**Arletta Allen - Stay Strong Through the Storm**

**March 26, 2020 - Facebook Live Event**

**Transcript**

This is just a testing period to give everybody an opportunity to go ahead and come on in before we get started.

**Chatting to Live watchers**

\* \* Video Time – 6 minutes, 50 seconds \* \*

I see that it is 7pm and we want to make sure we get started right away. First of all, let me take this time to swipe left so I don't see all these comments. Know that there are some moderators out here that are watching for your comments and your questions and they'll be able to chime in and make sure that they are responding to those questions. In the very end, I will then ask for you to drop some questions out there and then I'll respond live to two or three questions. And then the other questions you can forward to info@womensempowermentseries.org

So! Shall we get started? Many of you do not know me so let me introduce myself. My name is Arletta Allen and I am a motivational speaker by trade. But I'm telling you, as pretty as I look sitting here today y'all, everybody doesn't come from that type of background, everybody's not that well put together and I'm telling you there was a time in my life when I was not this well put together either. At the age of 15, I was a prostitute. At the age of 16 I was pregnant and bearing my first child. At the age of 18 I dropped out of high school and worked two jobs to take care of my kid. At the age of 19 I went back to Moraine Park Technical College to complete my HSED. At the age of 22 I then decided that I wanted to take on more college courses so ended up going back to school but I tell you - there were so many pitfalls I took along the way so THIS did not happen overnight. So if you're out there and you're watching, I don't want you to get mistaken by the package that you see here today because we don't all keep it all together and we're not all here together. So this is a safe space, this is a place where we can express ourselves and really enjoy connecting on tonight. I want you to know that during this presentation I'm really looking forward to all of you guys commenting and making sure that you drop your questions below. If there's anything that I mention here tonight especially that really catches your eye, be sure to leave a comment and don't forget to share! There is a share button down there in your feed, share share share share share! Share to your personal Facebook pages and make sure that all of your friends and family are able to chime in too. I'm telling you, I've got some great tidbits for our shut-in. You guys are not going to want to miss this.

So! The reason why I connected to the Women's Empowerment Series was mostly due to life experience. I kind of gave you guys a little bit of my background on who I am and how I kind of came about. I've lived in Fond du Lac for over 28 years. I actually serve on the Advisory Board for Women's Empowerment Series. I'm absolutely invested in *any* work that contributes to women and children. So because I know that that organization is surrounded by the work that they do for women and children, absolutely I'm signing up! I'm recruiting people, I'm looking for other people to come in and work alongside us. You may be asking yourself tonight because we're now getting ready to dig in a little bit deeper – what could Arletta possibly have to say about us remaining pandemically positive during such a time where it's just so easy to fall into panic, anxiety, and fear. What is it that I could possibly say? Because just being in the midst of everything that we're going through right now is downright overwhelming. If it's overwhelming for you, I want you to throw your hand up like this in the comments. Put a hand up if it's overwhelming for you too. For a person like me who is always on the go, it's crazy to sit in the house somewhere. I'm not used to this kind of stuff. Well, tonight I'm going to share with you some things that I've been doing to remain positive throughout this storm.

So shall we begin? Here we go. American poet Maya Angelou once said, “If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.” So your attitude is something that you're in control of and I really absolutely love that quote because of the fact that she just said that a lot of times circumstances can't change, but the one thing you are in control of is you! And how you view things. So can I challenge you today? Even though we're faced with a time of stress, uncertainty, and even financial devastation for many of us that perception is everything and being a solution-minded and oriented individual is going to be how you're going to change your perception of what we find ourselves in right now. You may even be sitting out there now, once again, ask me: “Arletta, what is a solution oriented thinker? What is that?” Well, don't worry, I came packed with answers tonight so I got you boo. First of all, a solution oriented thinker makes a decision each and every day. Decision making, okay? To keep moving forward no matter what their circumstances are. Many of us took pitfalls, many of us don't know how we are going to survive throughout this season but we have it set in our minds that we are going to continue to grow, and we're going to continue to move forward. We're going to dig down deep and we're going to pull up by the bootstraps and we're going to keep going no matter what. A solution oriented thinker recognizes what is out of their control and what is within their control. So you learn how to draw a specific line as to what you're in control of and the things that you can't control. Okay, let's just be real – us being put on a shut in, or stay-at-home order, what can you do to control that? There is absolutely nothing you can do to control that. However, what you CAN control is your atmosphere at home and the energy you're putting out while you're at home. We can make the best of any situation. And remember that worry changes absolutely nothing. So you’re sitting at home worrying, having panic attacks, and full of anxiety. Being nasty and rude and mean? That ain't changing nothing. When you recognize the fact that what you can control is your attitude then you stop being all nasty to people in your house and you’re making sure that your atmosphere remains positive. Does that make sense? Let me know if it's making sense to ya'll. If you need me to slow down let me know that too. I'm telling you, tonight you're going to need your notepads and pencils because I've got some good stuff.

Another way that you can recognize whether or not you are a solution oriented thinker is whether or not you claim to be a victim or a victor. You have to learn to distance yourself from “stinkin' thinkin'”. You've got to get outside of thinking gloom and doom all the time. And that doesn't happen overnight! This is something that you have to literally train yourself to be able to say, “Uh oh! Okay. Enough is enough, I've had it up to here.” And that's enough. You have to know when you feel it, when you hear yourself talking a particular type of way, nip it in the bud and pull it back in. Don't allow the temptation to worry about our circumstance right now overtake you because it's easy once it gets a grip on you to consume you and before you know it, everything around you seems grey. Everything around you seems distant. Remember that we are all in this together and none of us are going through anything that we can't pull through as long as we lock arms and we keep moving forward together.

There's this quote that I like to say to myself oftentimes and it's helped me through so many different storms and adversity, even ones that seem almost as paramount and as big as the one that we're going through now. I've never faced a storm this big, however, ones I've been in before that made me feel like I was facing a tsunami in my life (if you understand what I'm saying, say Amen if you get me!). So I always say that troubles don't last always, and just like every other time that's come before it, this too shall pass. So I try not to hold on to what I can't control. And then I really spend some time reflecting on what I can control. Leading up to this live video tonight, I asked the marketing team to place a post out there and one of the quotes that I asked them to place out there states, “You can't calm the storm. So stop trying.” You can't! What you CAN do is calm yourself and know that the storm will pass. Tonight we're all learning and we're all growing together so don't get upset with yourself if you have not been handling things as well as you'd like to. Because this isn't a space for perfection! We're just looking for real women that understand real things that are able to really unveil themselves in this space. Be honest and be clear on how you feel and how you've been behaving lately. And you know what? There's nothing wrong with taking a breath and knowing that tomorrow is a new day and you can do it all over again – better than what you were the day before.

Now, one thing I want to distinguish and help you to understand... I'm not here by any means to convert anyone over to Christianity. But one of the biggest reasons that I am so steadfast is because I have a comfort in knowing that God is my solstice and that he's going to take care of me. I also have a comfort in knowing that just like every other storm that's come past, I've checked the archives... every time I thought that things were finished and up to here, God has rescued me over and over and over again. So I can't even get mad at the situation. I'm literally looking to the hills from which cometh my health knowing that my health comes from God. Because I couldn't be here and I couldn't be positive and all these things without him in my space. Plus, I also understand that in the end, we win! I know that this is a fixed fight, too! When you know that the battle is already yours? Please, honey. Go on somewhere Corona-ona! I ain't got time for no Corona virus. You better go on!

I believe that as we continue to apply the different principles that have been set out there by government officials, and that as long as we are complying within our homes and doing what they're asking us to do in order to keep all of us safe... I don't know about you, but I have elderly parents. My mother has diabetes and she's older. My stepdad has cancer and he's older. And they're shut in. They cannot go out at all, but now also we can't come in. It's imperative for me to keep myself in a space where I'm loving on my mom and loving on my stepdad and letting them know that even with distance in between us, I'm keeping up with them and I'm still a presence in their lives. This is a hard time for us all. But in order for us to follow the mandates that have been set, we need to make sure that we're exercising thinking about sacrificial love and loving those around us by following the mandates. Stay in the dag-gone house if you don't have to go out! It's that simple. I'm dressed up tonight with no place to go. I'm at home, okay? And I'm happy about it. I'm glad about it.

I also am very optimistic about the outlook of what's going to take place after this is all said and done to be honest with you. I believe that when this is done, we're going to have stories of redemption, of courage, of valor, of perseverance, of favor, and also a very optimistic outlook on our future. Let that soak in a minute. Understand that things will absolutely never be the same from this point on. They won't be. It doesn't matter how we try to force it or fit, we will never forget that as a country in this world, as a nation, that we suffered this plight together. We will never forget that and that's just the truth. This storm came and it succeeded in shaking us all out of our comfort zones. I mean, I don't know about you but things just don't feel the same. I feel like I'm reaching further. Some of y'all ain't never touched a computer a day in your life and now you're trying to figure out how social platforms work. Why? Because you've been forced out of your comfort zone! Now it's not about whether or not you like change, it's about the fact that technology is the only way for you to keep up with your friends and family! So now you have to learn how to work that dag-gone Android and iPhone, okay? It'll be alright. Don't worry about it, we got this together. You can call me! I'll help you get through it.

So this storm is not like any other we've ever seen. But as we become solution oriented thinkers and view the glass as half full instead of half empty, then we'll all win together. I've got a little bit of exciting news tonight. Some of y'all didn't know. I'm about to change your job title! Yep, I said it! Job title. Comment below and tell me what you do as a profession right now. If you're out there and you're watching, comment below and tell me what you do as a profession. What is your actual job title? Comment comment comment! I want to tell you now that we're all stuck in the house, I mean – those of us that aren't considered “essential” workers – are stuck in the house and we can't really move around and do what we want to do. I have developed a new title for us all. You ready? **DRUMROLL...** Professional curve flatteners! What do you think? Do you like it? I like it! I think it's kind of cool. Professional curve flatteners! Because now we can implement a series of activities to help us to remain positive while we're going through the simple instructions of helping to flatten the curve. So we have all evolved to professional curve flatteners. How's that for size? I like it. I'm keeping it. Even after we're done with this epidemic pandemic craziness, I'm going to keep it. I'm going to be the best professional curve flattener ever!

As we go forward, here's the meat of our topic going on tonight. How to stay strong through the storm. Take out your notepads and pens. I'm going to list ten activities that I've been doing within this house at home here that I've been implementing myself and I just want to pass it along to you so you know that you can remain positive, and also that you can come up with creative solutions at this time as to how to maintain within this new space. I'm used to being somewhere else, I'm not used to being stuck in my house all the time. So this is new for many of us.

On my list, I'd like to focus tonight on things that I always said I never have time to do. So I think that's what's really going to make this list really special not only for me, but for you guys too. And also, while I'm listing these things, if you could just do me a favor and list some things that you're doing in order to maintain or continue to be positive while you are in your space right now. So that we navigate and we get through this together. Who knows? Maybe I need to add a few things to my list based upon what you have to say.

Number one – One of the first things that you can do in order to maintain your positivity and make it through this storm is to invest in you. Invest in yourself. Learn something new. I mean, seriously! I'm sure there is something out there that you've never done and there has to be some series online somewhere that teaches you how to do this thing that you claimed you never had time to do before. For instance, myself – what I'm doing is I signed up for a 30-day entrepreneurial challenge for speaking engagements. Those that are speakers, those that are professional keynotes. I'm looking for ways to enhance my skills while I'm shut in. No better time than now! I've got all the time in the world. And also, I actually picked up an American Sign Language course. I had never ever thought in a million years that I would be a person who would learn sign language. However, I took a trip with a friend by the name of Tracy Robertson not too long ago and she taught me my ABCs and made me learn to sign my name while we were on our way to Rockford, Illinois so I'm continuing that plight. I signed up for her course and I'm going to be taking American Sign Language, learning something new. So you tell me what you plan to do, how you plan to invest in yourself during this time of quarantine.

Also, I would like to suggest that you guys become a big old kid again. Yep, you heard me right! Become a big kid again. Pull out those crayons, pull out them markers, pull out your paint. Paint by number again! Pull out your coloring books! You know what I'm saying? You don't have to do the adult ones if you don't want to, I messed up and did the adult one. I pulled it out and let me tell you how fast I put it back in. Because ain't nobody got time for those little bitty squares. I'm used to not being able to focus that long on one particular thing so for me to have to sit there and concentrate on how to stay in the lines there, it's not working for me. So what I suggest to ya'll is what I suggested to myself. Get you a giant coloring book with like Disney characters or something like that in it and color all outside the lines because you know what? It's your book and ain't nobody there to tell you that you can't do it. Become a kid again and enjoy this time that we have set apart and sitting down right now.

Another thing that you can do, number three, y'all got one and two? Invest in yourself, become a kid again. Number three, read several good books. This is no greater time than to read some good self-help books, and make sure that your books have a positive condensation to them. Don't be reading no gloom and doom when the world comes to a close, what happens when you can't breathe... Will you please leave that alone for a minute? I understand that this shut-in has gotten to you but I need you to focus for me. Do not under any circumstances, chime in to be reading books that do not build you up and encourage you at this time. Read good books! Or, if you're anything like me, I'll be reading a few romance novels too. Mainly because I don't have romance in my life and because I don't have romance in my life, I need to read about somebody else's romance. You heard me? So maybe this would be a good time for you to do the same. Chime in and read a good romance novel and live vicariously through somebody else. That's my plan!

Somebody say four! Number four. Make sure y'all typing these in so we can go back and view them later okay? Organize your home. Spring clean, spring clean! Y'all know it's spring right? Spring clean! That means get up and go through these dag-gone closets that you go stuff from here to Timbuktu lined up in and clean them out! Y'all are some hoarders. Stop it! And go ahead admit the fact that you got a problem. This is a safe space, I don't have a problem with y'all telling me, “You know what Arletta? I do have a problem. I have been struggling with keeping everything that I see. I go out and I buy stuff and I really don't need it.” Don't worry! You're amongst good company, I have the same problem okay? But we're going to get through this together. Once again, I told you – you're not in this by yourself. We can do this together! So what I need you to do is organize your home and oh yeah – a friendly reminder. Those jeans that you've been holding on to forever. During a quarantine, you're not going to fit those any time soon so what I need you to do is go ahead and give and bless those to somebody else. Give them away. Yup! Those jeans you've been saying you're going to fit into forever? Not this period of time sweetheart. Not right now. I don't know about you, but I've been eating Cheetos, Fritos, Doritos and everything I can get my little hands on. And I ain't been just dealing with the chips, I've been dipping, I've been doing all types of stuff since I've been shut up in this house. And that's just 100. I was doing good, I was like, “Let me get my walk on!” And now I look up and here I am, all pleasantly plump. That's okay, I'm still sexy though! That's alright. Make sure you go out and bless somebody else with the stuff that you've been holding on to that you don't need any more okay?

Number five. Connect to your family. Connect back to your friends and family. How long has it been since the last time you just gave a shout out to somebody? You’re waiting on them to call you? There's no better time than now to pick up the phone and call the people that you love so much. Because they're loving you back! They're looking forward to hearing from you. So make sure that you chime on. Go ahead and pick up a phone tonight. Call mom, call dad, call grandma, call auntie, uncle, cousin, sisters, best friends, people that you've lost contact with over the years. And replenish those lost files. Rekindle those lost relationships. No better time than now!

Somebody say six. Six! It's time for you to do some journaling. Put your thoughts on paper. And what do I mean by that? Journaling is a safe space for you to be able to relieve some of the mental space, some of the things you're harboring up top, that a lot of times we can't escape from. When it's time for us to go to bed we're sitting there and we're thinking and thoughts are just running across our minds. Nine times out of ten it's something that you absolutely cannot control, however you keep it going right? You keep thinking about things that you have no control over. Well, it's time to stop that. It's a good time to form a habit when you have at least 30 days to be able to start journaling. Rise up early, put on paper what it is that you feel, some of the thoughts that are running through your head, and you're going to feel so much better. You know what, in that space if everything's not roses, peaches, and cream. Remember that your journal is your journal. Whatever you want to write in there, write in there! If you feel like today you just want to be real about how you feel, write it! Write it down. You will feel so much better. I even sometimes go back and read it out loud so it feels like it empowers me to feel better about my circumstances, like I really let it go. So this is something that you can exercise and that's going to be extremely helpful for you.

Number seven! Write a letter. Sounds simple right? Yeah. Write a letter. No, not to somebody else! To yourself. Mhm. My friend, a long time ago, introduced me to what is called love letters to self. Every single day, take about five minutes, sit somewhere, reflect on who you are, and fall in love with you all over again. It's really that simple. Write just a few encouraging words on a piece of paper. I have a love box, I slip it right off into that love box and on days when I feel like I'm under the weather and I feel like sometimes circumstances can make you feel like you're nothing, make you feel like you're less than, make it feel like even though you're giving your all you're not moving ahead, you're just not making that stride in life. It's okay to write it down and maybe remind yourself of all the things that you are. That's what love letters to yourself does. It reminds you on those rough days, you can go and pull your box down off the shelf and you can revisit some of those amazing thoughts about you. You can read them aloud so that you hear it in your ears and all of a sudden it takes, and it soaks, and makes its home in your heart so that you remember who you are. So that when the world comes to tell you all the things that you're not, you're reminded of how amazing you truly are. You have to be careful because it can make you conceited. Because I happen to think I'm the bomb. So I don't know what to tell you, I guess my little letters are getting to my head. Whatever! Okay.

So, next – somebody say eight? Are we to number eight or on number seven? No, I think we're on number eight. We're on number eight! Create you a playlist. Okay, look. First of all, I'm not talking about ANY type of playlist. I'm talking about a playlist that when it comes on, you can't even stand to sit in your seat – you’ve got to get up! I got to do something, because if I don't get up and dance... Look, I'm talking about a type of playlist got your arms flying up over your head, got your body gyrating and doing stuff, you like, “What?? I didn't know I could...” Heyyyy! You know? Those types of vibes. That's what you want to see happen when you have this particular type of playlist. And so what if you can't dance? Who cares? Be free. You're at your house and you make the rules. Be free! Set yourself free. Put on something that speaks to you and just let it go. Let it go! Dance, groove, shout, sing, laugh, have a whole ball by yourself! With your kids! With your spouse! Do your thing. It's your time. And this is how we're going to maintain our positivity while we're stuck in the house, ya'll! Get up, put on some music, and just let it go. You know, Mary J Blige has this song that she usually sings online and it's called “Just Fine”. I'm telling y'all, look up that song. It's called “Just Fine'' by Mary J Blige. Somebody type that below for me so people can remember what I said. Mary J Blige, “Just Fine”. That song is so the bomb and I'm telling you, when you hear the beat and how it winds up, you're going to be like, “Heyyy!” Well, at least that's what it does for me.

Number nine – stop neglecting all those clothes in your closet that you know have missing buttons and holes in the dag-gone pockets. You got holey jeans, armpits with holes in it. You got all types of stuff, I mean how many times are you going to let that shirt go that has buttons missing from it? There is no other time than now, no better time, than to take that old sewing kit that you got from hotels years ago that's on the top of your shelf all the way in the back... Pull that sucker done and let's get to sewing. Let's put some buttons on these shirts. Let's get rid of these airy spaces that ain't got no business having air in them. And let's just be happy and let's celebrate! Let's fix some things. Can I let y'all in on a secret? Okay. I have personally been fixing some of my stuff too. But it's been more intimate apparel. How many of yall out there, women, and I know y'all can understand what I'm talking about, got these bras that have these underwires and every now and again the underwire likes to come up and show its ugly head like under your armpit. And then you're stuck with this dag-gone wire poking you all dag-gone day. And then what do you do? You take it off when you get home, you whip it across the room, and you forget all about it. Well you know what I've been doing? I've been restoring some of my secrets. I've been pulling out them bras and sewing up patches and putting them wires back where they go. And you know what? My set's going to be alright. When I get done here, my bra and underwear set is going to be matching and I'm going to be good to go. Quarantine where? I'm making use of my time and I hope you decide to do the same.

Somebody say ten. Last but not least! And this is probably the most important positive thing that you can do. I want you to lay low. I want you to breathe. And I want you to remember to smile. And mostly because of the fact that it's a gift that you have and it just keeps on giving. It's something that you don't have to get rid of, it's something that you can do at any point throughout the day, and it can change your total and complete surroundings. You'll be amazed at the people that just need a smile. Just need to see somebody smile at them. How it just makes the difference in your day. I know I do it for my kids. They look at my face, and sometimes they're having rough days, assignments they don't understand, Mama's been out of school for so long she doesn't get it. And everybody's just in the house frustrated. They look back at me and I smile at them. Because we've come through worse. We've come through worse! And God saw fit to see us on the other side of this. So lay low, and make sure you smile a lot because you have the ability to do so. And also remember that it takes a heck of a lot more muscles for you to frown than it does for you to smile.

So, in conclusion. We learned today how to maintain and be pandemically positive throughout this entire quarantine period – our stay in the house order. We learned how to become a solution oriented thinker. And we also learned some tips on how to survive the storm on the inside. Remember that an idle mind is the Devil's workshop. You don't want to have your mind all... you don't want to see that. When you're sitting somewhere idle and you're not thinking good thoughts, bad things can happen. Let's go ahead and take some of those ten things I named off and put them in the place of your idle mind and let's get to work. Let's get some self-improvement going, let's get to investing in ourselves, and let's smile a whole lot.

I hope that you got all that and I hope that you understand that I brought these things to you not to overwhelm you, but to make you know that there are so many ideas, so many innovative possibilities and creativity that you already house within. You have access to these resources already, all you need to do is implement them.

At this time I'm going to take two, maybe three questions. I'm not sure exactly how much time, because I didn't time myself.

\* \* Video Time – 37 minutes, 7 second \* \*

**Chatting to Live Watchers**

Questions can be submitted to info@womensempowermentseries.org

Tune in next week live on Thursday, April 2nd at 7pm as Erin Flood speaks about the non-Pinterest parent.