

*You Are Worth  
Fighting For*



# *You Are Worth Fighting For*

YOUR GUIDE TO  
FINDING MENTAL  
WELLNESS AND  
SELF-LOVE

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# Dedication

In memory of my beautiful mother, Sang Watts.

February 7, 1954 - May 19, 2021

Mom, thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me for years to write a book. I finally did it, all in honor of you. The first person I wanted to call when I finished writing was you, and it pains me to know you'll never read this book, but you inspired *every word*. I miss you forever, my love will never change, and I love you, more.

Nothing Less Than a Bath and A Half  
-Your most famous saying lives on, Momma





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# Introduction

Sept 12, 2019, was a day that I will never forget and was one of the hardest days of my life. That was the day that my mom, my best friend, Sang Watts, let me know that the doctors suspected what I had a gut feeling about for months, that she had cancer, which we would soon find out was pancreatic cancer. For the next 651 long and hard days, she fought with a positivity and strength that I have never seen before.

Throughout her journey with cancer, I developed an even stronger appreciation for my mom and all she was to me and to others. My mom had a lot of sayings that she said over, and over, and over again. When I was growing up, I didn't think too much into these statements, but during the year and a half that she battled cancer, I was able to reflect on a deeper level about all that she taught me. At the surface, some of her sayings were just reminding me to stay organized or to be patient in traffic, but as I've grown and reflected, I've realized that her sayings have a deeper meaning for finding self-love and self-worth.

My mom had a way about her where she was able to share exactly what was on her mind and still have it well received. She may not have always told someone what they wanted to hear, but she told them what they needed to hear in a way that was still compassionate and open for further discussion. I often look back in awe at her strength, her honesty, and her ability to stand up for what she believed in.

I wish I had connected my mom's teachings to finding my self-worth and learning to love myself earlier in life, as it would have helped me through the mental health challenges that I faced, but those challenges have made me who I am today. Today, I am thankful to share my story and tools for wellness as a Mental Health Empowerment Speaker and as a mental health advocate. I am a former DII All-American track athlete and a NCAA Woman of the Year Award finalist. In my personal life, I am a single mother to my beautiful baby girl, Charlotte, a daughter, and a friend to many. I am determined, loving, hardworking, and strive every day to reach my goals. I am someone who struggled to find my self-worth and who struggled with my mental health in silence, despite my accomplishments.

In our society, we are often encouraged to feel bad about ourselves, compare ourselves to others or even put ourselves down for not reaching our goals or for not meeting someone else's expectations, and this can easily lead to many of us struggling with our mental health. It's so easy to let the negativity that creeps into our minds completely cloud out any of the positives about ourselves or the situation. It's so easy to learn to grasp onto self-hate and self-criticism, than to learn to embrace the journey of self-love and compassionate growth. If you've ever felt like you weren't good enough, or that you weren't worthy of being in

a certain situation, it's okay, society has conditioned you to feel this way, and you aren't alone. But what I hope you realize from this book is that you don't have to always feel that way. You don't have to feel stuck, because you aren't. There is a world of potential inside you that involves a life of acceptance, compassion, love, and joy from others and from yourself.

This book keeps my mother's legacy alive. On May 19, 2021, we lost my mom to pancreatic cancer. My mother was the most beautiful person I have ever known, and her strength lives on within me. The chapters that you are about to read aim to help you find your strength as well. The fear, grief, love, laughter, and moments of hope that came from my mom's journey throughout her life, my childhood, and her fight with cancer, influenced this book and the words that follow. This book is a compilation of eleven of my mom's teachings, each of which I have applied to this book with my own mental health lens, to help you find your own sense of mental wellness, self-worth, and self-love. Each chapter of this book mirrors a saying my mom said to us all of the time when we were growing up, that with my own reflection and growth, have molded me into the person I am today. Through the tools and reflection prompts/questions provided, you'll walk away not only with some new catchy phrases, but also a renewed sense of self and you'll learn to love and accept yourself for who you are and know that in this moment and in every moment, you are more than good enough.

I can still so clearly hear her saying each and every single one of her famous sayings and I know she would be so happy that I am sharing her teachings with all of you. I can see her smiling now, so proud of me for writing this book, and so very proud of

you for picking it up and choosing to do something powerful for you. Let's dive in!

**Trigger warning\*** - This book discusses mental health challenges including anxiety, depression, disordered eating, suicidal ideation, and relationship abuse. This book also discusses a challenging cancer journey. Please know if you are experiencing any of these challenges, you are not alone and help is always available. If at any point these topics become too much or too triggering for you, please take a moment to take care of yourself and return back to the book after you've given yourself a chance to reset. Please know that if you need support, you can reach out to resources such as the Crisis Text Line (Text "Hello" to 741741) or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Dial 988) at any time, 24/7. There are also additional resources listed in the appendix at the end of this book. Help is always available.



*Lesson One*

**FROM MY MOM**

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*“Nothing Less Than A Bath And A Half”*



## YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH TO GO AFTER WHAT YOU DESERVE

I want you to think back to when you were a child. You were probably fearless. You probably had big dreams to be a teacher, an astronaut, and a professional athlete and believed wholeheartedly that you could reach all those dreams. You probably took risks and weren't afraid if you didn't get things right on the first try. You probably weren't worried about what others thought about you. Somewhere along the way, we lose that fearlessness, and we begin to question ourselves, our ability, and our worth on this earth. Somewhere along the way, we stop believing in ourselves and become full of doubt that our goals are even in reach. Somewhere along the way, we forget the light we add to the world, just by being who we are.

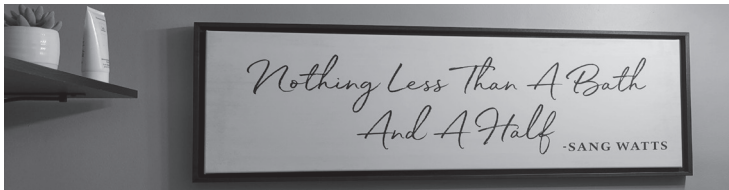
This mindset often halts us in our path toward our future and makes us feel that we are not worthy of doing the things we want to do. In turn, we settle. We settle for relationships, friendships, jobs and experiences that are not good for us because we are

afraid we will never find anything better. Simply, we settle into the belief that we are not good enough. I fell into that belief for most of my life. I lived most of my life feeling like I was not good enough and I settled for a lot of people and situations that only made me feel more worthless than I already felt. My mom did her best to empower me to believe in myself and go after my dreams, but the pressure from society for me to be perfect led me down an opposing path.

My mom was always someone who believed she could reach her goals and one of those goals led to the creation of her signature phrase, “Nothing less than a bath and a half.” A phrase I heard countless times throughout my childhood and adult life. If you knew my mom, you knew how important it was to her to have more than one bathroom in her home. My mother grew up in Oxford, Mississippi, where she shared one small home with six siblings and her mother. In the first home they lived in, they had a single outhouse to use as their bathroom. The next home she lived in with her siblings was a step above their last situation, now having a bathroom inside of the house, but only a curtain served as a door to the bathroom. My mom spent the rest of her life sharing just one bathroom with other people in her home. She met my father while in college in Mississippi and they eventually settled in Waltham, Massachusetts, in a three-bedroom, one bathroom home. My mom thought this living arrangement was only temporary, but it ended up being the home where they would raise both my brother and I. My mom continued to share one bathroom with all of us. This proved to be a challenge, especially during our teenage years, as there was always a fight over who got to shower and get ready first. Every week my mom would play scratch tickets, hoping she would get her lucky break that would allow her to

afford the dream she had been craving, and finally add on that half bath.

Since we grew up being told to have “nothing less than a bath and a half,” almost every day, both my brother and I knew that any home we ever purchased would never get a Sang Watts approval without having at least a bath and a half in it. I even have a sign in my half bathroom at my house with this signature saying (photo below), and I tell all my friends when they are house hunting about the sheer importance of that half bath.



It happened quite frequently that my mom would be getting ready to leave the house and needed something in the bathroom and whenever it was occupied, she would mutter, “Nothing less...” Before she could even finish her sentence, one of us would finish for her, “We know, Mom, nothing less than a bath and a half.” I can see her clearly now raising her thumb to show her excitement that we understood, but also sharing with us a gentle eye roll, while she impatiently waited her turn in the bathroom. I like to think about her saying that phrase over and over as more than just an important logistical part of life and living situations. I like to think that by constantly reminding us to have more than just one bathroom, she was teaching us to find our worth and that we should never settle for anything less than we deserve. My mom’s