

Compiled with the
help and advice of
Dr Roisin Ryan (GP),
Beth Cox (Beth Cox
Inclusion Consultancy Ltd)
and Mary Butler
(youth worker).

The world is an ever-changing
place and the people within it
are capable of incredible things;
discoveries are made, records are
broken, new facts are found and
history recovered. We will be
happy to revise and update
information in future editions.

LITTLE TIGER
LONDON

LITTLE TIGER

An imprint of Little Tiger Press Limited
www.littletiger.co.uk

1 Coda Studios, 189 Munster Road, London SW6 6AW
Imported into the EEA by Penguin Random House Ireland,
Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin D02 YH68

First published in Great Britain 2025

Text copyright © Anu Adebogun 2025

Illustrations copyright © Soofiya and Lila Cruz 2025

Illustrations on pp. 4, 5, 8, 32, 40, 41, 43,

46, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60, 78, 84, 116, 136, 161,
170, 186, 204, 211 copyright © Shutterstock.com 2025

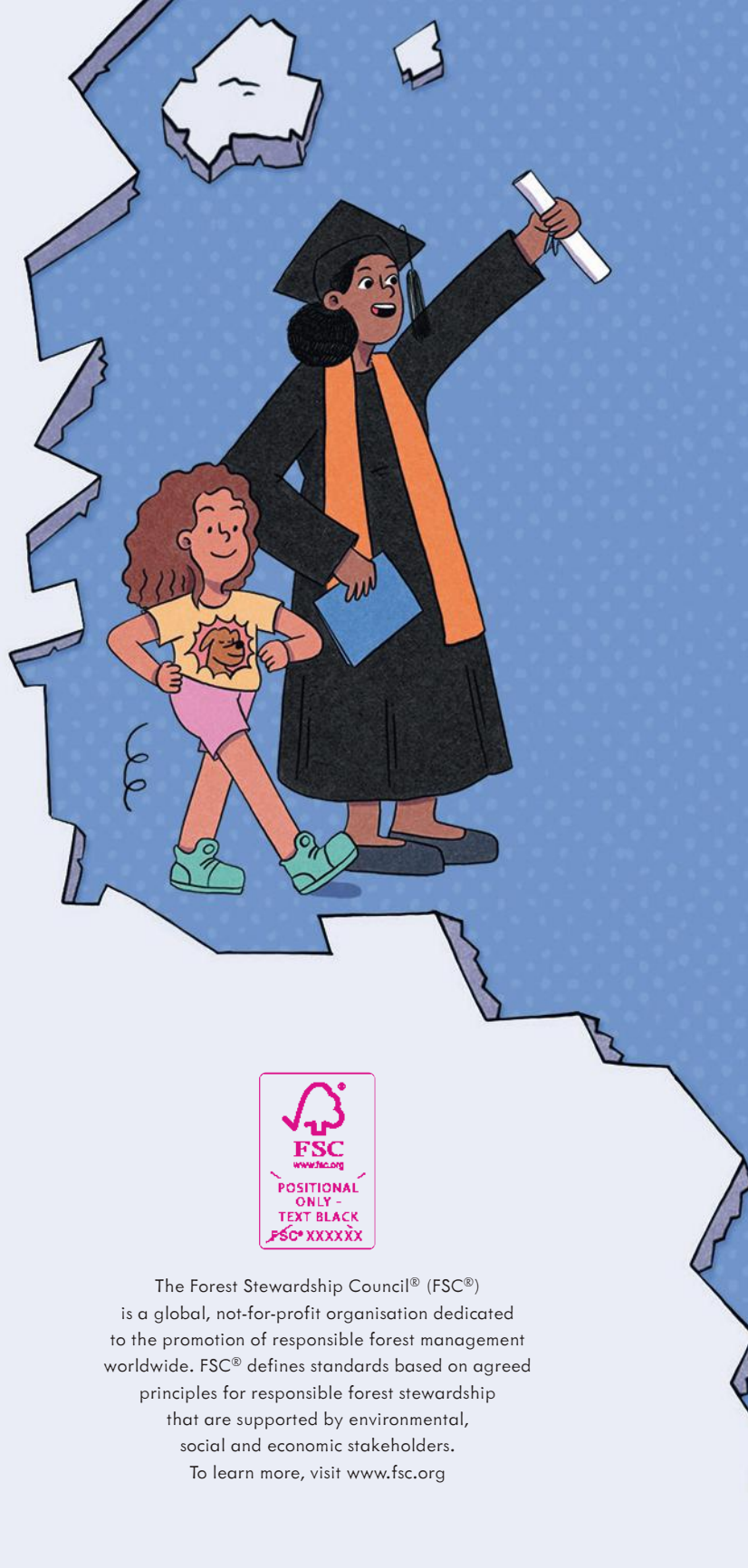
A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

All rights reserved • Printed in China

ISBN: 978-1-83891-640-4

CPB/1800/2768/0824

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1



The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)
is a global, not-for-profit organisation dedicated
to the promotion of responsible forest management
worldwide. FSC® defines standards based on agreed
principles for responsible forest stewardship
that are supported by environmental,
social and economic stakeholders.
To learn more, visit www.fsc.org

IT'S A BRAVE YOUNG WORLD




To the person reading this right now,
this book is dedicated to you.
The world that demands so much
of you must do better by you.

You are **WORTHY**.



Contents

My Story.....	6
Chapter 1 – Identity	8
Chapter 2 – Family	32
Chapter 3 – Friendships	46
Chapter 4 – Relationships and Self-love	60
Chapter 5 – Mind, Mood and Feelings	84
Chapter 6 – School	116
Chapter 7 – Beliefs	136
Chapter 8 – The Internet	170
Chapter 9 – Your Safety	186
Chapter 10 – Future You	204
Useful Resources.....	214
Acknowledgements.....	216



Welcome

Hello! I am so glad you decided to pick up this book. It was written for you, to be an honest companion as you work through the complexities of finding yourself and growing up in today's world. You might be wondering a bit about who I am and why I decided to write this book . . .

My name is Anu Adebogun, and I am an author, youth practitioner and PhD researcher at the University of Oxford looking at issues of gender, justice and crime. Over the years, I have had the immense privilege of delivering sessions to thousands of young people to promote safety, wellbeing and access to education. I also work with several charities and community projects that empower young people.

To say that I am committed to youth development is putting it lightly. I want to see you thrive, step into your power and light up our world. Through my work, I have listened to young people share their struggles with social media, families, friends, school, relationships and so much more. I believe YOU are the future and that is why I wrote this book.

Think of these pages as a journey to get to know yourself better and uncover the power of being brave. Each section covers a different topic, from values and beliefs to healthy boundaries and coping with challenging feelings. You'll find tips on relationships and consent, talking about cancel culture, navigating school and staying safe online – no conversation is off the table.

This book is for you if anything we cover feels relevant, regardless of your gender, age or race. We address some difficult topics but aim to equip you with the information and language to call out unsafe situations. This book will help you stand up for yourself and for others. Use it to become a global citizen and the best version of yourself. I am rooting for you!

ANU x





My Story

I was certainly one of the 'early bloomers', and by early I mean really early (I started my period at nine years old). So while my friends were still playing 'it' in the playground, I had more pressing issues on my mind, like trying not to leak out of my school skirt . . . It felt like I went from Reception to training bra without much space just to be a child.

I still remember my first 'talk' with my Nigerian parents after starting my period. They meant well, but the responsibility was placed on me to

'protect myself' from harm. I was told to avoid boys at all costs because if one of them even mistakenly poked my shoulder, I could fall pregnant (not true of course!). I had to act like nothing different was going on in my body and to keep 'hormonal reactions' at bay. There was a lot of shame attached to how 'grown-up' I was becoming. I am Nigerian, and culturally it is believed that if a girl is 'growing too fast', it is probably because she is 'messing around' – if her breasts are 'too big for her age', it is because she is allowing someone to touch them. I was always confused and hurt by this untrue assumption. It felt like there was no understanding



that my body was just on its own unique journey. More importantly, if someone had actually been taking advantage of me as a child, suggesting I was to blame would have caused huge emotional damage. No one should ever be blamed or made to feel ashamed for someone else's inappropriate actions.

From Year Seven onwards, I remember holding my breath as I rushed past the barbershop because the older men inside would almost always make crude remarks. Often, one of the men would come out and follow me down the road, pestering me for my number. When I refused, I would be sworn at for being stuck up.

At this stage, I was none the wiser that this was verbal assault and I could report it. I wish someone had said, "Anu, it's not your responsibility to

diminish yourself to stay safe from predators, bullies or abusers." Instead, I was told to hide my growing hips in layers of baggy clothing, to be good enough, quiet enough and to avoid unwanted attention. Rather than being silenced, I wish I had been told about trust and boundaries and taught how to spot the signs of someone violating them.

The responsibility should not be on anyone to make themselves unnoticeable, play it small, avoid the internet or give up the places and activities they enjoy to avoid predators; this only gives more power to abusers. Instead, all of us can be equipped with knowledge and understanding so that we can advocate for ourselves and others. I wish I'd had this guide during my school years and beyond. I hope it is useful to you.



Affirmations

Always affirm yourself. Affirmations have the power to help you focus on what matters and change negative thought patterns. By practising self-affirmations, you are reminding yourself daily that you are capable, strong and worthy. Affirmations are statements you can say aloud to yourself every day or write down somewhere you will see them.

Here are some positive affirmations to start you off:

"You are your best thing."

Toni Morrison

*I can do this.
I am confident.*

I learn from my mistakes.

Today, I am open to new opportunities and experiences.

My smile is my gift to the world.

I do not let my fear hold me back.

Good things happen to me.

I choose to let go of the old and embrace the new things today brings.

I have the power to change my story.

JOURNAL TIME

Affirming yourself

Write out five affirmations personal to you.



Future you

What a time to be alive, with so much inspiration, courage and elevation in the world. You stand tall among countless people finding their brave, attempting difficult things and doing their bit to shake up the world. We are all unique and have different access to opportunities, resources, platforms and privileges. But if we share the motivation, desire and passion to make our world a better place, we can start wherever we are, use the access we have and push for change. Just by reading this book, you have started to explore how much power, value and ability you have to offer. You bring so much to this world.

REFLECTION

Think about how you will use **YOUR** power to bring about change.

What do you think needs transformation in our world or culture?

What can you do today (even if it's just a small action) to move towards that goal?

Activity time

Write a letter to your future self

Write a letter to yourself which you can put in your journal or diary and revisit as time goes by or open in five years' time if you like. In this letter you can make predictions, envision the future and set goals for yourself. Some examples:

"Dear future me, spend quality time with friends and family and don't get too bogged down with life's difficulties."
Lilly (12)

"Dear future me, I hope your dreams come true. I hope you come out of your shell, overcome your fears and find happiness. Never let anyone bring you down."
Taria (12)

"Dear future me, how does it feel to have won the Nobel Prize in Literature? I hope your love for telling great stories continues to grow. You should be so proud of yourself."
Bukky (13)

