

Nicole Thompson

### Peace Within

Have you known three people to be so different from South Central L.A, Alabama, and the Valley, but so much alike in a lot of ways? People say that you can be alike, and can go through different things but still be the same in many ways like things you go through. In the book And Still We Rise written by Miles Corwin there were three different people Olivia, Latisha, and Ms Little who have a lot of obstacles to overcome.

Olivia has a lot of obstacles to overcome, but she can do that if she helps herself. Olivia has come a long way. Being a little girl growing up in South Central with her mother beating on her all the time for nothing, and telling the judge that she did not want her anymore, was something that Olivia had to overcome whether it was to forget it or always remember and be hurt by it. Olivia also has been to different foster homes in her life. These foster homes that she went to were just as bad as her mother's house. The foster parents locked the girls in a room all day when it was hot. Olivia gets tired of all the abuse, and she runs away from these foster homes, and AWOL she went. Olivia can overcome this just by going to her counselor and telling her the problems that were going on. Olivia went about it in a different way, and AWOL she went. Olivia always wanted fast money so she could be on her own. She sold candy at the school to have money for clothes. Olivia did well with the selling of the candy. That was not enough for her so she worked at a clothing store. One other obstacle Olivia had to overcome was when she was arrested for forgery. At first, she was not worried about it at all. Olivia knew she was going to get off with just probation, but as time went on, and court dates were cancelled she was not so sure anymore. Olivia's lawyer, Peter Weiss, said that "It is a shame she has no one to talk to. No mother, no father, no counseling. That would cause anyone to be screwed up" (Corwin 261).

Even though Olivia did not get probation she was still positive that she would get out in time to go to college. However it is a good thing for her. Despite all the obstacles Olivia had gone through, she has overcome all of them by staying positive through all of the problems she faces. Because she loved school so much, she finally got out of Dorothy Kirby Center, and went directly to California State University of Northridge. She did well in everything she did after that. Olivia is one person who I can say deserves everything good here on out just like Latisha.

Latisha had different barriers than Olivia did but is overcoming them. As a child, Latisha was a very bright girl and always loved school. Her mother became a crack head and left Latisha, and her brother for days at a time alone with no food to eat. Latisha was also sexually abused by a man her mother lived with. In the midst of all this that was going on in her life, Latisha would still get good grades in school even though she still had a lot of barriers to climb. However when she was in the eighth grade, Latisha went to live with her father's sister in Los Angeles. So after leaving Huntsville, Alabama she convinced her father to get a two bedroom apartment and he did so she moved in with him. Latisha's father enrolled her into Crenshaw High School to the gifted program. She drank a lot to get the memory of the molestation out of her head. Latisha did not tell anyone about the molestation. So she was an alcoholic by the age of fifteen. After having a breakdown, she finally told her aunt about the molestation and quit drinking. Latisha was in a lot of things in school such as cheerleading, and she wrote for the student newspaper. She wanted to prove to everyone that she could succeed despite the abuse. Even though Latisha did not pass the AP exam, she still went on to Alabama A & M College, but dropped out her sophomore year. That is ok though because she moved back to Los Angeles, and a job as a receptionist at a clothing company. Latisha still goes to community college. She is overcoming the obstacles in her life like so many other people.

The obstacles that Ms. Little has to overcome are a lot different from Olivia and Latisha because she is a teacher. Ms Little has been through a lot in her life, being a teacher in South Central Los Angeles. Ms Little was a drama teacher at a magnet high school for the performing arts in the San Fernando Valley before even coming to Crenshaw High School. Everything started for her when she found out that the boyfriend she was living with was cheating on her. In addition to him cheating, he wanted her to move out but she did not leave because Ms. Little did not have anywhere to go. She even figured if she stayed there at the house, they would get back together. When it did not happen, she moved out. So Ms. Little started putting all her grief into her student's plays. She was also accused of having sex with her students. It was not true, she had to leave the school, and all of that was to be investigated. Ms. Little missed teaching so she started working at Watts High School. She had a lot of complaints there that the administrators were total fascists. Ms. Little left there and got a temporary one year position at another school until an opening became open at Crenshaw. Ms Little has been having the same obstacles here at Crenshaw as the other school with the staff, but she has to overcome them one way or another. She thinks everyone is against her. Ms. Little needs to really focus on her students and not everyone around her. She had left school for time off, and when she got back she did not have a lot of time to prepare the students for the AP exam. So after graduation only two people out of her class passed the exam. In order for Ms. Little to clear her mind and focus she has to not worry about what others think of her so she is still overcoming her obstacles.

So people who are different can be very alike in many ways. People have so many obstacles to overcome but at the same time really is still dealing with them everyday. Sometime they have to have peace within and keep on going no matter what.