

Stand Up! Speak Out!

LIVE OUT LOUD: You Ought to Be Proud to Live Your Life Out Loud *Guide for Discussion, Reflection or Role Play*

Believe in yourself, be proud to be exactly who you are, and never give up! That's what Émile Zola's quote means to me. But bias and bullying unchecked can crush our spirits, make us question our belief in ourselves, our worth, and how we each impact the world and all the people around us. This is my It Gets Better song: No matter how bad you are feeling about your life at this moment, there is at least one Ally out there who cares. Pick up the phone. Make that call. Don't go it alone and never give up on yourself!

Vocabulary

childhood wounds: ways in which we were hurt by things that were said or done to us as children, whether they were said or done intentionally (on purpose) or unintentionally (due to carelessness or ignorance)

color inside the lines: literally, this refers to the expectation of how children should color in coloring books; figuratively it refers to the unfair expectation that people who are different in some way should try to fit in, even if it means not being true to themselves, hiding or being ashamed of who they really are

live out loud: to live your life to the fullest, with no shame, proud to be exactly who you are

***I've got some childhood wounds like you / I've got the smoothest scars to prove
That I can slip and fall / And I can lose it all / And get back on my wheels and ride again***

1. If you are the target of bullying, it is crucial that you report it, and take advantage of all the support your school counselor, teachers, and staff can offer. We also need support *outside* of school when we're going through rough times. We might talk to friends or family, listen to music, write poetry, or work out. **a)** What activities help you stay strong and positive? **b)** Who can you count on to help you stay strong and positive when times are tough? (you don't have to name names) **c)** How many people know they can count on *you*? *Tell at least one person this week.*

I've got to push myself out of my own way / Cause I can be my own worst enemy

2. Words are powerful, and if we hear negative things said about us often enough, we sometimes start to believe them. We have to remind ourselves, "It's not true!" TV and magazine ads can do the same thing, by showing us images of people that are so *photo-shopped*, they don't look like real people! Yet we often believe we *can* or *should* look like that. **a)** How is *beauty* portrayed in ads? Who does it include or exclude? **b)** How can these images effect how we feel about ourselves, how we see each other? How can they effect our physical health? **c) No Name-Calling Myself Log:** How often do you catch yourself calling *yourself* names, aloud or inside your head? Keep a log for 1 week. This will help you pay attention, and cut it out, because "It's not true!"

I've got a life to live / And I've got a lot to give

If you ask me what I came into this life to do, I will tell you / I came to live out loud

3. Sometimes we forget that we have a lot to give, especially if we're targets of bullying or name-calling. And we need to be reminded. Do you have a mentor, role model, a hero from history or the present, a celebrity you admire? Imagine you can write to this person when you're having a hard time. Now imagine *s/he writes back*. **Write a letter to yourself** from *that* person to *you*, telling *you* how special you are, how much you are loved, how much s/he believes in you, and what a difference you can make in the world.

No matter who you are, you ought to be proud / To live your life out loud

Even if you're not in with the inside crowd / Go ahead and live your life out loud

4. Every one of us has the right to live our life to the fullest, proud to be exactly who we are. But bullies often target people who are in some way different from "the inside crowd." Those most often targeted are LGBTQ students and students with disabilities. Forming a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) is one way to create a safe space for *all* students. *Straight students who have the courage to be Allies and support their non-straight classmates are key to a GSA's success.* **a)** Does your school have a GSA? If so, do you support it? If not, would you support students who wanted to start one? **b)** Some schools have a safe space for students to gather, as an alternative to being in open areas like the cafeteria. Does your school have a space like that? Does it need one? How else can we make school a safe space where every one can live their life *live out loud*?