

RUBY ASUGHA, M.A., M.M.

Little Sisters, Listen

UP!

BOYS TOWN.
Press

A Message of Hope

for Girls Growing Up in Poverty, Racism, and Despair

Table of Contents

Introduction		
Three Friends		3
Chapter 1		
Love		19
Chapter 2		
Poverty		31
Chapter 3		
Racism		39
Chapter 4		
Worthlessness		51
Chapter 5		
The American Dream		59
Chapter 6		
Pressure		67
Chapter 7		
Faith and Spirituality		77
Chapter 8		
Self-Esteem		85
Chapter 9		
Loneliness		93
Chapter 10		
Pain and Pleasure		105
Chapter 11		
Role Models		117
Chapter 12		
Purpose		127
Chapter 13		
Listen Up, Little Sisters		137

"It's not the load that
breaks you down, it's
the way you carry it."

Lena Horne
Singer and Actress
(Born 1917)

Lena Horne began performing at the age of 6. At 16, she was forced to leave school to support her sick mother. She became a singer and dancer, performing in famous Harlem nightclubs. In 1938, Horne started a movie career and eventually became the first African American woman to sign a long-term movie contract with a Hollywood studio. In the 1950s, Horne was an outspoken foe of racial discrimination. This had a negative impact on her career, but she never wavered in her beliefs.

Pressure

Pressure can come from many different sources: friends, school, family, yourself, and others. Pressure can be good for you (like the pressure you put on yourself to get good grades in school) and it also can be a bad, even destructive, force in your life (such as peer pressure to do drugs).

At your young age, bad pressure is all around you; it's almost impossible to escape it. There are pressures to be thin, pretty, accepted among your friends, have material things, drink, have sex, and so on. So, the first thing to understand and accept, little sisters, is that pressure, both good and bad, is a part of life.

Little Sisters, Listen Up!

What I want to say to you is this: Don't let the pressures that you experience overwhelm and dominate your life. Why? Because once you allow this to happen, they have tremendous power over you and your thoughts and actions. Ultimately, if you allow them to take over your life, you will begin to lose motivation to work hard to make your success a reality. When you give in to the pressures to drink, do drugs, or have sex, you are only hurting yourself. You are not respecting and loving yourself. And, you won't succeed.

Let's talk a bit, little sisters, about some ways that you can resist and overcome some of the bad pressures you'll face.

- Faith and prayer are some of the best ways to resist and overcome bad pressure. Sometimes you might not feel like talking to someone about the pressures that the girls and boys are putting on you. At these times, turn to God. Have a conversation with Him. Tell Him what's going on and ask Him for guidance. God will help if your faith and beliefs are strong.
- Ask someone you are close to and trust if he or she has been in a situation like the one you are experiencing. If so, ask that person how to

handle the pressure and overcome it. It's up to you to seek these people out. They won't just magically appear when you need them.

- Remember that for every pressure or problem there are many solutions – both good and bad. There also are consequences for each one of those solutions. So, think carefully about each possible solution and make sure that whatever solution you choose is one that helps to make you successful.
- Many times, it helps just knowing that you're not alone. Keep in mind that whatever problem or pressure you are dealing with, there is or has been someone somewhere who has experienced the same thing – and who worked everything out successfully in the end. So, take comfort in knowing that you're not the only one experiencing problems and pressures.
- Seek out the counsel and advice of your elders, especially your grandmother or a caring and knowledgeable aunt. These people have a wealth of life experiences for you to draw from, and they want to share and help you. Just reach out to them for a helping hand!

What Do You Think?

What can happen when you give in to the pressures around you?

What are some of the bad pressures that you face in your own life today?
