

# Contents

## Introduction vii

### Part I: Good Things in Your Life Begin with You 1

*Narrative 1: Toads in the Backyard and School Uniforms 5*

1. Who Are You? 15
2. An Attitude of Gratitude: A Gift to Yourself 23
3. How Do You See Yourself? 33
4. Habits: The Key to Greatness 43
5. Setting Goals: Coming a Step Closer to Your Dreams 53
6. Being Your Own Best Friend 61
7. Uncovering Your Talents 69

### Part II: Your Family: Basic Training Camp 77

*Narrative 2: Noses and Other Not-so-Important Things 81*

8. A Look at Your Family 91
9. You and Your Parents 101
10. Being Responsible 109
11. Some Great Things About Loyalty 119
12. Respect Begins at Home but Travels Well 127
13. Overcoming Tough Situations at Home 137

### Part III: Cornerstones of Character: Things You Don't Want to Live Without 147

*Narrative 3: PE and the Chili Tragedy 151*

14. Do Manners Really Say Something about You? 161
15. Where Does Happiness Come From? 169
16. Honesty: Taking a Closer Look 177
17. Conscience: Following Some Good Advice 187
18. Empathy and Compassion 197
19. Courage: A Trait Worth Working For 205
20. Having a Friend and Being a Friend 213

## **Part IV: Fine Tuning: More Tools for the Adventurous 221**

*Narrative 4: The Chocolate Milk Incident 225*

- 21. The Importance of Being Fair 235
- 22. Apologizing and Forgiving: Tasks for the Brave 245
- 23. Acceptance: Learning to See Beneath  
the Surface 255
- 24. How to Use Your Hot Temper in the Right Way 265
- 25. The Power of Your Words 275

## **Part V: The Bigger Picture: Yes, You Really Matter 283**

*Narrative 5: Why I Changed My Name 287*

- 26. Growing Up: Making Right Choices 297
- 27. Taking Care of Yourself: A Word about Substance  
Use 307
- 28. What is Love? 315
- 29. Let's Talk about Sex: Facts and Fiction 327
- 30. Diversity: The Beauty of Differences 337
- 31. Taking Care of the World Around You 347
- 32. Being Your Best 355

**Index 361**

**About the Authors 367**

**About the Artist 368**

**About the Publisher 369**

**Ordering Information 370**

# Introduction

Dear Readers,

We have been around the world with you on our minds. We have been to Russia, America, China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Guatemala, Italy, Spain, England, and a dozen other places. As we traveled the world we have spent a lot of time with you, the younger generation, and asked you many questions. We have asked you what is important to you and what makes you happiest. We have wanted to know who you are. We have seen that although we speak many languages, and come in all shades and sizes, inside we are very much alike.

We have seen that many of you have lived through real difficulties. You might have problems at home. You may feel that there is too much greed and not enough kindness around you. The world's wars, diseases, poverty and conflicts are all around you—in your lives and on TV. And every day you are faced with dozens of tough decisions. Sometimes these decisions aren't so easy to make. Many times you're left wondering what is right and what is wrong. Your generation is probably the hardest to be growing up in and yet at the same time, the most exciting.

Through our own life experience, we have come to a few realizations. You are the world. You may feel small and unimportant now, but you are hugely important. You are the future. You are the future leaders and parents. You are the future teachers and principals, social workers, business people, doctors, nurses, artists, athletes, lawyers, construction workers, farmers, engineers and scientists. Without you the world would be nothing. You are the hope for us all. The choices you make will change the face of the earth. You will decide if there is to be war, or if there is to be peace. You will bring people together or tear people apart. You have more power than you can ever imagine.

You can show other people a better way to live. You can reach out to people all around you and the world will be a much better place because you have lived a good life. You may think that you cannot do much as one person, but you can—if you are deter-

mined. You will change this world if you live honorably. People will see the way you live and they will want to do better themselves.

Don't let fear and failure stand in your way. No matter what you have done in the past, today is a new day. You can re-make yourself. We have discovered that the great majority of you are kind and care about others. You may feel lost at times, but that will not last forever. You can become the person you have always wanted to be. You won't all have the same opportunities in life, but you will all have a chance to achieve your highest hopes. No matter what stands in your way you can overcome it. You will experience many challenges, but the more challenges you master, the stronger and wiser you will be. You are capable. You can do anything if you believe in yourself.

You may wonder how you can make a change that will reach around the world—it may seem impossible. But when you think about it realistically, all people want to live in a peaceful world, and the beginning of such a world starts with individuals. It sounds too simple, but it starts with you—one person. As you grow up, the good within you and the life that you have created will expand to your own family. Good families create the kind of neighborhoods and communities where people want to live. Families make up a country, and the many countries make up our world. That's the bottom line, do the math—peace begins with you. Peace by piece. In the future, people will look at you and your accomplishments and they will be grateful and proud. You have the tools in your hands to be an awesome generation.

We want you to know that this book was written for you—as a guide to help you through life. Perhaps you will discover your potential and purpose more clearly. Or learn how to deal with the passions and pressures that you feel within. Maybe you will realize just how important your life is. It is our sincere hope that you will come to understand yourself and others, and come to love and care for the world in which you live. You are a very important part of that world. You are the world and you are the future.

Yours,  
Dorothy Kolomeisky  
William Haines  
Myra Stanecki-Kolzwoski