

And the girls wrote:

*"I'm proud that I stood up for the girl who was bullying my best friend."*

*"I think I'm smart."*

*"I like that I'm different."*

*"I'm a really fast sprinter."*

And *"I'm a good artist."*

At the end of that year, these girls started to change. It was like they were walking a little taller. They were kinder to themselves, they were kinder to each other, and I started to change too.

It was like they showed me that I could rewrite my story. And I realized that we weren't the only ones struggling with that story; boys were struggling too. Teenagers, even adults were having a tough time coming up with one or two things to say about themselves that they felt good about.

And this negative self-image that we were holding on to, it was showing up in our culture in alarming ways. It turns out that teens' suicide: it's the third leading cause of death amongst young people. One out of four girls says they have sex for the first time to be more liked, to be more popular.

And boys and girls alike, they're joining gangs, and the number one reason is not to feel safer, it's to feel more important.

But here is the good news. The good news is that we can counteract this. The work that I did with those girls and the work I've done for the last 15 years, we've come up with ways for us to feel good about ourselves right



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now, today, and I want to share some of those things with you. OK?

So, the first thing that we can do to feel good about ourselves is **we can spend time with people who make us feel good**. This is me and Julie when I very first met her. Find your "Julie" and spend time with her or him.

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The second thing is that we can **turn up the volume on our positive thinking**. We can build up those thoughts about ourselves that are good, and we can delete the negative thoughts, just press "delete."

The third thing: Start to tell the people around you - maybe the people around you today - start to tell them what you see about them that you like. Help them jumpstart their own positive thinking.

And the last thing is, when you receive a compliment, when we receive compliments, let's stand our ground, let's look them in the eye, and let's just say, "Thank you."

Let's create a new culture: a culture where we all get to grow up feeling good about ourselves. A culture where we can rewrite our histories, we can create new stories about ourselves.

I will start.

I'm 11, and I like these legs because someday they're going to help me run marathons.

I'm 15, and I'm proud of my mom for getting herself sober and for making a better life for us.

I'm 17, and I know that nobody is perfect.

I'm 21, and I think I'm just as successful as my friends.

I'm 37, and now, this is my story.

I invite you today. I invite you to do two things with me.

First, be "Julie" for someone; invite him/her to meet themselves. Because it might change their lives.

And second, I want you to get out a piece of paper, and I want you to write down 10 things about yourself that you admire.

The 10 things about yourself that if you were someone else, you might even be jealous of. And I want that to be the beginning of your story today. I'll help get you started, OK?

So, I just met you a couple hours ago, literally, just a couple hours ago. And I can already say that you are gutsy; you are hardworking; you are unique; you are resilient; you are talented, you are gentle; you are calm; you are all amazing!

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