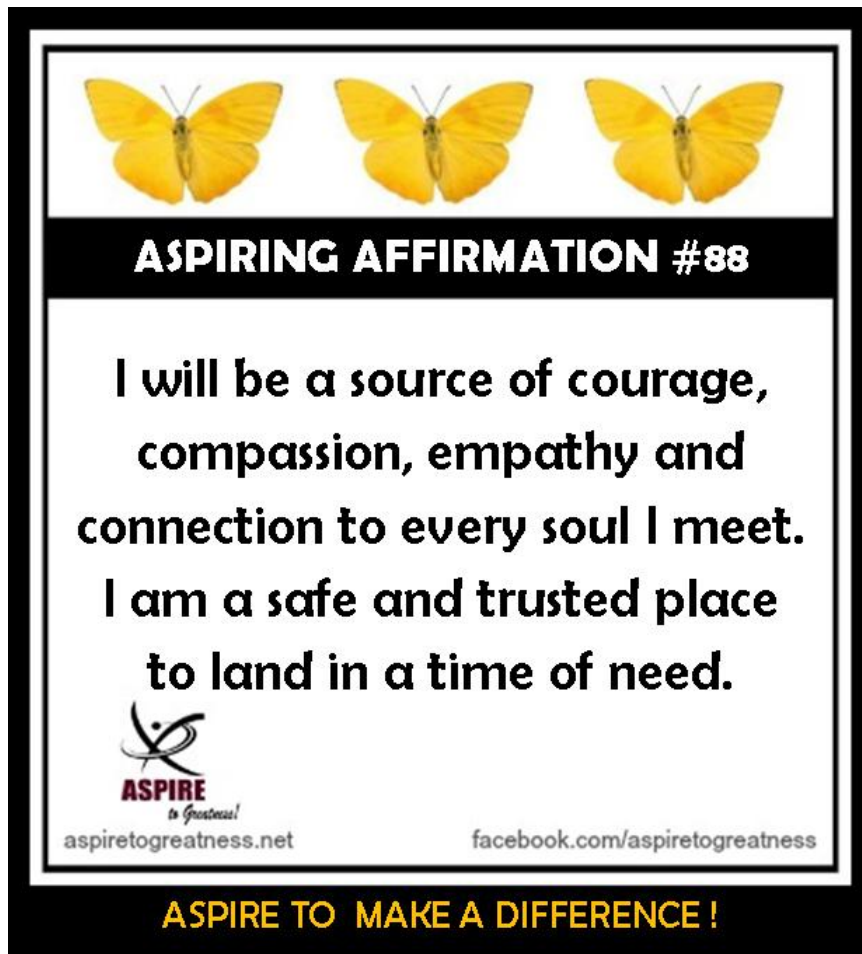


# A Moment of Transparency #2: We Must ASPIRE to Compassion!

Dear Friends:



This morning my heart is heavy, as I contemplate the future of a young 13-year girl I met a few days ago and her one month old baby. In a few hours, she will be boarding a plane to join her father in Florida. While looking into her eyes, I told her how special she is and that her baby is a gift. I reminded her that she is not her mistakes and to not blame herself for the decisions she has made; but to learn the lessons and move forward. I shared with her the challenges and rewards she would experience as a mother.

Furthermore, we talked about the importance of her valuing and honoring herself and her body; and that she is a gift to any man lucky enough to have her. We talked about the importance of dealing with her pain; becoming emotionally and spiritually

healthy and her priorities as a mother. Additionally, I stressed the importance of her finding a support group that can help nurture her along her journey and provide emotional support. Immediately, my heart began to cry out as I thought about the reality of what I asked her to obtain for herself. *Who can she really count on? Who will mentor and guide her? Who's going to step up in this young girl's life, and be there for her and her baby? Who will remind her of how special she is and cultivate the greatness that resides within her?* I am trusting God to open a few doors for her in Florida. What burdens me is the millions of young girls that require the same level of support.

As I held her and assured her that everything would be alright, I could feel her pain. When I asked her if she was afraid, she began to cry. I said to her that I knew that she wish it was her mother holding her and not a stranger. In that moment, I was very aware and conscious of how the power of her mother's love and affirming words could instantly empower her. This young woman is in desperate need of intentional parenting, her parent's love and a community of people that will uphold her. I wonder how many people have stopped to ask themselves, *"How does this young girl really feel?"* I can tell you how you feels, she's scared to death, she feels alone and does not feel equipped to meet the demands that come with caring for a newborn. She herself is still a baby.

As a society, we must change our perception of teenage moms. Many of these young women are hurting as a result of broken homes, absent fathers, no one to confide in, low self-esteem, mistaken identity, mother's that are overworked and have checked out...and the list goes on. Teenage moms should not be discarded and labeled as promiscuous young girls who are contagious or have some sort of disease. The reality is that teenage pregnancy exists because of what's lacking in their home and society at large. THERE'S A MUCH LARGER ISSUE THAT

MUST BE ADDRESSED. For many, it's easier to blame the young girls and label them as promiscuous, than it is to stop and ask, *"How have I and society contributed to this epidemic?"*

Along my journey, I have discovered that many of us need to ASPIRE to compassion. The world is lacking in this area. Consequently, many of us suffer through life needlessly.

***What would the world look like if we exercised more compassion?***

***How healthy would you be, if someone had taken out the time to walk you through a challenging time, without judgment and harsh criticism?***

Before we parted, I had her store my number in her phone; and I did the same. I have made a commitment to stay connected to this young lady and be a source of courage, compassion and connection. I will be a lifeline for her.

***How can you make a difference today in the life of someone that is in need?***

***Who in your circle is in need of compassion?***

Today it's them, tomorrow it could be you.

Please join me in praying for the success of this young lady and her beautiful baby.

Today, I affirm that I will...

**ASPIRE TO GREATNESS AND BE A SOURCE OF COURAGE, COMPASSION, EMPATHY AND CONNECTION TO EVERY SOUL YOU MEET!**