

Sojourner Truth
(1797-1883)



Epilogue



By Oprah Winfrey

We women have been having conversations since the birth of this nation. We know when it's time for a conversation to begin. Expressing ourselves as women, expressing ourselves as people of success and power and influence, it reminds me of a convention held in Akron, Ohio in 1852, where Sojourner Truth, a former slave whom I consider one of my great mentors, gathered together suffragettes asking, pleading, and fighting for the right to vote. Sojourner Truth, a proud, six-foot-tall Amazon-like figure, walked up to the podium and said:

Well, children, where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about? If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right-side up again!

Those are the words of Sojourner Truth, who believed that without media, without mass marketing, without any social programs, women joined together had the possibility of turning the world right-side up.

Now, in 2009, there's so much racket again. Today, it's about women becoming half of all the American workers, about making more money than men, about what men think about this, and about what our families, our government, and our politicians, bosses, clergy, and aging parents are going to do. Men and women, families

of all kinds, are negotiating about household responsibilities, child care, work, and sex. There's a lot of noise going on in this country and in this report about what it means to live in a woman's nation.

It seems to me it's an important conversation to have. Are our political, government, faith, and media leaders out of touch with the realities of how most families live and work today, just like they were out of touch in the day of Sojourner Truth? Some might say our nation has now been turned right-side up, but no one seems to recognize this outside of the families living and working every day. There is something a-kilter.

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Where do we go from here? One thing is for sure: Women have a new kind of power in the workplace, in the marketplace, in the boardroom, and in the bedroom. Women have as many definitions of power as there are women to use it.

Forget the idea that being powerful is about how rich or important you are, or whether or not you get your own coffee in the morning. What I find powerful is a person with grace, with courage, with the confidence to be her own self and to make things happen. We have earned the right to celebrate the kind of power that isn't about landing the corner office, but about stoking an internal fire.

For me, there is no real power without spiritual power. A power that comes from the core of who you are and reflects all that you were meant to be. A power that's connected to the source of things. When you see this kind of power shining through someone in all its truth and certainty, it's irresistible, inspiring, elevating. I can feel it in myself sometimes, mostly when I'm sharing an insight that I know will have an impact on someone's life and I can see that they "get it." I get real joy from helping other people experience those "aha" moments. That is where my power lies.

“When we align our thoughts, emotions, and actions with the highest part of ourselves, we are filled with enthusiasm, purpose, and meaning,” writes Gary Zukav in his best-selling book *The Seat of the Soul*. “When the personality comes fully to serve the energy of its soul, that is authentic empowerment.”

Fulfilling your purpose with meaning is what gives you that electrifying “juice” and makes people stand in wonder at how you do it. The secret is alignment: when you know for sure that you’re on course and doing exactly what you’re supposed to be doing, fulfilling your soul’s intention, your heart’s desire, or whatever you choose to call it (they’re all the same thing). When your life is on course with its purpose, you are your most powerful. And you may stumble, but you will not fall.

I know for sure that in every challenging experience there’s an opportunity to grow, enhance your life, or learn something invaluable about yourself. Every challenge can make you stronger if you allow it. Strength multiplied equals power.

We have the power as women, as families, as a nation to rise to the challenges of our time. To hear each other out. To talk it out. To let the conversation begin. Together, we ought to be able to “turn it back, and get it right-side up again!”