



## **7 Lies Women Believe and the Limitations They Create**

We listen to, believe in, and act on one lie after another – lies we tell ourselves about who think we should be. Be perfect. Be thin. Be everything to everyone. The pressures and expectations are often too much to handle. While today’s culture portrays unrealistic ideals for both genders, women are often more affected because we’re passionate pleasers and we desire to be the best – whatever the “the best” is. When we let these self-defeating “lies” sink into our consciousness, they can affect our attitude and our actions. It becomes much too easy to over-burden ourselves by attempting to live up to unrealistic standards. Below are seven common lies women believe and a more authentic truth with which we can replace them.

### **Lie: “I must be thin”**

#### **New Truth: “I will live a healthy life”**

Weight does not equal worthiness, nor does it equal beauty or health. Imagine the freedom of being accepted just as you are, regardless of the size of your clothes or the width of your waist. If we give into the “being skinny is better than being rich” lie, we will forever be starving for an approval from others based solely upon our physical shape. Our bodies are supposed to change with age, with childbirth, and for other normal reasons. Don’t limit the victorious life you could be living. Make your new truth, “I will live a healthy life.” Begin by making choices that include the goodness of healthy foods, energy-producing activities, and most importantly, an attitude of great self-worth. The weight of believing that being thin is everything is a burden greater than any bulge you’ll ever carry.

### **Lie: “I must take care of everybody”**

#### **New Truth: “I will also care for myself”**

Women are natural caretakers. We begin our days envisioning how we can meet the needs of those we love. Caring for and helping others bonds our relationships. It strengthens our connections to others – to family, to friends, to our community, church or social groups. If we notice someone’s need or if we receive a request for a task, we mistakenly feel we would be rejecting him or her if we said, “no.” It is important to spend quality time on you. You must recharge, renew, and simply rest. In order to offer the best of yourself to others, you must first care wholly for yourself. Record your name on your daily to-do list!

### **Lie: “I must be perfect”**

#### **New Truth: “I will try my best and that is enough”**

Perfectionism is a destructive path. It is a luring lie we tell ourselves in order to perform for the greatest approval of others. Reasonably you may want to do your best, but being able to emotionally and physically detach from the compulsion for perfection is essential to living well. Perfectionism is often linked to depression, eating disorders, stress and anxiety. Recognize your own perfectionist behaviors and thoughts and accept the truth that doing your best at anything is enough.

**Lie: “I can do it all”**

**New Truth: “I will do what I can”**

In close relation to the necessity to be perfect is the lie of believing you can do it all. Have you fooled yourself into believing that you can be the super-Mom, the competent career contributor, the neighborhood watch woman, the caretaking daughter-in-law, and the ever-attentive spouse, all rolled into one? Women play many roles today and with each come huge responsibilities. It is understandable to want to be fully involved in your commitments and relationships, but your time and energy are like balls to juggle. You may be able to handle a few at one time, but juggling a bucket full will ultimately result in a tumble to the floor. Reject the lie that invades your mind with pressures of being Superwoman. You cannot do it all, all the time. You are not supposed to. Accept your new truth that you will do what you can, and that’s OK.

**Lie: “I am my past”**

**New Truth: “I will live a new reality”**

The path that brought you where you are today likely included a few holes, bumps, and ditches in terms of family of origin issues, or more recent adult endeavors. While disappointments or painful events may mark your past, they do not require you to be a victim in the present. Your past has indeed influenced who you are but you are not your past. If you believe the woman you are is only defined by what has happened to you, you enable yourself to become a victim (again). The truth is you are rich with fresh and new possibilities. You can live a new reality. Seek support or counseling if you feel stuck and waddling in the woe’s of your past.

**Lie: “I have to have a man in my life”**

**New Truth: “I am a complete woman”**

No man holds possession of your meaning. A woman does not have to be a part of a couple to make her whole and complete. She can be a woman with a life of her own, and that will enrich the life she has with anyone else - including a man or not. A loving partnership can offer many benefits for a woman who seeks that. But having a man in your life is not the missing link that connects you to meaning, to purpose, or to love for that matter. Find truth in your excellence as an individual. You are complete within yourself! Celebrate this truth and celebrate your divine worth.

**Lie: “It is too late to pursue my goals and dreams”**

**New Truth: “I will begin living fully today”**

Whether the rationale involves aging, regret, fear or frustration, many women cling to safe routines that don’t allow for the risk of change and new beginnings. You can redefine or restart your goals at any time. You may even find yourself pursuing all new avenues of accomplishment. Don’t let the fear of a shrinking calendar diminish your dreams, halt your happiness, or keep you prisoner in a passive life. It’s time to realize the potential of your power as a woman and begin living fully today!

“Masquerading as a normal person day after day is exhausting.” - Anonymous

If you have a question you would like Susan to address on an upcoming show, email her at [AskSusan@Centerstone.org](mailto:AskSusan@Centerstone.org).

For information about an appointment to help eliminate the lies that limit you, call (615) 460-HELP (4357), or visit [www.Centerstone.org](http://www.Centerstone.org).

More at Midday May 23, 2007

### **About Centerstone**

Centerstone ([www.centerstone.org](http://www.centerstone.org)), a not-for-profit organization, is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Tennessee and the ninth largest in the nation. Serving the community for more than fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to individuals of all ages and their families. Centerstone is devoted to research that seeks to identify, treat and eliminate mental illness. Centerstone provides services to more than 50,000 individuals annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs at more than 65 facilities and 140 partnership locations throughout the region. For more information about Centerstone, please call (615) 460-4357 or toll free at (888) 291-4357.

### **About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS**

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.