Empowering Girls of the Future

By now you have probably seen the new photography trend of the sporty girls all glammed up. As a photographer I wanted to jump on the bandwagon and do some too, with my two daughters. However, I felt the need to take it a step further and help these girls feel empowered. I also decided that this message deserved to include more girls than just mine. So, I reached out to my village of moms with daughters and found five more amazing, young girls.

This idea all started when I was volunteering with my daughter’s Girl Scout troop. They were doing a lesson on being powerful. It got me thinking, do my daughters see me as a powerful woman? Do I empower them every day? Am I raising them to feel powerful, independent, and to be kind human beings? Then I thought, do I know what powerful really means? What do people think of when they hear the word powerful? So, I did what anyone would do, I googled it. The first thing that came up was the definition.

powerful /ˈpouərfl/  
adj. 1. having great power or strength.  
synonym: strong, muscular, muscly, sturdy, strapping, robust, mighty, hefty, brawny, burly, husky, athletic, manly, well built, Herculean, tough, solid, substantial, lusty; beefy, hunks, ripped, shredded; buff, jack, stalwart, stark, intoxicating, heady, hard, strong, stiff; spirituous, intoxicant violent, forceful, heavy, hard, mighty, vigorous, hefty, thunderous

The list of the synonyms really struck a nerve with me. It insinuates what I expected, that most people immediately picture a man when they hear the word powerful. Yes, I know some of those words can be used to describe girls/women but most of them are used to describe boys/men.

I wanted to know what the girls thought. They mentioned things like being strong, tough, hardworking, determined, smart, standing up for others, and being a leader. They all mentioned that being a part of a team or sport is one way that makes them feel this way. Besides being all of these things, there is also one other thing these amazing young ladies have in common; they all have incredibly strong mothers who are raising them to be strong, independent, empathetic and powerful young ladies.

As you can see from the pictures these outstanding young ladies are all different shapes and sizes but, they are all BEAUTIFUL, HEALTHY, ACTIVE, ATHLETIC, STRONG, and POWERFUL! I hope they know this, and I want them to know that they should never ever let anyone make them feel otherwise. Which brings me to my next inspiration for this project. My oldest daughter had two encounters in which
she was body shamed and treated in a way that made her feel diffident. The first was a dance audition when she was 7, and the second situation in my eyes, is even worse. A close family member made some remarks implying that she was overweight. I have been prepared to help her navigate mean girls, or bullying with her peers, but these are grown adults and family members! Both times I felt paralyzed, and like I was going to vomit. I had to wait a while for my blood pressure to come down before I spoke to her so I wouldn’t say something I would later regret. Now, that doesn’t mean I didn’t go into the other room and scream multiple obscenities, punch a pillow, stomp my feet and throw a fit. I definitely did that. In both instances I never spoke up to the people who hurt my daughter at the exact moment I should have. This is where my guilt comes in. Where I feel like I just failed my daughter. Me, her mom, the one who should have her back no matter what, just froze. I preach to my kids all the time, to stand up for others when they need you, no matter how difficult it may be or who it was. I just became a hypocrite. I did apologize to her later and promised her that I would never let it happen again.

I recently came across an organization called Just Strong who has a clothing line of active wear and their mission is to help empower and motivate women to be strong. They even have a kids line. The mission speaks to me, being an athlete, coach, former PE teacher and mom of two girls (and two boys). I am proud to say I am now a brand ambassador. Let me tell you ladies, the gear is AMAZING. Powerful messages on the tops, fits great, and super comfortable. My girls love that they can dress like me when we workout together. Give it a try and you will not be disappointed. Go to www.juststrong.com and use my discount code at checkout. TANROB10.

I see so much shaming, and bashing on social media of women, girls and moms and it is nauseating. So, here is my challenge to you, let’s start lifting each other up, and empower one another instead of judging. You never know what someone already thinks of themselves. After all we want our young girls to grow up to be powerful, confident women. Remember, they are always watching!

Progress, Not Perfection! (My favorite Saying on my Just Strong gear.)

#GirlPower

Photography by: Tanya-Lynn Photography