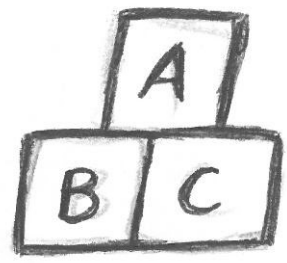
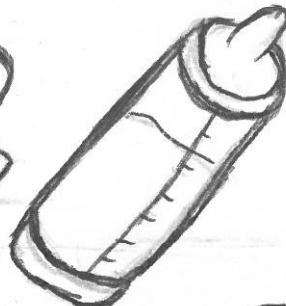


The



Struggle

Is



Real



Art by: K.R

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www.qwf.org/programs/wic

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INSIDE out

1. *I really should give myself more appreciation*
2. *I really should accept certain things in my past*
3. *I really should allow myself to feel more*
4. *I really should think more optimistic*
5. *I really should allow myself to cry*
6. *I really should appreciate what I have*
7. *I really should live in the moment, then tomorrow*
8. *I really should take more time to be more patient*
9. *I really should practice meditation*
10. *I really should accept myself more*
11. *I really should be more assertive*
12. *I really should set boundaries with people*
13. *I really should not be afraid to fall in love*
14. *I really should express myself more*
15. *I really should trust myself more*
16. *I really should accept help sometimes*
17. *I really should take advice sometimes*
18. *I really should stop letting my emotions get the best of me*

Manju

Negatives vs Positives

I really should give up

I really should try my best

I really should lie

I really should tell the truth

I really should hate myself

I really should love myself

I really should cry

I really should smile

I really should do the negatives

I really do the positives

Khadija Blaize

THE PARASITE

You really should call me more often and be there for me when I have difficulties.

You really should've educated me more about life and what life is all about.

You really should've been more there for me when I was a kid to give me good night kisses.

You really should've taken me into your care.

You should've given me more attention.

You should've put me before your women.

You really should have been there when I was struggling growing up.

You should've stood up for me when I was broken.

**You should've allowed me to be
myself as a child.**

You should've been there.

-SUPERMOM-

POTENTIAL

I have so much potential in myself and I am someone great. I know that if I push myself hard enough, I will reach somewhere. Somewhere where I never thought possible. I just have to stay focused. I am unique in my own way. My potential has no limit, it's me that stops myself from certain levels. I am authentic and I stand in my strength and no one can take my greatness away from me. There is no time limit to getting to where I want to go. I have the potential to be anything I want and my drive will bring me there.

-SUPERMOM-

POTENTIAL

Everyone always used to tell me “you have so much potential”. Growing up I was so unsure of myself I didn’t even know what they saw. Hitting my 20’s I did start to believe it more, not day to day but here and there. Enough for me to start seeing it. Potential? I put a giant question mark on that now that I am 30 and have lost almost everything. I have made some gains back in a matter of a few months. Which is great and a blessing.

Skipping back to a few months ago—I lost my kids, my home, my dignity, my sister and myself. Let alone all my papers from my entire life and my kids. I lost everything over a man (using those words would be kind) ...A monster to be exact. This monster was perfect at first, how you would picture a real gentleman. It was all a disguise. It was such a vulnerable state in my life that I was to blinded by his charm to see otherwise. Slowly control turned to hurtful words, manipulation. That made me believe I was in the wrong. My esteem was lowered. Lowering myself then turned to the acceptance of physical abuse. Every time he put his hands on me, I always said I would leave him. But he would apologize and sit there with tearful eyes like he was so sorry. And that he himself couldn’t even understand that he had hurt me. I kept trying to see the light but there was none—I was convincing myself of a lie. That he didn’t mean it and he really did love me. He would buy me things to make up for it and spend almost all his money on my kids and me. He used his money to make me feel secure, he tricked my emotions. I knew it was wrong in the back of my head. Obviously with any bad thing comes consequences. Social workers –DYP. The worst. From there the chain of events unfolded. My kids were taken.

My heart beating faster and faster as I watched these women take my children. I was yelling to my children on the street: "Don't worry mommy will get you back". "Be strong for mommy" is all I could keep screaming out to my son as he kept his head turned to me while their figures got smaller and smaller down the street. Tears, my face felt so hot with the warm tears that kept dripping down. RUN. I ran to see a comforting face. The only face I knew would not judge me. My sister...she lived just two blocks down. I could not believe what had just happened. Once I got to her place, I fell to the ground crying, screaming in pain. Like someone had stabbed me with a knife through my heart. She came and helped me up and hugged me, while I was sobbing and trying to say a word with every breath I could take.

Potential? I put a giant question mark on that. While I'm writing this and looking at a room that is not mine. An empty crib, while I wait in agony to have my daughter back. My son sleeping in his bed with sheets that are not his. One room for three in a house that is not ours.

Manju

STRUGGLE

Sometimes I wake up startled out of my sleep and I say to myself is this a dream. Some days I just wish I didn't have to get out of my bed. I wish I could stay inside where no one and nothing will bother me. I spend most of my days on a strict routine where I feel that there is no freedom at all. Some days I feel so powerless to the point where I feel that my own statements and opinions are not heard. Struggles are real somedays and all I can do is cry to release my pain. I know that being a single mother is learning about struggling in life, but I have someone who relies on me and he calls me mom and depends on my strength, love and care. He is my world as I am to him and I know that my love to him is enough and I'm not alone.

-SUPERMOM-

Trees

The trees are changing

As so am I

Changing

A part of life

The trees are losing their
leaves

Then regain them in the summer

Regrowth

The trees stand tall

so I stand like a tree

strong

-k.

Happy

Being happy comes and goes so fast. Life moves so quickly it's hard to hold on to that emotion. We should try and be more excited even over the little things, so that could be a way to hold on to happiness. Maybe not forever, but for longer than that moment because you would be making up your happiness.

Being happy is a mindset, so it's all in the way you look at things. I love being happy but I dwell so much on the negatives instead. As humans it's natural for us to do that. It's almost like a survival instinct.

All I could say to myself is be happy enough with you then everything else seems ok. When I wasn't happy with myself my life was filled with other emotions...and feeling happy was an emotion I wouldn't get to have all the time. Maybe I was afraid of being happy. As if I didn't deserve it. But I see now I do—everyone deserves to be happy. Live every day like it was your last because life is truly too short.

Manju

Dear Mommy

You've been there for all my ups and downs

And all my turn arounds

You've been by my side from day 1

And now its day 6570

You are doing so well as

A grandmother

I love you, mommy

Khadija Blaise

Mother

you've always hated that name

too formal

you called your mom that

Mommy

You're too old for that

You're on your own

Mom

that's better

simple

-k.

A Place

It was a mid-afternoon in India. Dark grey sky. Wind blowing so fiercely through the fruit trees. Humid, heavy rain seeping into the red muddy ground.

I was 5 years old, sitting on the swings in the orphanage. I remember feeling the hot rain dripping on my face. My hair was drenched; the drops were coming down my face one by one. Falling off my chin onto my lap, that turned into a puddle of water. My hands were holding on so tightly to the metal rods that tied the swing. Afraid to let go. It had left a red print in my hands.

I sat there alone, everyone else had run inside once the rain had started. I could still hear the Iya's standing outside of the orphanage house doors. Calling me to come in. I didn't look at anything else but the seesaw in front of me. It was blue and rusty. I was in a giant circle of sand. A park.

If I turned my head slightly to the right, I could see the green doors of the orphanage house open. It was a red house with the lights from inside shining out. Two figures just standing there in front. If I had looked, I could have seen the kids running around playing inside. Before I knew it, someone came up from behind me, took me off the swings and carried me inside. It was my Iya.

Manju

A Mom's Happiness

It's a beautiful fall afternoon, it's warm out & windy, you can just feel the wind blow against your face. As the leaves fall onto the ground & off the tree, as you walk on the ground you can just hear the crunch of the leaves. My kids are jumping into the pile of leaves that my handsome husband made them. The smile he has makes him so happy, we are all together as a family having a beautiful day. Having kids who are happy and a husband who's happy makes things all better for me.

-A.

I should and I shouldn't.....

I should be more independent
I should be more confident
I should've worked harder
I shouldn't have given up on certain things
I shouldn't think negative & I should think positive.

-A.

Day Dreaming

On the beach. Sunlight from the bright blue sky is striking down on me. While I'm looking at the nice blue water, I can hear the kids running and screaming, not listening to their parents. But I'm ignoring them. I set the chairs and the umbrella in the hot sand. Sitting on the chair I'm thinking should I go in the water with the other kids, or not. With all the kids splashing water at people, maybe I should. It is now 6pm and families are heading home. Sitting in the car I'm thinking of the wonderful time I had until I fall asleep...zzzzzzzz

Khadija Blaize

Baby

I knew before I really knew

I felt it in my heart

I took the test and I was
right

I was so happy to find out

I dreamed about having a baby

I am forever happy

-k.

My Nights

Ugh, I can't sleep
My everything hurts
Hmm, what if I switch sides
Nope!
Ughhh!!
Okay, I'm staying awake.
5 am
5:20 am
zzz finally
“wakes up”
drinks water
goes back to bed, falls asleep
“wakes up” full bladder
goes to bathroom, ahhhh!
goes back to bed
7 am
bright light
no more sleep for me!...

Nazli

Sounds

The sounds my baby makes
when he's hungry or tired
because then he needs his mommy
to make him feel better.
And I feel useful. Again.

The sounds the wind makes
as I take him for walks
as if it knows
I'm out there.

The sounds of a piano
as if it's playing
the music to my life
like it's playing out a song
just for me.

Nazli

In 5 Years

A 17-year-old mom, with lovely 2 months old son named Lyon. I really love my babash.

In 5 years I see our family in a big house, and a good job. I see ourselves as a big happy family.

I really like being a mom to Lyon. He makes me smile every day and I make him smile every day.

I love you babash.

Khadija Blaize

IN FIVE YEARS

I'm a mother of 5 beautiful children. I have 2 girls and 3 boys. Twins that are 10, my second is 8, the third is 6 and my youngest is 4. I want to live in a big house with all my kids and be married to the man I love. I want my schooling to be done and be working as a physiotherapist. I want to travel twice a year with my kids. Go camping with them and enjoy life and be a healthy, happy family.

-SUPERMOM-

The struggle is real...

I was so young. I grew up without my father & my mom was the one who raised me. I always wanted to see my dad but then when I reached 8 years old, he'd take us for a weekend very rarely, & by us I mean my sister & me. My parents separated when I was two years old. As I grew up, I barely saw my father but today I love him very much & he cares very much about me.

I fell in love with a boy named Andy. I got pregnant with his child at the age of 15. We were together for almost three years until he had to choose work over his own son, so a little before our son turned one I left him. I somehow had enough of him never showing, only late nights when we'd all supposed to be sleeping.

One day I met another man named Jahaziel. I fell in love with him since the first time I laid eyes on him. I got pregnant with his child & I lost both my kids.

Today I am at this place I never wanted to be in, far from my boyfriend, with people I don't know. It's really hard for me, but here is the place to be in order to get both my babies back. He & I are trying

to save our relationship & trying to fight everything that is happening.

I want my boys to grow up with a father & even though Jahaziel isn't Hunter's real dad, he's a good role model for him. I want to be with him forever & I want both my boys to have him in their life. That is my life, described in one word: "stressful."

-A.

dreaming

hurting

Darkness Light

Perception

observing

Seeing Knowing Watching looking
Crying Blinded opening closing sleeping

EMOTIONS

Colors

Inspiring

TRUTH

eye open

Seeking

wondering

Finding

clearer

maybe