

COLINCU

CONNECTING THE LINKS FOR YOU

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021

**CELEBRATING
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY**

#CHOOSETOCHALLENGE

LIFE HACKS

TO SAVE MONEY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT!

MESSAGES IN A LETTER

THE JOY OF WRITING IT ALL DOWN

**LESSONS
IN LOVE**

From heartache to loving
yourself and your life again

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4 LESSONS LEARNT IN LOVE

Looking at loving yourself first so that you can appreciate the love you can gain.

7 INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINA MEGEE

On teaching, wellbeing and her Canadian challenge.

10 CELEBRATING AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS WEEK

Looking at a small collection of children's books.

11 ANNIE'S POEM

A poem reflecting on the joys of being a mum.

12 MESSAGES IN A LETTER

A message from Katharina Lehmann from Austria, Europe.

13 LIFE HACKS

Tips to help you save money and the environment!

15 #IWD2021

Celebrating International Women's Day #ChooseToChallenge

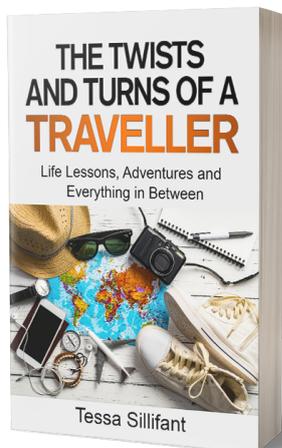


EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to issue 2 of COLINCU - a zine that aims to "Connect the Links for YOU" through inspiring, empowering and celebrating!

I am excited to share the contributions we have had for this issue and am looking forward to collaborating with others over future issues to help share matters that are meaningful to you!

For those who don't know me, I am the author of "[The Twists and Turns of a Traveller; Life Lessons, Adventures and Everything in Between](#)" and a life coach to help people overcome obstacles that are impacting upon them living a fulfilled life. I care about the world we live in and the people within it and believe when people love their lives, they put their best foot forward and this positive energy radiates around them which rubs off onto others. I am armed with life experience, and have a Bachelor's degree in Applied Science (Psychology), a Master's degree in Teaching (Primary) and a Diploma in Professional Coaching and I aim to combine my knowledge of the world, skills and experience to help others. I've worked in a number of different roles over the years, from organising professional development events and activities to providing pastoral care through mentoring and coaching tertiary students to collaborating with others to develop a wellbeing strategy that sought to get to the heart of the cause of what was causing unnecessary stress. A lover of travel and life, and a firm believer in the word being a powerful tool - I hope you enjoy what COLINCU has to offer!



Tessa Sillifant

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If you have feedback, an article, product or story you'd like to share then please get in touch! I'd love to hear from you and celebrate and share what you are up to! If you'd like to be kept up to date with new issues when they are released - you can [subscribe for free here](#)

You can also find and follow me on Instagram @tessasillifant Facebook @cornishkiwicoach and www.tessasillifant.com

LESSONS LEARNT IN LOVE AND LOVING YOURSELF



February was that time of year where emotions often sizzle to the surface as shop windows were filled with commercialised heart-felt sentiments and public displays of affection all of a sudden spring up everywhere! You're happy for others but..

- your healing heart still has the band aids firmly taped on
- you're really not into playing the game just because everyone else is
- you don't feel worthy of love yourself
- you'd rather treat yourself and plan something on a day less commercialised
- you are already loving your life so much that every day already feels like valentine's day!
- Insert other here

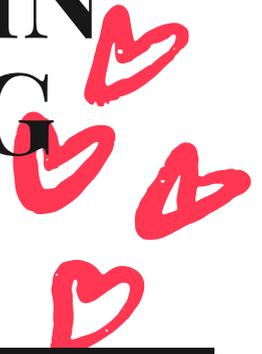
I must admit, as the years have passed I've chuckled over many a valentine's days. From being in the office and witnessing a domestic taking place over the phone; as their spouse had supposedly forgotten their special day when really he'd planned something more discreet as he was conscious of the singleton's in the office.

To telling my best friend who called me up asking what my boyfriend and I were planning to me hesitantly trying to live up to expectations by saying we were going out for breakfast, (when he hadn't uttered such words), but promptly adhered to my plea in fear of not living up to the picture I'd painted; to celebrating with girlfriends because they've stuck around far longer than any guy has!

Like with anything in life, it's how and what you make of it. Choose to see it as one big disaster because you didn't receive the expensive gifts and over the top show of affection, choose to see it as a special day to celebrate with your loved one or choose to see the good that is around you and all the love and care you receive in so many different ways that occurs at any time of the year, not just on the 14th February.

However, sometimes it's not always that easy. Those who don't feel worthy of love themselves, may be struggling with low self-esteem as they may not like themselves much and have negative beliefs that hold themselves back from living up to their full potential; or they may find themselves making bad choices or be in destructive relationships (Cherry, 2019). Low self-esteem is often believed to have stemmed from childhood either through stress, difficult life events, illnesses, bereavement, and negative and critical teachers, friends, parents, media and siblings (NHS, 2020, Cherry, 2021).

LESSONS LEARNT IN LOVE AND LOVING YOURSELF



I know from my own experience with low self-esteem, I wasn't even aware that I had it and looking back I can see within various areas of my life, it did hold me back. Signs can manifest through believing others are better than you, having a negative outlook on life, finding it difficult to say no, always putting other people's needs before your own and having trouble accepting positive comments from others (Cherry, 2021).

The aim for someone with low self-esteem would be to become aware of what is holding them back from reaching their full potential and finding ways to achieve a healthy level of self-esteem. Cherry (2021) recognises healthy self-esteem as being able to say no, having a positive outlook, being able to express what you need, accepting your strengths and weaknesses (as opposed to only focusing on your weaknesses) and being able to avoid being stuck in the past.

One way to help with this is to recognise and challenge any negative beliefs you may have about yourself and to find evidence that overrides the negative belief you currently have (NHS, 2020). For example, when I had a long-term relationship abruptly end I realised my sense of self and power lay in the mantra I had ingrained deep within my psyche; that sadly relied upon someone else.

"All will be okay because you get to go home to him and he loves you" were my go-to thoughts that got me through the difficult times. Yet when the ultimate time came my way, I finally heard those thoughts and crumbled at the realisation I no longer had what I had wrapped so tightly in my being as the sacred thing that would make life better.

Like a tidal wave hitting me on repeat, I was stuck in the clutches of something I had unintentionally created. The sense of shame weighed me down as my brain found ways to remind me over and over again of all the signs I ignored that prewarned me this day would be coming; as well as the significant weight I felt for losing the one thing I thought could "save me". My critical voice told me I was to blame, it was my fault, I should have, I was stupid, I was unworthy etc, all of which meant that I focussed on things that ate away at my self esteem and kept it low as I allowed the negative thoughts and beliefs to swirl around my mind, to continuously make me feel awful and to continuously be hard on myself.

After lots of personal development and reflection and as an exercise recommended by the NHS (2020), I was later able to challenge those negative beliefs and find positive statements to override them so that I could carry a new mantra that recognised my own qualities, strengths and positives to help me become kinder to myself.

LESSONS LEARNT IN LOVE AND LOVING YOURSELF



So from years of self-doubt, self blame, and low self-esteem that have potentially impacted upon the relationships I've had over the years, here are a few of my favourite lessons that I've learnt.

Number 1:

Don't lose who you are in the relationship. It's exciting and natural to want to spend your days with your special one, particularly during the early days, but it is also important that there is a healthy balance to your life and that you don't sacrifice or put on hold, all that you want/enjoy doing. We all change and grow as individuals and part of a relationship is sharing your life with someone so sacrifice and shared goals can form part of this, but if you struggle to say no, you can find yourself agreeing to things that take you away from your own hopes and dreams. A loving relationship is about give and take and working together and making compromises can fall into the mix, but being supportive of one another's hopes and dreams is also really important.

Number 2:

Love comes and goes, it's an emotional state of being but is one that can bring out the best in you and others. You do the things that make you happy, you feel inspired and this newfound confidence enables you to radiate positive energy, so much so, that people who pass you by, feel it too. Yet when you experience heartache, you can plummet to your knees and darkness can descend upon you. So if you've lost yourself in the relationship you may struggle to have the support you need to have around you, when and if the time comes that you need it. However, what if you aimed to keep a balance whereby your happy positive state doesn't depend on others to bring it out in you? Whilst you can't stop or control the disappointing and sad days, you could aim to bring out the positive emotions in yourself as much as possible. Gratitude, acknowledging the simple things, not taking one another for granted and appreciating that not everyone is fortunate to reach the age we have and that our time on this earth is a precious gift; all can help us see that there is more value in focusing on positive emotions than holding on tightly to the negative ones that don't serve us, or those around us, well.

Number 3:

Be mindful not to compare your "now" to another person's "now". Eight years ago I thought I was in a happy loving relationship and thought my life was "complete". Six years ago I was nursing a broken heart and tried to figure out where it all went wrong. Five years ago I started to love myself and my life again, two years ago I was a broken mess and questioning why it had all happened again and what had I done to deserve such treatment. Fast forward to today and I take on the "I am happy with who I am and where my life is heading", position. I am stronger, wiser, know so much more about myself than I did then and I am now kind to myself. However if I had taken to looking at the direction other people's lives had taken them then I could quickly get swallowed up in a comparison that isn't going to serve me well. Life doesn't always run smoothly but there's a lesson in everything, are you paying attention and growing as a person from it? What lessons have you learnt lately?

I have created a short course that aims to help those who are having to rebuild their life again after heartache. I am looking for testers who are able to go through the course and provide feedback. If you are interested in being a tester or enrolling in this course when it is finalised. Please get in touch with me (Tessa) at tsillifant@gmail.com xx

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINA MEGEE

Today I have the pleasure of chatting with Christina Megee, who lives in Hamilton, Ontario, in Canada. Christina, it's wonderful to chat with you today, tell us a little bit about yourself!

Christina: Hmmm, I think this is the hardest question to answer. Let's see. I am a 43 year Canadian female who loves teaching French, doing yoga, rescuing cats (I have 4), being out in nature and drinking wine around a fire with my favourite people! I also enjoy cooking (mostly dishes like Thai or Indian curries), baking (I've recently taught myself to make bread from scratch the old fashioned way), reading or watching mysteries (I particularly like shows like Murder She Wrote - very little blood and guts but a great whodunit) and playing board games. I also absolutely love to travel and explore new places, try new foods and basically just have new adventures whenever possible!

Tessa: That sounds like a great mix of things that keep life interesting for yourself Christina! In regards to the teaching, I take my hat off to all the teachers out there educating our future generation. Whilst hugely rewarding it is a demanding role at the best of times yet due to the current COVID-19 climate, teachers are juggling reaching students online and continue to connect and engage with those within classroom. On behalf of everyone, I'd like to acknowledge and thank you and our teaching profession across the world, (past, present and future), for all that you do to help our children learn, grow and develop into the young adults they become.

Tell us a bit about what got you into teaching and how long have you been teaching for? What words of wisdom can you give to teachers who are really struggling right now?



Christina: Thank you for that. I've been teaching for most of my life. When I was a teenager, I taught karate classes to young children and I volunteered in my little brother's kindergarten class. Even when he got older, I continued to volunteer in the kindergarten class because it was fun being around little kids who are so full of life and energy.

After I graduated from university, I went to Japan for a year to teach English and even when I came back to Canada, I continued to teach English to young adults and adults new to Canada. I continued to teach English to young adults and adults new to Canada.

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINA MEGEE

Christina cont: That was a great experience because I got to learn so much about other places and cultures around the world. I also made friends, and still keep in touch with them. After that, I decided it was time to officially become a teacher so I set off to Newfoundland to get my education degree and I have been teaching geography and French ever since. It's been about 12 years teaching in the public school system now.

For new teachers wanting to get into teaching I'd have to say that make sure it is your calling. This is not a 9-5 job where you go home at the end of the day and forget about it until the next day. On top of the lesson planning, marking and emailing parents, it's the worry and concern that you have for your students who become your kids. These things can consume you.

Tessa: Thanks Christina! Prioritizing self care is hugely important, particularly during times when we are faced with challenging situations that put us under stress. When it comes to looking after yourself and your wellbeing, what are the top things you prioritize that become non-negotiable for you?

Christina: When I first started teaching, health and wellbeing were non-existent but I started to notice that I was putting on weight, not sleeping well, extremely stressed and just overall feeling crappy. Now I make sure that I cook my meals from scratch using whole plant based foods and I get out for a walk every day. When I have extra time, I add in swimming, hula hooping, weights and/or yoga. But a walk is a must.



Christina Cont: Just getting up and outside for an hour every day before having to get to work wakes me up and makes me feel more ready to start my day. Even on days when I am exhausted, I feel better after my walk than if I skipped it.

Tessa: It's great you are so active Christina! I am inspired by the challenge I hear you are participating in right now, tell us about what it is you're doing and what you are looking to achieve.

Christina: Right now, myself, my husband and our best friends have started a challenge to do a virtual walk across Canada. Canada is 8000km coast to coast so we each must walk 2000km in exactly one year. We started last July 1st, Canada Day, and we must finish by June 30th of this year. To date, I have walked 1299.54 km. I started this challenge because of Covid. Canada has been in lockdown or semi lockdown since last March and it started to get very discouraging. It was hard to make goals and plans because nothing was open, we couldn't visit any friends or go anywhere.

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINA MEGEE

Christina cont: When I read about this challenge, it motivated me to get out and really start moving - lockdown, or not, it was something I knew I could commit to and succeed at.

Tessa: Best of luck with your challenge Christina, it sounds like a great opportunity to stay connected with friends as you share your updates and stay active at the same time!

When we look at others we can sometimes compare ourselves against them; yet we are all on an individual life-long journey of learning and self-discovery. When you look back on your life, knowing what you know now, what advice would you give your younger self?

Christina: I would definitely encourage my younger self to start prioritizing self care when I was still in high school. When I was 38, I decided to start running. My goal was to run just a 5km run which doesn't seem hard but with bad hips and knees, it was definitely a challenge.



Christina cont: I know that if this was something I had started when I was just a teenager, it would be so much easier now. I think as a teenager it is easy to believe you will never get old and that you can do whatever you want to your body and no harm will be done; but the truth is, the better you take care of yourself when you are young, the easier it is to maintain those life long habits.

Tessa: Great reflection and advice Christina! As we start wrapping up, I always love to learn what makes people laugh out loud! When was the last time you belly laughed and what were you doing?

Christina: I can't think of the exact last time as we've been in lockdown quite awhile now but usually during a night of board games with friends. The silly things you say and do when you are playing games with close friends always brings forth a good laugh for two.

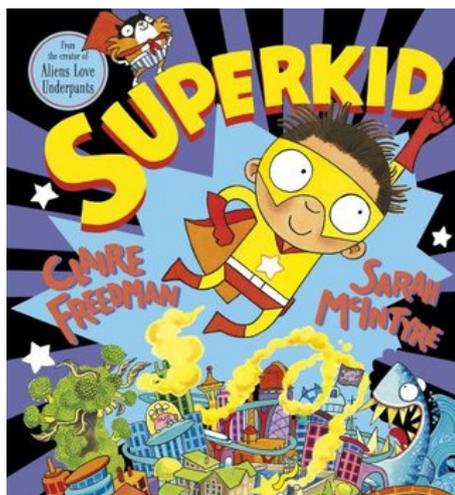
Tessa: Yes, it's been hard during lock-down to be able to find those opportunities to connect as online chat and quizzes can bring an element of awkwardness to begin with as you get used to seeing yourself on the screen! Nothing beats the face-to-face contact.

It's been lovely chatting with you Christina, thanks so much for your time and energy and for sharing with us a glimpse of your life right now! As we wrap up, if you could describe your life to date in three words, what would they be?

Christina: Adventurous, fulfilling, honorable!

CELEBRATING AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS!

We all know a good book has the ability to capture the reader's full attention and take them on a journey. The illustrations are also a wonderful tool to creatively share the vision behind the story being told and can also have huge impact! Here are some of this month's favourites!



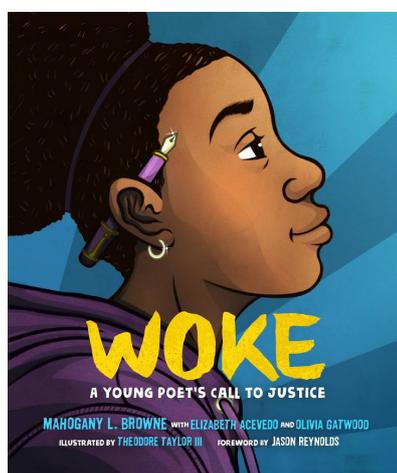
Superkid

Author: Claire Freedman. **Illustrator:** Sarah McIntyre
This beautifully illustrated rhyming story is based upon a child who uses his superpowers to get through not-so-pleasant experiences! The bold and brightly coloured illustrations entertain the reader and share the delight of the adventures Superkid is on. A creative example of being able to bring the story to life through the visual images and rhythmic flow which work together wonderfully!



Dirty Bertie Children's book series

Alan MacDonald and David Roberts are responsible for the funny Dirty Bertie children's book series that take the reader on a journey of mischievous adventures! An entertaining read for adults as well as children, you'll soon find yourself hooked and wanting to read more!



Woke: A young poet's call to justice

Authors: Mahogany L. Browne, Elizabeth Acevedo & Olivia Gatwood. **Illustrator:** Theodore Taylor III
Woke provides a number of thought provoking poems themed on social justice topics ranging from ableism, gender, prejudice, stereotyping, justice, individuality, community, equality and much much more! Each poem is illustrated in a way that captures it's essence and aims to awaken people to key messages and ideas through the notion of their words.

A POEM BY ANNIE FROM ENGLAND

When the world is full of darkness, my children bring me light.
When I'm blinded by the news around, my children give me sight.
When the world is full of unkind words, my children say the nicest things.
When I can't walk another step each day, my children give me wings.
When nothing feels certain in our lives, my children give me hope.
When I think I can't keep going, my children help me to cope.
When adults seem to have lost sense, my children lead the way.
When I'm lonely and in need of a friend, they hold my hand each day.
When I'm tired and exhausted, my children tell me I deserve a rest.
When some days I feel I'm not enough, my children say I'm the best.
When the world is grey, my children bring colour to everything I do.
I'm the luckiest Mum in the world and with everything I love you.



MESSAGES IN A LETTER!



The joy of writing it all down!



By Katharina Lehmann

In COLINCU's last issue we read about universal letter writing week. Who knew something like that existed? I for one didn't. I now propose to go one step further. Why write only during that one week in January? What about the rest of the year? Be honest, we all love receiving letters. Normally it's mostly bills or advertisements that rattle through our letterboxes. Not much fun in getting those is there? As the world has been on hold during the last year, not even the occasional postcard brightened our days. Thanks to COVID-19 most of us were unable to go on our holidays, and therefore didn't send or receive any postcards either. Why not change that? I'm sure you still have some postcards at home. From holidays long ago, advertising favourite pubs, ones you simply couldn't pass by without picking them up or ones you made yourself. Grab those and get writing. It's just a couple of sentences that will take you no more than a few minutes to write and make someone's day much brighter. Who knows, you might be a trendsetter and inspire your loved ones to write back?

If you want to write more than just a couple of lines or feel a need to meet someone new - which, given all the restrictions we live with, is quite hard these days - look up your local hospital, retirement home or school. Call them and ask if you can drop off a couple of letters. Especially retirement homes and hospitals as they are dreary places without the chance to get visits from family and friends. Write a letter to someone you don't know. Tell them about you, your day or even your hopes and dreams. Cheer them up and give them some encouragement. I am sure it will break the monotony (both for you and for them). And who knows, you might find a pen pal or meet with them when times will be better and meeting others will be permitted again.

You might not feel like writing to someone else and that's ok as well. So, what about writing a letter to yourself? Not one that reflects on your past and experiences as done in the first issue, but one that concentrates on the future. Write down what you want to achieve in 2021. Your goals and aspirations as well as wishes. Then pop it somewhere out of sight and forget about it for a while. I'd recommend the box with your Christmas decorations, you will not stumble upon it before November/December and it will be safe there. How much fun will it be to read it again in nearly a year's time. Did you stick with your fitness routine? Do that course you were interested in? Go on holiday? Circumstances might prevent you from doing everything or your goals may shift. That is all right. Don't worry, life is like a film, things move along and there is a plot twist along the way. What might interest you now may not even be on your radar anymore in a couple of months.

If you have achieved some of those things that you wrote down: Good for you! Go clap yourself on the shoulder and celebrate seeing something through! You deserve it. If you were less lucky (I will definitely be among those) reflect and think about why things didn't work out the way you wanted them to. Was it circumstances that prevented the completion? Did your goals change? Or did you not stick with the ideas? If so, why? You might not have done everything on your list, but it will tell you a lot about yourself. What is important to you and how you prioritize accordingly. Which dreams are you willing to sacrifice and for what? And what can you do differently if you wanted something then, still want it and didn't make it work nonetheless? You definitely deserve a treat as well, as you will have learned something about yourself and your inner workings. Be honest, we all know that this kind of knowledge is very hard to come by. So enjoy your newfound insights!

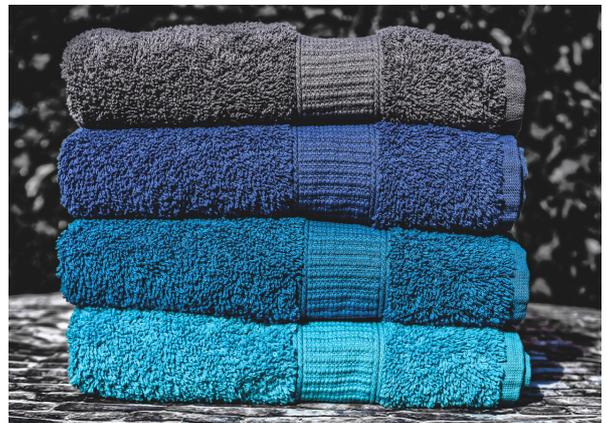
LIFE HACKS!

To help you save money and the environment!

Jars can come in handy for a number of storage options! From being a toothbrush holder, a place to hold loose change or mini stationery pieces like sharpeners, coloured pencils and erasers, to being a place to keep your food items neatly organised on your shelf! Some jars also cleverly have label tabs where you can peel them off without leaving behind any difficult sticky residue! Genius! The opportunities are endless and can actually end up sprucing up otherwise dull looking spaces.



My dad taught me this trick before I set off travelling. If you are doing hand washing, to help it dry quicker and to take out the excess dripping, roll the item up tightly into a towel and then wring the towel. Once you unravel the item you'll find the moisture has soaked through to the towel leaving the item rinsed well so that you can hang it up by a window or outside to dry.



There are many ways to be extra mindful of the water that we are using to prevent waste. Sarah Monro (2019) suggests saving shower and bath water and using it to water plants or to refill the toilet system. Other ideas include capturing running water whilst you are waiting for it to heat up to reuse it for another purpose along with using the water from your hot water bottle to water plants. For those who enjoy a cooking a Sunday roast, the water from the veges can be reused to make your gravy!



For more of Sarah Monro's tips, check out <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/team-blog/2019/11/extreme-moneysaving-household-hacks/>

Other fun useful life hacks can be checked out at Twisted Sifter's top 55 life hacks!
<https://twistedsifter.com/2015/04/55-most-useful-life-hacks-ever/>

Celebrating International Women's Day!

8TH MARCH 2021

#CHOOSETOCHALLENGE



We will celebrate women's achievements

#ChooseToChallenge



We will forge positive visibility of women

#ChooseToChallenge



We will help forge a gender equal world

#ChooseToChallenge



We will challenge gender stereotypes and bias

#ChooseToChallenge

International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate the "social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity" (International Women's Day, 2021).

To help celebrate International Women's Day a video series has been put together to highlight key things a group of international entrepreneurs have chosen to challenge. From challenging our inner critic to challenging age not being a barrier to achieving what we want to.

Head over to <https://www.texasillifant.com/international-womens-day> to it out!

Quotes from women leaders can be found below (International Women's Day, 2021)

Coco Chanel, fashion designer

"A girl should be two things: who and what she wants."

Emma Watson, actor & activist

"I think women are scared of feeling powerful and strong and brave sometimes. There's nothing wrong with being afraid. It's not the absence of fear, it's overcoming it and sometimes you just have to blast through and have faith."

Nora Ephron, journalist

"Above all, be the heroine of your life, not the victim."

Anita Roddick, Body Shop founder

"If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito."

Quotes from: <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Missions/15539/Empowerment-quotes-from-women-leaders>

CELEBRATING THE DAMSEL

Tessa
Sillifant

Say the word damsel and distress echos in your ears
An unmarried woman who isn't beyond her years
The view of being saved is conjured within the mind
Yet she is brave and capable, more than just kind.

We view others from our worldview and our very own eyes
But what lies beneath can be heavily disguised
Hard working, courageous, striving forward day in, day out
Is it time to give the damsel a celebratory shout!

To our brothers, daughters, our families and our friends
Is it time to flip the narrative to a positive lens?
Language is a powerful tool that can
reframe the pictures painted
So let's work together to get the damsel reacquainted!



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Coming soon!

In the next issue...



**WORKPLACE
BULLYING
WHAT IS IT
AND
WHAT CAN
YOU DO
ABOUT IT?**



INTERVIEW



CELEBRATING WORLD ART DAY

**TO KEEP UP TO DATE WITH NEW ISSUES WHEN THEY ARE
RELEASED YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE FOR FREE HERE**

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SPECIAL THANKS

**MANY THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS, INFORMATION SOURCES
AND RESOURCES!**

CHRISTINA MEGEE, CANADA
ANNIE FROM ENGLAND
KATHARINA LEHMANN FROM AUSTRIA

PHOTOGRAPHS - PIXABAY

KAROLINA GRABOWSKA
RYAN MCGUIRE
NICOLE TURNER
♥ MERRY CHRISTMAS ♥
RONY MICHAUD
ALEXANDRA ♥ A LIFE WITHOUT ANIMALS IS NOT WORTH LIVING ♥
ALEXAS_FOTOS / 21602 IMAGES

COVER PHOTO

BOB DMYT FROM PIXABAY

ZINE DESIGN

CANVA

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