

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Spirituality/Religion

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After losing three people in my immediate family within a little over 30 days I was struggling with my emotions. While attending grief counseling I was encouraged by my counselor to journal. Journaling became therapeutic for me. On those days when I was too emotional or sad to write I would reflect on my previous journal entries. This was a reminder that through all the adversity I faced in my life God has always seen me through it. I wanted to offer hope and God's love to others struggling to overcome adversity so that is what inspired me to write the book *Resilient on Purpose*.

Here is an excerpt from the first chapter titled *Created to Overcome*. When a child is born, he or she has the expectation of being loved, wanted, and taken care of. I also believe that everyone is not conditioned to be a parent. Being a parent requires commitment, love, and sacrifice. Often, children are born and naturally taken care of by their birth parents. However, many children are born and abandoned, given up for adoption, neglected, taken in by other family members, or another of many other scenarios.

Many of you who probably remember disco, Soul Train, miniskirts, bell-bottoms, and platform shoes were born in the 1970s. Consider a little girl born during a cold winter in New York. Her parents were teenagers and probably not ready to be parents, but now there was a baby with teenage parents living in the projects.

The most dysfunctional part of my life as a child was that I often saw my biological parents. I lived in the same building as my biological father until I left the big city to go away to college. My biological mother typically didn't live too far away. I would see her from time to time at some family functions. I believe this interaction imparted feelings of neglect and abandonment in me. I have always wondered why they didn't choose to raise me. As I was growing up, my coping mechanisms were to get lost reading books, to make excuses for my biological parents, or to make up stories to ease the pain of feeling unwanted.

No one would ever let me forget where I started. My starting point reminded me of pain, but it was my beginning, and without my biological parents, I would not be here. I also know that there are specific instructions in the Bible on how relationships between parents and children should work. This is one that I always struggled with and, admittedly, still do.

The one thing that I don't think either of my biological parents understood was that I didn't long for material things from them. I just wanted their time and attention. I wanted the truth about why they chose not to raise me. I wanted a sincere apology. I wanted to feel as though I mattered, that I wasn't a mistake or a burden. I wanted more than anything to feel that they wanted me. It is important to learn that putting one's trust in people will bring disappointment, while trusting in God will never disappoint.

I could have very well become a statistic. Even a very little bit of research says that a child who grows up in the projects—or should I say a “bad neighborhood”—is less likely to graduate from high school. According to statistics, these children are more likely to be unemployed, on public assistance, unmarried yet have children of their own. Statistics and those who don't know the power of the Lord expected me to fall prey to street life, become a pregnant teen, and drop out of high school.

I always had someone speaking positivity over my life—someone telling me that I could go to college, that I could be anything I wanted to be if I put in the work. I had someone telling me to love and respect myself or no one else would.

If you don't have anyone speaking positivity over your life, then please find some new people to associate with. You can also encourage yourself by reading the Word of God and by telling yourself all of the positive and wonderful things about yourself. Negative self-talk can bring you down. It will make you believe that you are not good enough, or it will have you comparing yourself to others. There is only one you, and what God has for you is for you. Don't envy someone else's life because you don't know what it cost them to get that life. If you must compare yourself to someone, then compare yourself to who you want to become. Identify the fruitful characteristics in that person you want to become, and work on developing your personal spin on those characteristics for you.

Let me be clear—my faith didn't erase the hope of my biological mother eventually coming to take care of me. But it did make it easier to deal with all the times that she was not there. My faith taught me that God was always there and would never leave me. Trials and tribulations come, but those situations are ones to learn from to prevent the making of future mistakes. Anything worth having requires one to work for it. No one is going to drop the dream life in one's lap, and winning the lottery is highly unlikely. Erase the mentality that makes those things your hope. Pray and ask God to guide you in all that you do. Apply your plan of action, and God will do the rest.

My faith taught me to be grateful to my maternal grandparents for raising me. It taught me to embrace them as my parents because that is the role they were fulfilling. I also learned to always remember to be respectful to the biological parents who brought me into the world. But, most importantly, I learned not to let the mistakes of my biological parents define my life.

God will see you through any circumstance in your life, no matter how big or small, but you must trust and believe in Him. God hears your cry and will wipe away your tears. God will be your mother and your father. God will be your best friend. God will turn things that were meant to harm you into a blessing. So, as a result, I believe that I was created to overcome. I was created to overcome statistics, abandonment, and the negatives that surrounded my life.