

All I Really Need to Know I Learned from Pretty Woman by Kim Hodous

Dedicated to my Mom, Hermia Margaret Morse Tucker – the Prettiest Woman I've ever known and the one who truly taught me all I really need to know.

This book has been banging around in my head for the past 7 or 8 years – from the first time I saw PW. To this day it's still the only movie I've gone to see twice at the theater. I was hooked. And I know a lot of women just like me were too. I'm amazed, how 8 years after it's release, I can be at a cooking class, a bunko game, or a soccer tournament and if I mention PW, every woman will comment. Most of us have our favorite line: "Big mistake, really big, huge." Or "You just did." Or a favorite scene: Vivian singing Prince in the tub, Vivian saying her opera classes were broken or Edward climbing up the balcony to rescue her. I don't know that I've met a woman yet who hasn't seen it (although I know you must be out there) and if a woman's seen it – she's sure to remember something about it. I think it's that Cinderella story (or Cinda-fuckin'-rella as affectionately referred to by KIT) that we're all told as little girls that still appeals to us as big girls. I believe there's a part of even the most capable, intelligent, and assertive of us, that at times wouldn't just like to be rescued by an Edward Morse. Especially if he looked like Richard Gere, had the money of Bill Gates and adored us like Fred did Ginger.

When I had the courage to tell one of my best friends that I wanted to write a book about PW, she launched right in – that's my all time favorite movie. I love that movie, when Julia says, "Big mistake, really big, huge." And when Richard Gere gets the chauffeur to take him to her apartment. Oh Kim, that's a great idea, it'll be a best seller." Sometimes the smallest of comments can have the greatest of impact – and Bethy – I thank you for the smallest of comments, which has had the greatest of impact on my courage.

In his book, All I Really Need to know I learned in Kindergarten, Robert Fulghum says, "Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living. Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm." I'd like to say the same holds true for this book. Take any one of the items I've written about and extrapolate it into your family, your relationships, your passion (hopefully also known as your job!), your hobbies, your alone time – and it will hold true and clear and firm. From a belief strong enough in ourselves to say, "I can do anything I want baby. I ain't lost." – even in the face of someone whom we perceive to have much more power than us. To asking for what we want – "You know you could pay me." To "You shouldn't neglect your gums" - how many things do we neglect that we

shouldn't? To gratitude before it even happens, "If I forget to tell you later, I had a really good time tonight." It's all in there, from the practical and mundane to the esoteric and amusing. The Golden Rule ("You take care of you." And in return, "You take care of you.") and love ("She rescues him right back.") and basic sanitation, ("I'm a safety girl."), ecology ("So you don't build anything?") and politics (Senator Adams is here because I invited him.) and equality (We say when, we say who, we say how much) and sane living (I miss keys.) Think what a better world it would be if every time one of us left to go to work, we hugged each other and said, "You take care of you." And in return, "You take care of you." And if we all had the courage to ask for what we want, believe we deserve it all, didn't neglect our gums and how much saner a place it would be if doors still opened with keys, and toilets flushed when we pushed the handle down, not while we're on top of them!

"What's your dream? Hey mister, what's your dream?"

Hey lady, what's *your* dream? How often do you think about it? Are you living it? Do you really believe you deserve to have it? I do! I believe each of us is a powerful Goddess, capable to living our wildest dream. Will it be easy? Absolutely not. Will it be worth it? Absolutely. Whatever your dream is, do a little something to begin to make it happen - today. If it's to have your own flower shop – begin thinking of a name. If it's to quit your job and stay at home with your kids – go open an account and put \$5 in it to save for the day when that'll happen. If it's to run a marathon – park at the back of the Wal-Mart parking lot! Rome wasn't built in a day, but someone had to lay the first brick. Begin laying your bricks today.

"What do you do?"

"I cool."

I wish that could be enough for me. How we love to define ourselves – I'm an accountant. I'm a nurse. I'm the Director of Corporate Communications for a Telco company with 85,000 sales Reps. Blah, blah, blah..... I cool. That's enough. Next time somebody asks you what you do, just say, I cool. And see where the conversation goes..

"Don't you want to get out of here?"

"Get out of where? Where the fuck do you want to go?"

Sarah Ban Breathneah states in her book, *Something More*, "Human beings, as far as I can tell, seem to be divided into two subspecies – the resigned, who live in quiet desperation, and the exhausted, who exist in restless agitation." Vivian lives in restless agitation – she knows there's something more, something better to be had. Kit lives in quiet desperation – believing this is her lot in life, the hand she's been dealt. Which one are you? I suspect if you have this book in your hand you're living in restless agitation – searching for something more. Don't

give up girlfriend, you will find it. You're on your path, just wait for divine right timing to kick in!

"We say who. We say when. We say how much."

I wish I had that much control at some of my former places of employment. In today's world, most of us don't get to say who we work with, when we work or how much we get paid. Would I have traded places? Nope. But isn't it cool that even in the world of prostitution those who live in 'restless agitation' know that they have more power and more control over their lives than the resigned. As women, we can also stand in the gap and be strong for each other. Kit, I'm certain, would have probably let Carlos be her pimp if Vivian hadn't kept demanding that they be independent. Never doubt the impact you, as a strong woman, can have on the life of another woman. We restless agitators have saved many a life – besides our own.

"Take care of you." "Take care of you."

Say it with meaning to someone today. And if they don't say it back, tell 'em to. And then say it again to each other like you mean it. Those are powerful words – take care of you. Administered daily to those you love with heart and devotion behind them, they could start a revolution of caring so great in this world we wouldn't be able to stop it. And administer them daily to yourself as you head to the office, get up to drive the kids to school or prepare for a day of sameness. Get up and go to the mirror and say them to yourself. To take care of yourself is the greatest gift you could give yourself, and to those you love. Take care of you!

"Can you give me directions?"

"Sure, for five bucks."

"Ridiculous."

"Price just went up to 10."

"You can't charge me for directions."

"I can do anything I want baby. I ain't lost."

Don't you just love it? What ovaries! I would have never thought to charge someone for directions. And then to raise the price when they complained. If I did that with my kids I'd be rich. Of that exchange the most significant line is the last – "I can do anything I want baby. I ain't lost." Can you say that? Have you taught your children to believe that about themselves? I think my daughters probably believe it more than I do, but at 37, I'm beginning to figure it out. I can do anything I want baby. I AIN'T lost!

"Lights. Lights would be good here."

I love a woman who can be forward enough to say what's needed in a situation – and without apology. How many of us would have sat there and not said a word. Or if we did, we'd soften it: 'Do you think you should turn on your lights

now?' I did it all the time in my first marriage. Sat there in the dark not speaking up about was needed to make things right or safe or better. Not any more baby – I can do anything I want. I ain't lost. And that includes speaking up when I need to!

“What’s your name?” “What do ya want it to be?”

It's the way she said it, not what she said. She was playing with him. Deepak Chopra said in one of his tapes, (and I can't remember which one and so I'm paraphrasing), 'We've become a bundle of conditioned responses.' Meaning, we're programmed to conditionally respond to certain situations or questions certain ways. If someone tells us our breath stinks – we're embarrassed. If someone calls us fat, we get hurt or angry. If you spit on me you make me wet – you don't make me mad. I get to choose any way I want to respond to your actions. “What do you want it to be” was Vivian's conditioned response. But watch her face; watch her body. It doesn't feel right to her – and she knows it. Watch yourself – watch your face, watch your body. When you're reacting in a manner you've been taught, but it's not really you – your face and your body will let you know. You can take anything into your body – a statement, a question, a problem – and your body WILL NOT LIE. Trust it – as women our bodies are one of our greatest tools to truth.

“Fasten your seat belt. I'm taking your for the ride of your life.”

Words are powerful. I'm sure when she spoke them, Vivian didn't know all the implications of that statement. But take him for the ride of his life she did! Be mindful of your words. When you say, “I'm sick and tired of...” That's exactly what you'll get – sick and tired. And let's bond together to quit saying I'm sorry – except when we really need to. We bump into someone and say I'm sorry. Try excuse me. When we use the great I AM – we send out a message to the universe. I am sorry sends out a message that we're sorry – defined by Webster as pitying or regretful. I AM not pity or regret, most of the time. There are times when I've done something that I am deeply regretful of – those are the times I use sorry. Not when I bump into someone or interrupt him or her by mistake. Say excuse me – and save sorry for the really big stuff!

“Know your foot's as big as your arm from your elbow to the wrist?”

Learn some trivia. Get 3 or 4 facts you can stick in your head and pull out on cue. It's fun. It'll make you feel fun when you get to use this senseless bit of knowledge. Who doesn't want to know that >>>>>>or Try it. You'll like it.

“You make \$100 an hour and you've got a safety pin holding your boot up?”

You betcha buddy. I've never made a \$100 an hour for anything I've done – even when I went to a corporate office wearing \$200 Liz Claiborne shoes, carried

a \$500 Coach briefcase and wore \$700 Versace suits. So, although I wouldn't trade places with her – at least Vivian can say who, and when and how much. That's more than I can say for myself someday!

"I never joke about money."

I never joke about football (if it's on – I'm watching), being pregnant (which I've been 7 times!), chocolate (don't tell me you've got some if you don't), snakes (I see nothing funny in acting like there's one around if there's not) and money. I've had lots of money and I've had so little that I went for a year without ordering pizza or eating out. Rose Kennedy said, "To those whom much has been given, much will be expected." If you've got money – be grateful – and wise with it. If you haven't – be grateful – and wise with it.

"Well color me happy there's a sofa in here for two."

Watching my daughters run down the soccer field like gazelles, the smell of the ocean as you cross the Portsmouth bridge, visits from my mom, Caesar salads, 10 year old boys riding bicycles together, my first sip of coffee in the morning, plants by the front door – that's what colors me happy. Make a list today. We have so much to 'color us happy' – think about it.

"I miss keys."

Me too. And toilets you flush yourself and water faucets that don't turn on automatically and hand writing letters and >>>>>>

"It's the best."

'Cause it's high. We're the best when we're high too. High on life. You know those days – the ones where you wake up and you can't wait for your feet to hit the ground and do the things you have planned or even unplanned. Being high makes it good. Just ask a kid. When you go to a hotel they always say, "Please MOM, get a room on the top floor." They like to hang on monkey bars and go to the top of the sand pile. They just know. And you do too. We've just forgotten to listen to our instincts. So today – get high. Get high on life by doing what your gut tells you is good.

"You know you could pay me."

Ask for what you want. Don't be afraid to speak up for what is right. As women we are paid _____% less on average for the same work as men – and why? Not because we're not worth it. Because we don't ask for it. We don't demand it. Just think if each of us went into our bosses or our customers – and before we've performed one iota of service – we say – "You know you could pay me." There'd be a lot less poverty among women. One of the best books I read after my divorce was Crazy Times by _____. The author states that after divorce a man's standard of living increases by _% and a woman's decreases by ____%. We need to start to say, "You know you could pay me." And not just for

ourselves, but so our daughters will know how, or even better yet, won't have to.

"I'm a safety girl."

Whatever your profession – you need to be a safety girl, but not just from the physical, but from the emotional as well. Andrew Weil in *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health* recommends that we go on a news fast. That we no longer read the newspaper or watch the evening news. I agree. It is so negative. It's full of such bad things. As women we are so sensitive to the emotional scarring of others. I believe that it's hard for most of us to hear about a train wreck that killed 4 teenagers and not feel the pain of those parents. I'm not saying to isolate yourself, but don't bring unnecessary painful emotions into your day. As for me and my house – we're a safety house – where we focus on the good as much as possible.

"Where would we like it?"

It's admirable to ask when you just don't know. I have to do this all the time with my kids. Mom, where do squirrels come from? How do plane's fly? It's fun too, to ask someone right in the same room the same questions you've been asked. After one of my kids will ask something I can't answer, I'll turn to another one of the kids and ask them. Lindsey, Where do squirrels come from? They'll usually have an opinion, and often one that makes quite a bit of sense. So if you don't know where you'd like it, or where squirrels come from – ask someone else – they'll usually have an idea.

"You shouldn't neglect your gums."

Amen. Research shows that about 90% of adults over the age of 18 should have their teeth cleaned every three months. The whole twice a year thing was dictated by insurance, not by what's best for your oral health. (kinda like school being out for 3 months in the summer which was dictated by an agrarian society, not by what's best for kids' learning) We'll spend 60\$ to get our hair colored or \$25 twice a month to have fake nails, but we don't want to spend \$45 four times a year to get our teeth cleaned! It makes no sense. So get up right now and make a dental appointment if it's been too long since you've been there. You shouldn't neglect your gums. You've only got one set of teeth and you want 'em to last you this whole incarnation.

"It's just that very few people surprise me."

"Well, you're lucky. Most of them shock the hell out of me."

This one's a contradiction, because I believe both ways of looking at the world are valid. Some days I agree with Edward – very few people surprise me. People just are who they are. We aren't to stand in judgment of they're good or bad or right or wrong. We're supposed to accept people the way we are. Take one day and watch how many judgments you have about people. Our minds are

constantly working. Constantly evaluating and analyzing. She's got on too much make up. That outfit looks great on her. I bet he's a jerk to his wife. His legs are so hairy. Try to go one day without being surprised by anything and just accepting it. But then Vivian's attitude can be healthy too. Try going a day by being surprised by everything. Use that word. When someone tells you something, say, "How exciting. I'm so surprised." It'll add wonderment to your day.

"I'm just having a little carpet picnic here."

Do it. Go home tonight and have a carpet picnic for dinner (unless spaghettis on the menu!). It is so much fun. Spread a big blanket out in the middle of the living room floor and have a carpet picnic. You won't need stovetop to turn this into an extraordinary dinner – the act of eating knee to knee, butts to the ground will transform even fish sticks and french fries into an adventure!

"You really should think about travelers checks."

Why? In Message from Forever by Marlo Morgan, the main character, an Aborigine says, "The best way to protect yourself is to be sure you don't need any." This world is either a safe or a scary place. Whichever you believe is what you'll get. As for me and my house, we'll believe it's a safe place, and travelers checks aren't necessary. (And if my money does get taken, I'll know whomever has it now was supposed to have it instead of me.)

"Baby I'm gonna treat you so nice you're never gonna want to let me go."

That's why we love this story – because he doesn't want to ever let her go. Our words and thoughts hold power. Think how many times the self-fulfilling prophecy has come true in your life. Vivian never once thought, I bet he won't pay me or I hope I last the week. She put from thought into form the words, "Baby I'm gonna treat you so nice you're never gonna want to let me go." And guess what? She was right.

"But I'm here now."

We spend so much time belly aching about our past and projecting into our future. I know 50 year olds who are still blaming their parents (some who've been deceased for many years) for their current problems. I don't think so. We've all got hurts from the past. Some deeper than others I'll admit. But at some point you have to own your life and quit blaming ANYONE (except yourself) for where you are. You're here now. You're the only one who's been every step of the way with yourself. Own your choices, and your power, and be here now. On your own terms.

"I'll meet you in the lobby, but only 'cause you're paying me to."

My first date in high school was with Bill Kennedy – captain of the football team, Senior, honor student, most popular guy on campus. At the end of the date he didn't walk me up to the door. I was crushed – and pissed - at the same time. I decided I wouldn't go out with him again. He wasn't 'paying me to' – and so I wouldn't. Well if you want to become instantly noticed – say no to the most popular guy in school! A girl's got to have her standards. And set 'em high. Because wherever you set 'em – they'll get met. And if ya gotta lower 'em – make sure it's on a case by case basis and there's a good reason (like someone's paying you to!)

"I just wanted to say thanks. You're cool."

Honor people when they help you. Give gratitude whenever you can. Tell someone they're cool and watch the smile on their face.

"Intriguing young lady, Miss Vivian."

People notice. They notice when you speak your truth, give credit where credit is due, admit when you need help and have high standards. We're so afraid to be 'different.' It makes me insane when I watch it with my Jr. High age daughters. Goddess – please - dare to be different. People will find you intriguing. And I'd rather have one day of being intriguing than a lifetime of being ordinary.

"You're late."

"You're stunning."

"You're forgiven."

We are so easy. How come most men can still not figure out this simple formula for harmony? Show up late, forget the milk, leave underwear on the floor – but if they make their first words to us 'You're stunning' or 'How's the most beautiful woman on the planet?' and they're forgiven. Notice it all started with Vivian speaking her truth though. A paid prostitute working for a billionaire client and she called him on the carpet! Intriguing you lady, Miss Vivian.

"Slippery little suckers."

Sometimes you just gotta call a spade a spade. For years I lived in a fantasy world where I made everything in my life look perfect – my children, my marriage, my personal evolution. Well I'm done promoting that illusion. At times my kids can drive me insane, my marriage crumbled over a year ago and there are days when I'm taking a frosted cinnamon pop tart over organic granola. We don't have to be super Moms. We don't have to be anything more than what we are – cause what we are is enough. Even, if on occasion, that's being a slippery little sucker.

"Problem is – I think you like Mr. Morse."

A woman's intuition will never serve her wrong. Do you think he would have ever figured this out if she hadn't told him? Not I. One of the gifts that is inherently ours is the gift of knowingness. Of sensing things. Our intuition. Don't doubt it, and don't be afraid to use it.

"You and I are such similar creatures, Vivian. We both screw people for money."

So have and I and more than likely, so have you. Thing is, most of the time we're screwing ourselves. I worked a high stress corporate job for a year. I was an e-mail prostitute – sending and receiving documents for a fist of cash. (And I wasn't making \$100 an hour either!) So often the person we hurt the most when we're working at something that isn't our passion, is ourselves. There are millions of people who wake up first thing in the morning and can't wait to jump out of bed and get on with the day's activities. Problem is that most of them are under the age of five! So quit screwing yourself for money. I've done it. You've done it. But we don't have to anymore. We can say who, we can say when and we can say how much. We've just got to know we can!

"People always do what you tell them to do?"

They don't in my world. But what I've found is that it's more about me than about them. Days that I feel fat or fragile or like I'm not enough – people don't listen. But on the days I'm in my power and running on all eight cylinders – people listen. The biggest trick for me is to not have a preference. To not prefer if they do what I tell them to do or not. Why be attached? The Buddhist philosophy is powerful, but very simple at the same time. Should you listen to what I've written here? It's up to you. Parts will work for you and parts will not. Do what your heart tells you – not what someone else says!

Vivian's shopping experiences – first without Edward and then with his help.

"They were mean to me."

Some day I'm going to get one of those bumper stickers that say, "Mean People Suck." I hate to see someone being mean. It makes my heart hurt. I think in that moment I relive all the collective mean memories of my childhood. So many of us still carry the wounds of 'meanness' from our childhood. I think if there's one thing above all others I'd like to teach my children it is to 'be nice.' I heard a story once of a woman who lived in the middle of no where and planted a pine grove spelling out 'BE NICE' for all who flew over in a plane. Wayne Dyer speaks of going from no where to now here. Let's take the message of 'BE NICE' from the middle of no where and bring it to the now here. Every day, in all ways.

"Big mistake. Big. Huge."

Yes! I'm certainly not evolved enough to not take a glimmer of joy from a bit of well-deserved vindication. What I always wonder though is if those women

would have acted the same way if they hadn't been together. We, as women, so often band together to exclude other women that are different. Big mistake. If they could have opened their hearts to helping Vivian – they could have sent her out the door feeling like a new woman. And I bet they would have gone home feeling like new women, too. Knowing they'd helped one of their own come into her power in some little way. We can miss such awesome opportunities for growth and change when we let judgment get in our way. As women we need to be especially mindful of this as society has set us up to compete with each other rather than support each other. We tend to try and tear down the women who seem to have it all rather than hold them up as examples. Big mistake. Really big. Huge.

Vivian accompanies Edward to the Polo match where he's invited Senator Adams of the appropriations committee. Stucky sees her talking to David Morse, and fearing she's an industrial spy, queries Edward on how he met her. He tells Stucky she's a hooker. Stucky approaches Vivian and when they get home – Vivian and Edward have an argument..

“So you're the flavor of the month.”

Here it is – a perfect example of someone being mean – and of women banding together to exclude a new comer. Why? Why? Why? Because we feel insecure? Because we feel threatened? There is no legitimate answer. If we as women want to reach our full potential and power as a gender – we have to begin to build up and support one another rather than compete with each other. Be mindful, the next time you are tempted to cut down or be mean to another woman. Think of her as yourself. See yourself standing there in the eyes of the woman with 3 whining kids at the grocery store, the woman with her slip showing or lipstick on her teeth. See yourself and see yourself change.

“Well, I'm not trying to land him. I'm just using him for sex.”

Ah! For such wit. I can only think of good come backs like that about 2 hours after the fact when I'm boiling over what was said. There is something to be said for shock value. And doing the unexpected. Try it. You'll like it.

“You could freeze ice on his wife's ass.”

I just think that's a great line. Not much to say about it, but I bet it's true!

“These people your friends?”

“I spend time with them, yes.”

“Well no wonder why.”

“No wonder what?”

“No wonder why you came looking for me.”

There are no accidents. He didn't stumble upon Vivian by random chance. He co-created the encounter, as did she. As do we, every day, with everyone we

meet. When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. When a relationship is ready, the partner will appear. He called her into his life as surely as he called Stucky to close a deal. Don't believe the people you meet are by some seamless pattern – you've gone looking for them. The good and the bad. Learn from them all.

“If you were gonna tell everybody I’m a hooker, why didn’t you just let me wear my own clothes? In my own clothes when someone like that guy Stucky comes up to me, I can handle it. I’m prepared.”

They say shoes make the man. Well then, clothes make the woman. I carry a whole different energy when I leave my house with my hair pulled back in a pony tail, grungy sweat pants on and wearing no make-up than I do if I'm dressed up with my hair coifed and my make-up in place. Is this right? I'm the same person both times. But not really. We have times of day when we're mom and times when we're the professional and times when we're the strong shoulder to cry on and times when we're vulnerable. And I know for me, how I'm dressed makes a difference. I think it would have been pretty hard for me to convince the President and CEO of the last corporation I worked for to fund my next project if I'd gone into the board room in my “I'm a Soccer Mom” T-shirt and jeans. So think about what you might encounter today – and dress so you'll be prepared!

“I said I’m sorry and I meant it. That’s the end of it.”

Aren't you glad she didn't let that be the end of it? He didn't deserve to get off that easy. I don't know that I always have to have the last word (although I'm certain my husband might disagree), but it's so important that we as women stand up and have a voice and don't always accept it when strong, powerful men say, “That's the end of it.” I had the pleasure of working with a confident and self-assured business woman on a project in my last job. The tenacity with which she went after her ideas inspired me. She presented what she thought was best for the company. The President disagreed. She didn't just let that be the end of it. She got right back in his face and said, “You need to look at this again and really hear what I'm saying.” I can't even remember if she ended up getting what she wanted or not. That wasn't important. What I do remember is a powerful woman not backing down because a wealthy, powerful man said, “No. That's the end of it.” Wow. It's just the beginning for us!

**“I’m sorry I ever met you. I’m sorry I ever got in your stupid car.”
“As if you had so many more appealing options.”**

It's painful to grow – especially in relationships - and at times we're going to think, “I'm sorry I ever met you. I'm sorry I ever got in your stupid car.” At the moment it doesn't matter what our options were. It matters that we're hurting and we don't want to be. Many times after my divorce I wished I'd just stayed married – at least married I knew what to expect, even if that was emotional

unfulfillment and under appreciation. And I didn't have any more appealing options. But what I had was myself. Our most appealing option is that as we grow, we can rediscover ourselves, and never be sorry we took the risk to meet ourselves fact to face.

**"I've never had anyone make me feel as cheap as you did today."
"Somehow I find that hard to believe."**

Bless his heart – sometimes men just don't get it. Being a hooker was a conscious choice Vivian made. She'd put herself there and she took full responsibility for it. She didn't feel cheap – it was a business decision (and she doesn't joke about money). But what Edward did felt like a set up. He'd dressed her up pretty and then told Stucky she was a hooker. Whole different story. It's kinda like how you can say something bad about your own kids, but when someone else does you want to go for the jugular. Whole different story. Vivian's in touch with who she is and she didn't let Edward's comment, "Somehow I find that hard to believe," intimidate her. How many of us would have gone right into shame? Not Vivian. That's not the end of it.

"You hurt me."

"Yes."

"Don't do it again."

Amen! To tell our truth – what liberation. So succinct. So open. So honest. So willing to be vulnerable. Try it. It'll work as well for you as it did for her.

Later that night, after they've made up and they're laying in bed talking.

"My mom called me a bum magnet. If there was a bum within 50 miles, I was totally attracted."

What kind of magnet are you? What are you attracting into your life? Nothing happens in isolation. Both the good and the bad we draw to us- either on a conscious or sub-conscious level. Whatever our pattern – whether it's with men who don't deserve us or jobs where we're not appreciated or friendships where we get taken advantage of – we're the only one who can stop the madness. Regardless of what your mom calls you, your friends think of you or your man tells you – you are the only one that can break the pattern. You can be a magnet that draws to you what you deserve, or a magnet that draws to you the bums and bummers of life.

"It's not like anybody plans this. It's not your childhood dream."

"Life is what happens when you're busy making plans." I read that somewhere. I wonder what would happen if we just quit making plans and started living in the moment. It's an absence of fear that allows us to be in the moment. Vivian said she would have gone home, except she was embarrassed. Embarrassment

is just fear of being laughed at or talked about. Without fear, she would have gone home and never ended up a hooker. But then it's always perfect, isn't it? 'Cause if she'd gone home, she wouldn't have met Edward. Honor our choices and know the Divine Mother is making all things work for good.

"You could be so much more."

Couldn't we all? What would make you feel like more? A bigger house? A nicer car? Prettier clothes? A degree? A husband? Nothing will make you feel like more until you believe you're more on the inside. What you believe, you see. It's not seeing is believing. It's believing is seeing. If you believe you're worthy, that's how you'll see yourself. A car, a house, a new wardrobe, a PHD – none of those are going to make you feel like you're more, until you feel it on the inside.

"People put you down enough – you start to believe it."

Which is why we have to watch our words – especially to ourselves. If we look in the mirror and say, "I'm so fat," often enough – we'll start to believe. And once we believe it – the Universe has no other option than to honor our request and make us 'so fat.' The Universe is set up to honor our every wish and whim. So when we say, even non-challantly, I'm sick and tired, or I'm so fat, that's exactly what we'll get. The Universe can't determine the casual from the serious – and so all it knows to do is honor what we put out there. Watch what you say, because pretty soon, you'll start to believe it!

"The bad stuff is easier to believe."

Have you ever noticed that if you get your hair cut and 10 people tell you they love it and it looks great, but one person tells you they liked it better the other way – you'll invariably focus on the person who said they liked it better the other way. Why do we do this to ourselves? It's because the bad stuff is easier to believe. Well, stop it. Begin to believe the good stuff. It's a lot closer to the truth!

As they are preparing to fly to San Francisco in Edward's private jet to go to the Opera.

"If I forget to tell you later, I had a really good time tonight."

Gratitude before it's even arrived! One of the secrets to a joyful life. It also goes back to believing is seeing. She believed she'd have a great evening so she did. Try starting off your next date (even if it's with your husband) by stating, "If I forget to tell you later, I had a really good time tonight." You'll feel like Cinderella and he'll feel appreciated. I promise it'll transform your night!

"These are broken. Mine are broken."

I love it when people can act without the fear of appearing stupid. I would have probably set the opera glasses down and acted like I didn't want to use them.

Vivian just blurted out – ‘Mine are broken.’ What is our compulsion with not wanting to appear to not know something? I kinda like admitting I don’t understand something or asking when something appears wrong. It usually gives someone else the chance to feel smart – and you get to feel that way too when you finally get your answer. It’s so much more rewarding to learn something new than to sit there in silence and feel stupid. Try it, you’ll like it!

“If you’re afraid of heights, why do you get seats up here?”

“They’re the best.”

We’re back to that again. They’re the best. Well I think the best seats are wherever you are with someone you love. Believe any seat you’ve got is the best seat in the house – and watch it become that!

“Why don’t you not go to work tomorrow. Take the day off.”

Why don’t you do that? It can be so good for the soul. Take the day off, but don’t tell anyone at your house. Have a date with yourself. Go browse through antique stores, take a bubble bath, give yourself a pedicure and watch your favorite movie. Do something for yourself. Just take a day off – from work, from mothering, from listening, from being there for everyone else. Take a day to be there for yourself.

A discussion between Edward and Vivian the night before she’s supposed to leave.

“I’d arrange for you to an apartment, a car. You’ll have a variety of store guaranteed to suck up to you anytime you want to go shopping. Everything’s done.”

“What else? You gonna leave some money by the bed when you pass through town?”

“Vivian, it really wouldn’t be like that.”

“How would it be?”

“Well, for one thing, it’d get you off the streets.”

“That’s just geography.”

Amen for calling a spade a spade again. For recognizing this situation for what it really is – still being a prostitute, just for better wages. So many of us don’t recognize geography. We marry a smarter man with a better job, but he still holds us back. We take a more prestigious job with a more important title – but we’re still not recognized for our talents. That’s all just geography. Making real changes in your life requires tough choices. Not trading a Jonathan apple for a Granny Smith. Trading a Jonathan apple for a bunch of broccoli. We’ve got to make big changes – like maybe being without a man altogether for a while, or quitting our corporate job and being a waitress for six months – to really rewrite the map. Dare to challenge geography – it’ll be the best history class you’ve ever taken.

"When I was a little girl my momma used to lock me in the attic when I was bad – which was pretty often – and I would pretend I was a princess trapped in a tower by a wicked queen. And then suddenly this knight, on a white horse, with his colors flying, would come charging up and draw his sword, and I would wave, and he would climb up the tower and rescue me. But never, in all the time I had this dream, did the knight say to me, "Come on baby I'll put you up in a great condo."

~ Vivian

Don't compromise your dreams. Don't change 'em either. Unless the change comes from you, not from someone else. It would have been so easy to act thrilled with the 'offer' of a great condo, but feel hurt and cheated inside. Their relationship would have never survived that. It couldn't have. Relationships can't survive when one party accepts less than they know they deserve from the other. So why do so many of us do it? Hoping he'll change. Hoping it'll turn into something different. Iyanla Vazant says if you want to see how a relationship is going to end, look at how it started. If Vivian had accepted his offer, knowing she was selling herself short, she would have sold herself short throughout the rest of their relationship until she was so insecure and unsure of herself – Edward wouldn't have even been attracted to her anymore. In fact, she wouldn't have been attracted to herself anymore. Don't compromise your dreams – hold out for what you want.

"I want you to understand, I heard everything you said. This is all I am capable of right now. It's a very big step for me." *~ Edward*

She heard too. We all hear. We just don't listen. Whether he thought it was all he was capable of or not, she knew different. She knew she deserved more, and if he was the guy for her, then he could deliver more. Sometimes men know. Sometimes they're wrong. The only part we can be clear on is our role, and knowing what we're capable of. When we understand what we're capable of, and what we deserve, our men will often rise to the occasion, or leave our lives completely. So that a man who is capable of offering what we need can show up!

"It's a really good offer for a girl like me." *~ Vivian*

But inside she knew it was NO offer for a girl like her. Just because our external circumstances at the moment don't match up with our internal knowingness about ourselves, doesn't mean we have to compromise. I can remember when I left my husband – and our 4,500 square foot mansion – and moved into a 700 square foot apartment. The first time I had a man come pick me up for a date, I wanted to explain, 'Listen, I'm really successful and smart and capable, I'm just trying to save money to buy a house.' But I didn't. I knew what kind of girl I was like inside – and even though it didn't match up with my outside

circumstances, I wasn't making excuses, and I wasn't doubting my knowingness. If I allowed him to stick around long enough, he'd learn all about me!

"I've never treated you like a prostitute." ~ Edward

"You just did." ~ Vivian

That's awareness. That's trusting yourself and your own judgments over somebody else's. I spent 13 years in a marriage where my husband told me how it was and I believed him. I didn't tune into my own awareness and question him. He'd say, 'I know it's important to you to have the house picked up when I come home.' And I'd respond, 'Of course it is.' Ya know what? I could give a shit about having the house picked up when *anyone* gets home. I'd rather write or read or watch Oprah or tie dye with the kids or jump on the trampoline after everyone's home from school. Having the house nice and tidy wasn't my priority, but I made it mine because it was his. That's not awareness. That's trusting somebody else's judgments over your own. It's never too late to wake up though. You can always look at things from a new perspective – hopefully, you just did!

When Kit comes to visit Vivian at the hotel.

"You clean up real nice. Sure don't fit in down on the boulevard looking like you do. Not that you ever did." ~ Kit

"Thanks. It's easy to clean up when you got money." ~ Vivian

It is easy to clean up when you got money. However, it may not be as easy, but it's still possible when you don't. I've spent the last 2 years taking care of myself and three children with very little child support (a bad case of not trusting your own judgments: He says, 'You don't need a lawyer. You can use mine.' I believed him!) and trying to write rather than getting a steady job. There are so many resources out there that can be such a blessing. The health clinic that'll give required immunizations for \$3 each rather than for \$68 like the Dr.'s office. There are many second hand stores where you can get designer clothes, often with the tags still on them. Create a child care co-op with a couple of friends so you can get some time off each week without having to pay a baby-sitter. Take one day a month to make up double batches of casseroles and freeze them so on days when you're so busy you'd normally spend \$10 at Sonic or \$20 on pizza, you can pop a casserole in the oven and have a good dinner for much less. It may not be as easy to 'clean up' when you don't have money – but it's still possible.

"No. Something with shade." ~ Kit

Good for you Kit! Do you know _____ women die each year from skin cancer? I believe tanning beds are doing more to age our skin and make us unhealthy than anything since cigarettes. Research has shown that 10 minutes of exposure to UV rays each day can be beneficial. However, the women I know that use

tanning beds stay for a much longer period of time. We've again taken the media-created 'look' of tanned skin and taken it to a level where it becomes detrimental. Go get your moles (and tags and bumps and dots and red spots – can you relate? Oh – the glory of aging!) checked out once a year. Most communities have a health fair when you can get this done for little or nothing. Just as you shouldn't neglect your gums, you shouldn't overexpose your skin!

"It could work. It happens." ~ Kit

"When does it happen Kit? When does it really happen? Who does it really work out for? Did it work out for Skinny Marie or Rachel? No."

~ Vivian

"Those were very specific cases of crack heads." ~ Kit

"I just wanna know who it really works out for. You give me one example of somebody we know who it really worked out for."

~ Vivian

"Name someone? You want me to name someone? You want me to like, give you a name or something." ~ Kit

"Yes. I would like a name." ~ Vivian

"Oh God. The pressure of a name." ~ Kit

"I know. Cinda-fuckin'-rella." ~ Kit

Cinda-fuckin'-rella. That's why we love this story. It's a Cinderella story. Going from a slave to people to someone who's waited one. Going from oppression to freedom. Going from feeling unworthy to feeling deserving. Ya know the best part about fairy tales though? Whether it's Cinderella, Snow White or _____, the first part of their life is always about struggle and oppression and fear. It's only on the last few pages that things turn around. So if, up to now, you've had it pretty tough, you've got a good legacy that soon things will be turning around.

When Stucky comes to the hotel after Edward meets with Mr. Morse, and rather than taking over the company, he decides to build ships with him.

"When Edward was with me he didn't blow off billion dollar deals." ~ Stucky

When our priorities change it doesn't matter how big the 'deal', if our hearts lead us in another direction, we've got to go. I'm sure any of us that have blown off something important for something that our heart lead us to, can relate to Edward's decision. From blowing off a staff meeting to attend a child's play to blowing off a week of work to build homes for the poor in Mexico, we know there's no feeling that could replace the joy of that heartfelt decision. Not even a big fat check in your bank account. It just doesn't compare.

"I gave you ten years. I devoted my whole life to you." ~ Stucky

"This is bullshit. This is such bullshit. It's the kill you love, not me. I made you a very rich man doing exactly what you love." ~ Edward

That's awareness. That's trusting yourself and your own judgments over somebody else's. Outward appearances seem to indicate Stucky was a dedicated employee, but who he was dedicated to was himself. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. However, we have to be sure our joy and our passion don't harm other people or things. There's always two sides to a story. If you can find out what it is you love, and get paid for it, the rewards will be great. Not just monetarily, but in personal satisfaction too.

"Not all guys hit." ~ Edward

Thank goodness. And if yours is one that does, you need to go deep inside and practice some awareness and trusting of your own judgments. I'd never want to stand in judgment of a woman who stays with a man who abuses her, but I'd want to tell her that not all guys hit. And not one woman or child on this planet deserves to be hit. My dad was a Quaker minister for a few years and he always taught us that hitting was a form of violence. He'd ask, "How can we expect peace in the world if we can't even keep it in our own homes?" Hitting is violence and violence negates peace. How can we have peace internally if we don't have it externally? Not all guys hit. And if yours is one that does, please get some help.

"I heard what you did with Morse." ~ Vivian

"It was a business decision." ~ Edward

"It was good." ~ Vivian

"It felt good." ~ Edward

When Vivian's getting ready to leave Edward because her week of employment is up.

"But now everything's different and you changed that and you can't change back. I want more." ~ Vivian

"I know about wanting more. I invented the concept. The question is, how much more?" ~ Edward

"I want the fairy tale." ~ Vivian

"Impossible relationships. My special gift is impossible relationships." ~ Edward

I think we've all felt that at some point. What we have to remember is that it's in the tough relationships that we learn, not the easy ones. My most painful relationships have been the ones that have taught me the greatest lessons and I've learned the most about myself. So when we find ourselves in an impossible relationship – whether it's at work, with a friend, with a man – say Thanks! Thanks because this is where you're going to grow and learn about yourself.

Vivian and Kit saying goodbye.

"We think you got a lot of potential Kit DeLuca." ~ Vivian

"You do? You think I got potential?" ~ Kit

"Oh yeah. Don't let anybody tell you different, okay?" ~ Vivian

Why would anyone want to tell her different? It doesn't make sense does it? There are just some people out there who will want to tell you that you're not as valuable, as bright, as amazing as you are. In his inauguration speech, Nelson Mandela said, "It's not our darkness we're afraid of, it's out light." You are a bright light. Don't let anybody tell you different, okay?

The following morning when Edward is preparing to return to New York. After spending the evening by himself.

"It must be difficult to let go of something so beautiful." ~ Barney, the Hotel Manager

It is difficult to let go of things of great beauty – our children as they grow up, relationships that once nurtured us but no longer do, homes where many fond memories occurred, roses as they wither and die. But the real beauty in these things is that we can hold them in our memories and in our hearts and always have them when we wish. Nothing ever leaves you completely, and the good stuff you can always recall.

When Edward arrives at Vivian's.

"Vivian. Vivian. Princess Vivian. Come down.... Had to be the top floor right?" ~ Edward

"It's the best." ~ Vivian

"So what happened after he climbed up the tower and rescued her?" ~ Edward

"She rescues him right back." ~ Vivian

YES! He gave her things that she needed, but she gave him back just as many. Our society seems to place greater importance on things of monetary value. He might have been rescuing her, in part, with money, but she was rescuing him back with things of no less import – love and acceptance and joy. Don't ever de-value what you have to offer, especially if it can't be measured monetarily.

"Welcome to Hollywood. What's your dream? Everybody comes here. This is Hollywood. Land of dreams. Some dreams come true, some don't. But keep on dreamin'. This is Hollywood. Always time to dream. So keep on dreamin'."

What's your dream? Ya know, some dreams come true and some don't. I believe all dreams that are supposed to come true do. If something means enough to you, and it's a dream you really want to come true – you'll make it happen. Look at Mugsy Bogues – 5 feet 4 inches and in the NBA, Lance Armstrong, Norma Rudolf. There are thousands of examples all around us that prove if a dream is pursued diligently enough, it will come true. There's always time to dream. So keep on dreamin'.