

# Girls Are Strong! (And Boys Are, Too.) 17 Ways To Be Strong

By Cheryl Rainfield, the award-winning author of *STAINED*, *SCARS*, and *HUNTED*.

We are often told through the media and society that girls aren't strong—and that boys aren't emotionally strong—but we are. There are many ways we can be strong and save ourselves. Here are seventeen ways that Sarah in *STAINED*, and I, saved ourselves, and that you can, too:

- 1.) **Trust your intuition**, even when people pressure you not to or say that you are wrong.
- 2.) **Believe in yourself** the way you believe in those you love. Recognize your good qualities and strengths.
- 3.) **Find your own heroes**, real or imagined, that you can learn from.
- 4.) **Protect yourself and others from bullying** if you can. If you can't, tell someone.
- 5.) **Give compassion and kindness to others AND to yourself**. That takes strength and courage.
- 6.) **Take in the positives that other people give you**, and remind yourself of them frequently.
- 7.) **Follow your passions**, even if other people make fun of them. Do what makes you happy.
- 8.) **Find a way to say what you really think and feel** through writing, talking, art, dance, etc. You may be surprised at how many people will relate when you are emotionally honest.
- 9.) **Love and accept your body and look critically at the media**. Remember that ads are airbrushed and are not real, and are meant to target insecurities.
- 10.) **Protect yourself emotionally** if you are being abused or criticized. Keep hold of your soul, your goodness, and don't let anyone twist them. If you have to hide them from an abuser, do so.
- 11.) **Take positive emotional risks**. When you care about someone, let them know.
- 12.) **Ask for help when you need it**, and accept it when you're given it.
- 13.) **Face the hard things**—emotional pain, trauma, memories—and talk them out. You will heal faster.
- 14.) **Find a way to escape abuse**. That can mean you: tell someone; ask for help; psychologically fight back; find a way to leave or get safe; physically fight back if you have no other alternative. If you don't get safe at first, keep trying. You will do it.
- 15.) **Take self-defense classes**. Learn how to physically protect yourself when you need to.
- 16.) **Don't give up on yourself**. No matter how awful things seem, if you keep working toward safety and happiness you will get there, as long as you're still alive to do so. Keep hold of your needs and dreams.
- 17.) **Believe that it will get better. It will.**



How are you strong? How do you protect yourself?

*In STAINED, Sarah thinks she knows what fear is—until she's abducted. Now she must find a way to rescue herself.*

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