

# I am MY *why*



For anyone reading this who doesn't believe that she is  
worth putting herself first in her own life...

I have some advice. & I hope you'll listen

By - Jennifer Rawls

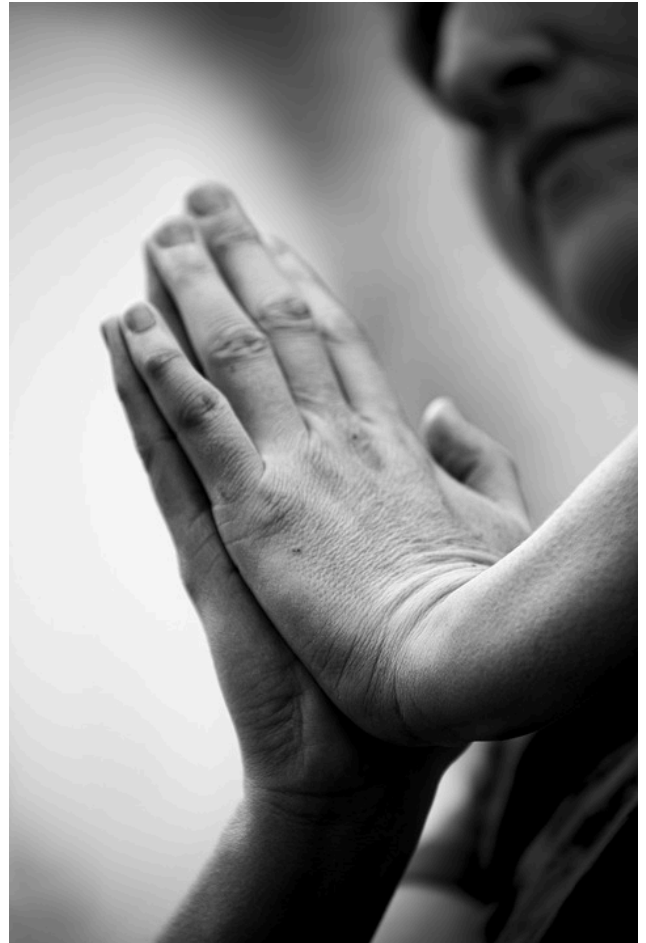
There is a popular question among personal and professional development experts advising us on how to claim the life we want:

## What is your why?

Whether you are starting a business, losing weight or getting fit, studying for an exam, whatever your big goal, chances are you will face some obstacle or challenge in getting there. As the old saying goes, “if it was easy, everybody would do it.” Whatever “it” is, it doesn’t always have to be as difficult as we make it. But the one thing the experts seem to agree on is having a clear picture of why you are making that change or working toward that goal, having a big “why” can make all the difference.

**“Know your why” seems to be the instruction *du jour*.**

As someone with some pretty major goals, I thought discovering my why might be a worthwhile exercise. So I began asking myself. I mean, I have a child whom I adore, wonderful family and friends, my health to consider,



ideas for books and other things I want to put out into the world. I have all kinds of “whys.” But I didn’t want to go with the easy answers. I wanted to dig deeper.

And what I discovered is, I think, as simple and as complex as it can be.

## I AM MY WHY.

And, with all due respect and tremendous love for you,  
I believe you should be your why, too.

Some of my reasoning is logical. If, for example, you make your teenager your big why, what happens when he does what he's supposed to and strikes out to build his own life in a couple of years? If dedication to a job has been your big why, what happens when the clientele changes or the technology improves and you find yourself with reduced hours or no job at all? We can explain why other people or jobs or volunteer work or anything is important but what happens when that person or place evolves or fades away? What's left of our why then?

Other parts of my emotional archeological dig discovered feelings that aren't so easy to hold on to. Sometimes finding answers on an emotional trek can be, as we say in the South, like nailing JELL-O to a tree. I think many of us have put others' needs before our own for so long (for unselfish and responsible reasons), that focusing on ourselves seems wrong somehow.

We've got to get over that. I want to share what I learned on my own trip down What's My Why Lane because I think it can help someone who reads this on her own journey. I asked the hard questions and came up with some difficult answers. It's a trip worth taking and I encourage anyone reading this to do the work for themselves. But I also want to give you some encouragement. Let me give you the highlights.



For anyone reading this who doesn't believe that she is worth putting herself first in her own life or that she's just going to take care of one more thing before she focuses on her own needs, I have some advice. And I hope you'll listen.

**Ready? Let's all take a collective deep breath**

**Okay, here we go.**

You are enough. On those days when you are hurried and harried and the "I love you's" are said more out of habit than feeling, you are enough. The morning after the night you stayed up to make cupcakes only to learn that kids can't bring cupcakes to school anymore, you are enough. The days when the battery is dead, the office key is on the table and your identification badge is somewhere between the back door and the trash bin, you just as you are, are still enough. On these days more than ever, remind yourself that you are your biggest why.

You are the answer to the question asked by millions of women in millions of forms every day. Why do I keep trying? Why do I have to go to the gym? Why am I eating healthy when my family wants burgers and fries at every meal? Why am I taking another class when I've just had a baby? Why am I working overtime to pay for new glasses or shoes or a field trip? Why do I wake up and want something different or more of a really good thing? Why do I keep pushing?



Be proud that you are teaching your daughters and granddaughters and nieces and your sons and grandsons and nephews and their friends that there is nothing wrong - and in fact, there is everything right - about building a life that you desire. It's good to love your life and it's great to want to grow. No one can define success for you except you so define it, determine it and then go get it.



Look yourself in  
the mirror, any  
mirror, and  
repeat these  
words:

**"I AM MY WHY."**





Move ahead with confidence. Or move ahead so you can build confidence. Ask questions and listen for answers. Read. Please read. And learn and ask and search until things make sense for you. Have fun, laugh from your soul and smile from your eyes. Be silly or serious or calm or crazy. Do you. And if anyone asks you why, answer:

## I AM MY WHY.

If you cannot be happy in your heart unless you are giving to others, give. If life isn't complete without lending a helping hand or offering an open heart, do those things and do them generously. Realizing that you are your why isn't selfish. It's liberating. Give your time, your energy, your money, your creativity, whatever you have because it fulfills you. Do it freely, honestly, genuinely and if people ask why you do so much for other people, tell them,

## I AM MY WHY.

You are worthy of being your why. You don't have to prove anything to anyone. You are enough as you are right now. How do I know? Because you are here.

But you are also worthy of starting where you are and doing, being, seeing, living, loving, creating and sharing more. It's your choice. If you choose to grow, to live the life you dream of, it won't be easy. It won't. But that's no excuse.

When things get tough, that's when your why matters most. Make no mistake, I'm not suggesting you wake up in the morning singing like Cinderella and proclaiming, "I am my why," with little birds floating around your head. (Although it's fine if you do.)

I am telling you that when you want to change your life or your circumstances and the changing gets hard, look yourself in the eye and remind yourself with steely determination that YOU are the WHY for the life you are living and the transformations that are taking place.



Say it out loud. Say it with fear or with grit. Say it until you mean it and mean it every day.

I am  
**MY**  
*why*