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This TED TALK article was written with the help of Pam Cook, George Hawkinson, Mary Lou Nash, Charna Gray, and Linda McNiece. Their words are scattered throughout the following article and shared at the end of the article. I am grateful for these participants in the Zoom Write Through August writing experience.

*We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant,
Gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?*

*Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.*

Marianne Williamson

Kardashians say, "we are beautiful."
Muhammad Ali said, "I am invincible."

It was Ali's belief that affirmative mental talk and thought led him to greatness. He said, "it's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen."

We're taught to be humble. Do we really need to be humble? We are a child of God. People don't say I'm a child of God or even a person of God. They say I'm Christian. We had to ask the question, are we putting a person down when we say you are a child of God? Is "who are you not to be," admonishing them? We believe the opposite. With God, all things are possible. We know it. We have experienced it.

What we know is, if you think you're not capable of doing something, you're probably right. Rather than thinking negatively, we must give ourselves permission to be recognized as a child of God. We agreed that people, including you and we, are really good at whatever dreams we express. It is important to accept the affirmations given to us by compassionate family, friends, and great thinkers.

We Martin UMC Christians can be affirmers if we only understand that a child of God shows love for everyone regardless of talent or whatever personal vision you and we have. To fulfill our dreams, we use what we have when we can, and we know we have no reason to fear or doubt. We are assured by God's promise, I am within you. We can all be aware it is not our strength that makes us special, it is God's strength. We cannot doubt our ability to achieve dreams. Why does anyone of doubt it? We know God is within us.

The holy emptiness cries out to fill the void in our hearts with the fullness of the Christ. When you know God is in you, you can give thanks that you are the gorgeous, talented and fabulous person you are. We are reminded to in like manner build confidence in children. Self-assurance in children happens when you and we affirm that they are special. It is the sharing of uplifting and self-assuring words that make a difference in children. We know how important it is to share words of encouragement with ourselves and with the people we love.

So how do we accomplish self-improvement and improving confidence in others? We collectively shared some ideas we want to share with you. One of us suggested starting a "This I learned" journal to record new and interesting ideas in science, human relationships, and experience. Follow "This I learned" with a "This I know" journal to solidify and confirm what "I have learned."

When we are confronted with lots of sad stories we should seek thrilling stories. Know that it is important to take advantage of the gifts we have. Stretch the imaginations because we know that a mind is a terrible thing to waste. We must learn to use what we have to make us better.

We shared examples of times we have used the God gift inside us to make a difference to others. We agreed to use what we have to make what we need. For example, Pam said "I used what I had when I wanted to sing for nursing home residence. Accompaniment was not available, I couldn't play guitar, so I used recorded music to sing. When the people joined in, God was there."

We learned when you don't have a hallmark card, send coloring book pages to people colored by you with positive and encouraging words. One torn out page shared from the heart makes a difference. We found so many ways to send encouraging messages to people-on Instagram, Facebook, or just for the fun of it write a letter or send a card (or coloring book page) with an "I care" message thru the USPS mail for people needing an uplifting word.

Being on somebody's mind for five minutes is something special. Your message may be just the thing that helps the recipient know they are brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous. Knowing they are these adjectives helps them know, they are a child of God. We know it because "in each of us, there is a little piece of all of us."

Receiving a text, or a call, or handwritten message says, "somebody thought of me when loneliness was overwhelming," and that means everything. Being positive about ourselves is not limited to celebrity, it is for all. What's your affirmative "I am" statement. Say it often and believe.

Peace always

Pam, George, Mary Lou, Charna, Linda, and Ted

The following words and phrases are from a group brainstorm we did to express our feelings about the Marianne Williamsons quote.

Kardashians say we're beautiful
Muhammad Ali said I'm invincible
We're taught to be humble. Do we really need to be humble. We are a child of god
People don't say I'm a child of god (person of god)
They say I'm Christian
(are we putting a person down when we say you are a child of god?)
Who are you not to be, (admonishing them)
I don't say prayers out loud
If you think you're not capable of doing something
We don't give ourselves permission to be recognized as a child of god
Pam, you would be. Really good at.... Learned to accept the affirmations
Child of god shows god's love for everyone
Regardless of talent or whatever
We use what we have when we can
Why do we have fear... God affirms, "I'm within you"
Not your strength, god's strength
Why do you doubt it
God is within me
Holy. Emptiness

Claimed confidence to lead
When you know god is in you, you can give thanks to god that you are gorgeous, talented and fabulous
We are reminded to build confidence in children when your affirm that they are special
Share word of encouragement with ourselves
This I learned journals
This I know journal to go back and confirm what I have learned
Lots of sad stories – find the thrilling stories
Take advantage of the gifts we have
Know that a mind is a terrible thing. To waist
Use what we have to make us better. Pam said I used what I had...recorded music...couldn't play guitar
Sent coloring book pages to people
Send encouraging messages to people – Instagram, Facebook, USPS
Being on somebody's mind for five minutes is something special
Receiving a text means. They thought of your

Use what you got to make what you need