BODY AND YOUR LIFE

SPEECH FOR

ELLEN AND LANA ECTOR

Hello everyone!!! It is so great to be here!!! The energy in this room is amazing, and by the time we’re done, it will be off the charts!! Lana and I want to thank all of you for allowing us to be inspired by each one of you and to have the opportunity to share our story and our moves with all of you today is the true blessing. We would like to take a moment and thank Mrs. Serita Jakes for thinking of us, and YOU, and asking us to be a part of the joy that is the 2014 class of God’s Leading Ladies Life Enrichment Program, and what a great program it is!! As we all nurture ourselves and acknowledge God’s role in all that we do, it’s perfect to take these few moments to explore all of the benefits and inspiration that comes from living an active, engaged and devoted lifestyle.

Lana and I, as many of you may know, have devoted our lives to supporting women through fitness and healthy lifestyle programs. We have a facility in Atlanta Georgia called Gymnetics. We offer classes and one-on-one training. We have 2 very popular fitness DVD’s called Black Girls Workout Too! We work together, we inspire each other, and in the end we believe the message is clear-by living a healthy lifestyle, one dedicated to well-being and genuine belief in oneself and the power we can wield with healthy, fit bodies, there is **NOTHING** we can’t do!!! The world better watch out, because by the time Lana and I are done working with all of you and the next class, and the next, we’re sure the world will be a stronger and more positive place for our children and our children’s children!!

Some of you may be curious to know how we got started, so let’s give you a little background. I‘m sixty-one years old and the proud mother of five children… yes-I have a few more at home just as magnificent as **THIS** one (**Point to Lana and wait for the laugh**). After I had my kids, I realized that everyone was taken care of, but what about me? In my purpose to be the best mother, I forgot about taking care of myself. I bet that sounds familiar, doesn’t it? I was tired, out of shape and I just didn’t feel like the kind of person I knew I could be. So I found the place within myself to take the first step-which, by the way, is always the most difficult one to take, to energize my body, my mind, and my spirits. Although a character on Saturday Night Live used to joke, ”It is better to look good than to feel good,” I knew in my soon to be reduced gut, that was **NOT** true. It’s definitely better to feel good. It’s better for you, the people around you, and the community in general. I began to run and train and I literally did not look back. There have been many blessings in my life that have come from my involvement with exercise and supporting others while taking care of myself, but the most precious gift was to see that my gorgeous daughter, Lana, shared my DNA in that respect. If you didn’t know her as **the Fitness Vixen,** you do now!! She brings our message to a new dimension and generation and I can’t even imagine having a more beautiful or dedicated and fun partner. I’d like you all to meet my daughter, Lana….

(**Lana**) Hi everyone!!! As my mother said, it’s so great to be here with you today! In a little while, we’ll do some of our “signature moves,” but first I’d like to tell you how I got here…. in one word, but in so many more ways than one, **MOM**!! My mother has related to you that she got into fitness to get into shape, but the work that she thought was in progress was already of goddess proportions even back to the earliest times I can remember. I grew up with **THIS** (**Point to your mother**) as a roll model and to inspire me, and it did! Mom taught us really important lessons when we were kids, and that was to have faith in God, your family and your **self**. I know how special my mother is and how the lessons and disciplines I’ve learned from an early age were able to give me a blessed life, and my mother and I want all of you to know, that we are here to do the same for you. Thanks to the miracles of modern technology and broadened understanding in the areas of health and well-being, every one of us can have access to the tips, tricks and inspirations that promote healthy living.

(**Back to Ellen**) According to a report published by the Centers for Disease Control, for the years 2007 to 2010, the percentage of African American women over the age of twenty who were obese was 54%. The percentage of African American women in the same group with hypertension was over 44%. The leading causes of death in the same sector were heart disease, cancer and stroke. On the government website called Women’s Health, we learn that one in four African American women over the age of 55 has diabetes. Ladies, that’s not a statistic, it’s an epidemic!!! Something needs to be done. We need to actively learn to save our own lives and it is very, very doable! We need to get up out of that chair and move! And we need to do it for ourselves and our daughters and our granddaughters. It’s time to show the world the energy and life and self-confidence we all inherently possess, and it’s time to do it **NOW**!

So what will it take to get each one of you up and off that chair? Today is going to be fun and we have the group dynamic to literally propel us, but how do we self generate? How do we inspire ourselves to take that first step to health and well-being?

The first thing I think we have to do is give ourselves permission to take care of ourselves. It’s okay to make ourselves a priority even for a little bit, every day. It’s okay to take a look at what we’re eating and make healthier choices. It’s okay to take an extra ten minutes and park at the far side of the garage and make sure we walk a little more. And it’s okay to continue to do all of this while building yourself up to formulating a regimen that includes exercise and nutritional awareness as an integral and regular part of daily life.

In Corinthians 3:16-17, we learn, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” You are holy. You are beautiful, and you deserve the best life you can have!

There are several things I’ve learned along my life’s journey.

* It’s **DEFINITELY** better to feel good!
* I don’t always want to do it, but I know that I have the strength and power to do anything I put my mind to.
* It’s been said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, and sometimes… no, **ALL THE TIME**, that first step is the hardest
* Sometimes the heaviest weight I lift is that **first sneaker** (**Wait for the laugh**), but once I tie that first lace and feel the spring that only a good pair of sneakers can provide, I know I’m halfway home!!
* I know that I am so thankful and grateful for all of my blessings and I am most thankful to the people that allow me to be a part of their journey to well being.
* I am always blown away when I see the results that fitness can have on women of any age. I know each one of you is my sister or my daughter, my mother or me, and I see my self and in every one of your stories, paces, leg lifts and squats. I feel your pain when you really believe that you cannot give me even one more crunch and then you manage to do five more. I am inspired by you when we both know you really have to be at work, or cleaning the house, or doing something for your kids, but you manage to get on a treadmill for even fifteen minutes a day, and if not, you sneak in a walk around the block. again… and again… and again…

The positive energy you give to yourselves, your faith and your future, is really a revelation and there is nothing I would rather do than work with you and girls and women like you as we create a movement of strong, beautiful, proud and healthy African American women because this world needs change. It needs to hear our voices and it needs to hear our feet pounding the pavement with strong messages of hope and joy and eager anticipation of a future filed with success and acknowledgement for each one of us, no matter where we are now and what we see for ourselves in the future.

Thank you all and God Bless you!!