is on her way to becoming the most powerful woman she can be. Although the essence of power comes from within—from her strength, passion, and vision—it also comes from you. Your basic interaction and response to her and the way you communicate with her will be the wind beneath her wings.

THE STOP METHOD

There are those times that test us. In times of frustration, when you are about to reprimand your daughter, for example, remember that regardless of your intention, *what you say to her* and *how you say it* constructs the beliefs she has about herself and her world. Since we have such monumental impact on **how our daughters view themselves and the world**, we need to make sure that every interaction we have with them will lead them to believe they DO have the capabilities to change the world.

How do you do this? Learn the seven *You Go, Girl! Principles* and follow the STOP Empowerment Method below.

STOP METHOD

Stop

Think

Options

Present

1. **STOP**

Do not respond immediately to a comment or action with an emotional knee-jerk reaction. Whether you're angry, sad, frustrated or disappointed, remember the words you say to her and how you say them may have a detrimental effect on what she believes about herself. **STOP** and take a breath. Or a moment. Or a day.

2. **THINK**

Think about what you're going to say. How will the words make her feel? Is that my intention—to make her feel that way? Can I change the tone of my voice so that she won't tune me out?

3. **OPTIONS**

What are my options in the way I respond to her? Can I rephrase my words so that they are empowering to her instead of demoralizing? Insightful instead of judgmental? Hopeful instead of limiting?

4. **PRESENT**

Present your ideas to her. Be empathetic. Think: If I were in her shoes, how would I like this information to be presented to me? How will I learn from the information presented to me? How will the information I provide have the most positive impact on my daughter?

Implementing the STOP Method will take practice and patience. At first, you will make a deliberate effort. You have to literally stop and think before you respond to your daughter. After time, you will become CONSCIOUS of your competence and effort. You may need to concentrate before reacting, but it feels easier.

Finally your efforts will become AUTOMATIC. The "empowering-your-daughter process" becomes so practiced that it is engrained in your consciousness and becomes second nature.

Practice, practice, practice. Until you reach an automatic mode. But Wait! Life isn't that easy....be prepared to deal with:

1. Feeling Discouraged

This is inevitable. The excitement felt at the beginning of the journey is followed by a realization of just how much work it will take and how much has to change in order to get us where we need to go. To be on the same page with our daughters will be rocky. It is normal to feel discouraged and frustrated.

2. Feeling Lost

Being in "freefall" between the security of your old ways and establishing the new habit—the empowerment method—is uncomfortable. The milestones become unclear. Many of you will want to give up at this point. This is precisely the time when I encourage you to re-read the beginning of this book. It will help you focus on the overall purpose of the

process—of how to respond to your daughters' needs in an empowering way today to ensure her empowerment tomorrow.

3. Feeling Disillusioned

For every two steps forward there may be a step back. Change cannot happen overnight. In addition, your daughter will challenge you, question you, want to explore her curiosity, test her parameters, and push the envelope. This is all good—as long as the tools of empowerment are in place for her. Stay true to your commitment and true to her. The sacrifice and persistence will pay off.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

When you look at your daughter can you imagine all the possibilities for her? All the opportunities you never had?

When your daughter looks in the mirror, what does she see? Is she empowered? Confident? Able to voice an opinion? Does she feel alienated? Powerless? Lost? Shy? Sad? Where and how does she find refuge?

We can make them feel better about themselves and believe that there are limitless opportunities in store for them. Understand that you will be her role model and the one she turns to for guidance for the most complex to the most simplistic things she has to do throughout her life.

For our girls, we are the truth. Whatever it is they see us say or do, they will take at face value and make it their truth, their reality.

Many of us may not feel we have the capability to empower our daughters—or may even feel disempowered ourselves. However, the **7 You Go Girl Principles** offers a framework to follow which will later become automatic to you.

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Even though at first it may feel unnatural, I guarantee that utilizing **7 You Go, Girl! Principles** and the **STOP Method**, will allow you every opportunity to put empowerment tools at her fingertips. These tools will become second nature to her. You are laying the groundwork NOW to strengthen her spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical well-being.

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Believe that *your daughter doesn't need you to know all the answers*. What she needs to know is that you are committed to her and can take the time to help her process information that will eventually make her empowered as a girl, a woman and a human being.

THE COMMITMENT

Make a commitment to empower your daughter. It will be a continuous, long journey, much like a lifelong marathon. But at the finish line, you will find a remarkable young woman.

Reinforce your love and acceptance of your daughter for who she is. Recognize her strengths and stand by her dreams and aspirations,

as well as her trials and tribulations. Communication is the key. Be empathetic. Respect her. Listen to her.

Understand that resilience is the most important quality you can instill in your daughter. The ***You Go, Girl! Principles*** will give her the tools to develop the ***empowered mind set*** and will help her handle almost any challenge with confidence.

The more you practice and believe in the ***You Go, Girl! Principles***, the easier it will get. They will simply become a way of life.

And your commitment to empower your daughter will become a reality.