

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Deeply empathetic and meticulously researched, *Enough As She Is* provides practical advice to help girls pursue success without losing their wellness or self-worth. Written by an educator, the book includes strategies to help girls manage overthinking, use self-compassion as an alternative to self-criticism, take healthy risks, navigate toxic elements of social media, prioritize self-care, and seek support when needed.

In writing this educators guide, our hope is to provide school professionals with resources they can leverage in the classroom, faculty meetings, and policy discussions. Each chapter begins with a personal **reflection exercise**, followed by content for a group **discussion**, staff meeting **activity**, and finally, **lesson application**.

Adult readers report they relate strongly to the content in this book, as many find they are navigating similar challenges to their own relationship to success. Our hope is that, in reading and using the Educators' Guide to *Enough As She Is*, you will engage personally with the content so that you can both teach and model the strategies.

Happy reading!

~ Corinne Fogg

Director of Curriculum & Professional Development  
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart

~ Rachel Simmons

Author, *Enough As She Is*

### **Audience for this Guide:**

Middle and high school classroom teachers, advisors, school counselors and administrators; undergraduate student affairs staff; and elementary school teachers willing to adapt the content.

### **Color Coding/Sequencing**

**Reflection Question** - for written or internal reflection

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

**Discussion Question** - for group discussion

**Activity** - for engagement with faculty, as led by administration or colleague leaders

**Lesson Application** - for use in your own lesson planning, regardless of content area

## Introduction

### Reflect

Simmons writes, “If [girls] once traded their real thoughts and feelings for relationships, they now trade close connections with peers for the pleasure of outperforming them.”

Consider specific stress and achievement pressures for girls (grades, scores, leadership, etc.). What do these look like for your students? How do stress and achievement pressure shape girls’ relationships with each other at your school?

### Engage

Simmons’ research rejects “the idea that difference makes girls less capable” and argues further that educators need special knowledge, support, and awareness to usher girls through the challenges of 21st century” adolescent development. She suggests “a different kind of report card” to evaluate a girl’s health and potential during this time in her life.

If you could add anything to your own classroom rubric, or school report card, to measure a girl’s healthy development, what would you include?

### Teach

Post this quote from novelist Claire Messud:

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

“When you’re a girl, you never let on that you are proud, or that you know you’re better at history, or biology, or French, than the girl who sits beside you and is eighteen months older. Instead you gush about how good she is at putting on nail polish or at talking to boys, and you roll your eyes at the vaunted difficulty of the history/biology/French test and say, ‘Oh my God, it’s going to be such a disaster! I’m so scared!,’ and you put yourself down whenever you can so that people won’t feel threatened by you, so they’ll like you, because you wouldn’t want them to know that in your heart, you are proud, and maybe even haughty, and are riven by thoughts the revelation of which would show everyone how deeply Not Nice you are. You learn a whole other polite way of speaking to the people who mustn’t see you clearly, and you know—you get told by others—that they think you’re really sweet, and you feel a thrill of triumph: ‘Yes, I’m good at history/biology/French, and I’m good at this, too.’ It doesn’t ever occur to you, as you fashion your mask so carefully, that it will grow into your skin and graft itself, come to seem irremovable.”

Ask students to reflect in writing or discussion about this quote, with the following prompts:

- Do you agree or disagree with Messud’s passage?
- Have you observed any girls in your life “become a girl” in this way? Without identifying any specific girls, describe what they were like before and how they changed? Is there a specific age or grade when you most notice this change?
- What about girls who resist this pressure? How do people react to them?
- What is the cost to girls who refuse to comply with the expectations of girlhood that Messud outlines here? Consider the alternative as well: what benefits might accrue to “resisters”?

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Chapter One: The College Application Industrial Complex

#### Reflect

How is college admissions pressure different today from when you were applying to college? How do you think you would fare as a high school student in your school today?

---

Consider Simmons's comments on the importance of seeking purpose in your life. How purposeful do you feel in your own life? Try answering some of the Echoing Green Foundation's [Work on Purpose curriculum](#) for yourself as an adult.

- What issues or ideas make your heart beat faster?
- What is the primary topic of the articles you read, the movies you see, the TV shows that are most appealing to you?
- Who are "your people"?
- When you imagine the world you want to live in, what three words come to mind?
- Have you ever stood up for someone? Who? Why?
- What social, environmental, political, theological problem do you ache to see solved?

#### Discuss

Simmons argues that girls need adults to challenge the most toxic aspects of the culture's pressure to achieve. How can you model a healthy critique of the culture while also emphasizing the need for hard work and commitment to the college admissions process?

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

---

Julie Lythcott Haims, author of *How to Raise an Adult*, writes that “saying you just want your kid to be happy puts enormous pressure on the child. They feel if they're not happy, they're failing. Periods of unhappiness are okay and our kids need to know that; it's the struggle that makes you who you are.” To what extent do you name the importance of struggle as a feature, not a bug, of learning?

---

Debate Simmons' *Washington Post* [article](#), “Perfectionism Among Teens is Rampant (and We're Not Helping)”. Many parents say they just want their kids to be happy above all, and not stress too much. Many of these parents also point out that their kids seem to put a lot of pressure on “themselves” (since the parent just wants them to be happy). Do you agree or disagree with Simmons?

### Engage

Consider the stance of educators at Harpeth Hall, an all-girls school in Nashville, which issued a white paper in 2016 questioning the use of online grading systems. They wrote that “the joy of learning diminishes as [students] focus narrowly on the numbers and improving the numbers.” Constant parental monitoring lessens “the space girls have in their lives for risk taking” and independent struggle. The system may burden high achievers with perfectionist tendencies, who “are more likely to equate their self-worth with their grades.” Generate a discussion about the pros and cons of adopting online grading in your school, or the effectiveness of it if you already use it.

### Teach

Have students make a list of a typical school-week, with two columns. On the left they can list "have-to" items; on the right, "want-to" items. Then, share and discuss. What

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

surprises them? What would they change? How can they make that change? How might class affect the balance of “have-to” and “want-to”?

---

Regardless of your content area, design an assessment or activity for your class around one of these questions from the Echoing Green Foundation’s Work on Purpose curriculum.

- What issues or ideas make your heart beat faster? (example: Ask your 5th grade students to think of an activity, not normally scheduled into the school day, that they absolutely love to do. Have each write about why they love this activity. Go as far as to add a persuasive spin, if you’d like, so students are marrying their passion for something with the power of persuasive writing.)
  - Who are “your people”? (example: Consider England during the period 1486–1603. Choose one historical figure we’ve studied and explain why s/he is “your person.” After you’ve thought about this and outlined your ideas overnight, think-pair-share with your classmates.)
  - When you imagine the world you want to live in, what three words come to mind? (example: Using *The Giver*, *1984*, *Handmaid’s Tale*, *Brave New World*, or another dystopian piece, create a visual that contrasts that world to one you would design for yourself. Visually represent a contrast between the world created by the author and the world in which you would prefer to live.)
  - Have you ever stood up for someone? Who? Why? (example: Choose one period of activism in United States history, e.g., the opposition to the Vietnam War or the events that led up to the 19th amendment being ratified. Choose five songs to be the soundtrack for this period. How would music represent what you would stand up for in this period/around this issue in history?)
  - What social, environmental, political, or theological problem do you ache to see solved? (example: Using one chemical principle from AP Chem, come up with a solution, without concern for finance, to a social, environmental, or political problem. Examples might include a lack of access to bathrooms for the homeless in urban centers; a lack of hot water in certain parts of the world; or the fact that recycling is not perceived as a bipartisan issue.)
-

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Try the “I love...” exercise with your students as a warm-up activity. Discuss what surprised them, what they found most interesting, and how easy or hard it was to think of things they love.

### Engage

Adults, Simmons writes, need to let girls know “that no one can sanely excel at everything they do, nor should they want to.” Consider this argument in the context of your classroom. How can you alter one assessment this year, such that students are given opportunities to prove their strengths and demonstrate a healthy response to their weaknesses? Consider inviting students to collaborate with you to develop an assignment that promotes and/or celebrates failure.

Note: Marginalized students may feel less comfortable showing vulnerability in the classroom. Encourage discussion about why some students may avoid showing weakness, and how school culture can support all students’ healthy risk taking and vulnerability.

### Teach

Ask students to imagine being a parent to a teen. If they could redefine success in any way they wanted, how would they define a successful life for their own children? What hopes and expectations would they have for their teenagers that would reflect this definition of success? How have these hopes and expectations been shaped by their class, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and other facets of identity? How do their definitions differ from the values around success that are currently celebrated?

---

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Print a certificate of failure for your students your classroom. Ask students why they imagine the creator (Simmons) thought it was important to let students start college with permission to fail. Then divide students into small groups and ask them to create text for a certificate of failure for their grade. How would it be different, if at all?

---

## Chapter Two: Girls and Social Media: The Virtual Second Shift

### Reflect

Simmons writes, “A smartphone catapults [a girl] into a thriving marketplace of social capital, where she can amplify the features of her life to make herself appear prettier, sexier, smarter, more accomplished, closer with her friends, happier, and more popular than she really is.” Have you, as an adult, curated images online? How different or similar are the behaviors of youth and adults online? What do you imagine it would be like to be a teenager today, with access to social media, as opposed to when you grew up?

### Discuss

“Adolescent girls dominate social media’s visual platforms: places where girls post pictures and videos of themselves, their friends, what they eat, where they go, and what they do. In 2016, 58 percent of Instagram’s 400 million unique visitors were female; teen girl usage dwarfs boys’ usage there and on Snapchat by double-digit margins. Girls get and send more texts, post more pictures, and have more followers and friends online than boys. They own the social Internet.” (*Enough As She Is*, p.27)



# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Do you observe girls using social media for different purposes, and with different frequency, than boys? How might this shape girls' relationships and self-esteem at your school?

### Teach

Simmons argues that “until a girl decides that social media can’t be the barometer of her own self-worth, very little will change.”

Invite students to visually represent and discuss two identities: My Online Self and My Offline Self. Alternatively, have them explore the difference between what social media values in girls vs what they personally value based on their race, class, sexual orientation, and other facets of identity. Discuss what they uncover. Remember to keep the discussion as nonjudgmental toward social media as possible; let their work provide the basis for discussion and analysis.

---

Create four signs with emotion words written in large type (Excluded, Insecure, Happy, and Included) and post one in each corner of the room. Divide students into small groups and assign a scribe. Have each group stand under a sign for two minutes and brainstorm examples of times they experienced the emotion while using social media. Rotate each group through every sign, then process the lists. What do they find interesting or surprising? What patterns do they observe?

---

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Chapter Three: Can We Fat Talk?

#### Reflect

What, if any, special responsibility do educators of girls have to model a healthy relationship to their bodies and appearance?

#### Discuss

In what ways have you seen fat talk, body shame, or self-consciousness about appearance distract girls from learning or personal goals? What can schools do for students, beyond offering athletics, to cultivate a healthier relationship with their bodies?

#### Teach

Consider the quote in chapter three: “For if a girl’s mind has been freed from social restrictions — you can be anything you want to be! — her body still bears the long history of women’s oppression: you cannot look any way you want to look....If a girl’s mind can be big, her body is still expected to be small.”

Start a conversation about this quote. Does every student agree that a girl’s body is expected to be small, or does this vary based on each student’s background or culture? Explore the tensions between empowerment and sexualization, i.e., is it empowering or exploitative to show off one’s body? Consider playing the “Despacito” performance at the 2018 Grammy Awards, and adding Kesha’s performance as a contrast for discussion.

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

---

Ask students if they are familiar with “fat talk.” Define it as a group, and list examples on the board. Discuss: Does anyone have a memory of hearing fat talk for the first time? Where do girls learn how to fat talk? Are there some students who have never heard it at home? Why might this be? When someone says something negative about their body in front of you, what is the unwritten rule about how you are “supposed” to react? How could you script a different conversation in which girls talk about their bodies? Or, how do you imagine boys talk about their bodies (script it) and why would that be different?

---

Get acquainted with some of the body positive activists on Instagram (e.g., [Martina Desiree](#), [Gabi](#) and [Megan Jayne Crabbe](#)). Project some of their posts to the class, then ask students to react. Do students at your school post images like this? Why or why not? Why are these activists considered trailblazing and brave? Are they changing the culture, or providing a distraction in the absence of lasting structural changes? Is it easier for some activists of certain ethnic or racial backgrounds to be activists than others? Consider a classroom debate on this question.

---

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Chapter Four: Overcoming Self-Doubt and Closing the Confidence Gap

#### Reflect

What differences do you observe between the way your female students look “on paper” — their grades, scores, leadership positions, etc. — and their internal confidence and sense of personal authority?

---

How would you describe your school culture's approach to failure and setbacks? How comfortable are adults modeling vulnerability and sharing mistakes? How might this affect the experience of students?

#### Discuss

Consider Simmons’s discussion of the study by Zachary Estes, in which women who skipped puzzles on a test scored measurably worse than the men, then pulled even with the men once advised not to skip any puzzles. Do you observe students skipping problems rather than hazarding a guess? How does the phenomenon of risk avoidance manifest in your schools or classrooms more generally? How can you work towards eliminating such gender disparities?

---

What does confidence look like in the classroom? Does it manifest in different ways for students? Consider some specific examples of confident behavior — both in terms of how confidence enables students to seek out *and* recover from challenges - and how you can work as a school to cultivate confidence in the classroom.

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Engage

Post the Eleanor Roosevelt quote, “Do one thing every day that scares you.” Start a discussion about the pros and cons of being scared every day (pros might include desensitization through “exposure therapy”; cons could include undue pressure on the self). To give students practice in setting small goals and using incremental effort, teach the Goal Setting Activity found in [Lean In’s Ban Bossy Leadership Tips for Teachers](#).

---

Share one act of “microbravery,” preferably your own, with your colleagues. Discuss how you can apply the concept of microbravery to classroom culture. Think of one opportunity for microbravery that applies to your class. What specific acts could you encourage?

### Teach

Ask students to create their own failure résumés. Lead with your own résumé, using it to start a discussion about the unique benefits and lessons of setbacks. What can failure teach us that constant success cannot? Reminder: marginalized students may be less comfortable celebrating their failures. Encourage discussion about the “privilege” of being able to talk about your failures. How can you create a school culture where all students can do this?

---

## Chapter Five: Mental Treadmills: Expecting the Worst and Overthinking

### Reflect

In what ways have you used “expecting the worst” to gird yourself against disappointment? What purpose has this served for you? How has it limited you?

---

Consider whether you ever co-ruminate with your advisees, students, or team of athletes. Think of one student in particular, and reflect on the following questions from Simmons:

“Do you spend most of your quality time together talking about her problems, and for a long time? Does this tend to happen everytime you talk?”

“Do you spend a lot of time trying to figure out parts of her problem that you can’t understand, the reasons why the problem has occurred, and every bad thing that might happen because of the problem?”

“Do you encourage her to keep talking about her problems even when she isn’t bringing them up?”

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

How can you use the four-step ORID process Simmons writes about to avoid this circular process of co-ruminating?

O = Objective (what actually happened?)

R = Reflective (how do you feel about it?)

I = Interpretive (what do you think it means?)

D = Decisional (what is one thing you can do?)

### Discuss

Have you observed students using defensive pessimism to “bond” before and after assessments? Brené Brown has written that “if we predict the worst, we can’t experience the joy of when that thing goes right.” To what extent does this habit potentially limit the exhilaration of learning? How can faculty help shift students’ mindsets around anticipating a challenge?

### Teach

Post an excerpt of Wellesley professor Julie Norem’s defensive pessimism questionnaire on the board. Assign a small group of students to each statement and have them identify specific ways the statement might show up in their own lives. Ask students to explore the benefits and drawbacks of expecting the worst. Are there any gender differences they observe in this behavior, i.e., do boys they know often expecting the worst? If so or if not, why might that be? Are there other differences, related to race, ethnicity, family finances that play a role in whether someone says they expect the worst? Are there some students who make it a point never to show vulnerability, or to project effortless perfection? Why might that be, and what does this accomplish? Is there an alternative to engaging in defensive pessimism, and, if so, what would it be?

Please note some of these statements are paraphrased from the original:

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

- “I often start out expecting the worst, even though I will probably do OK.”
  - “I spend lots of time imagining what could go wrong.”
  - “I’m careful not to become overconfident in situations where I am facing a challenge.”
  - “In situations where I face a challenge, sometimes I worry more about looking like a fool than doing really well.
  - “Considering what can go wrong helps me to prepare.”
- 

Print out Gemma Correll’s Worrier Pose cartoon online, cover up the thought bubble text, then make copies for your students. Ask students how they would fill out the thought bubbles themselves (or, if safer for them, how they imagine students at their school would fill out the bubbles), and use the activity to start conversation about overthinking, stress and pressure.

---



# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Chapter Six: Turning Self-Criticism into Self-Compassion

#### Reflect

Do you use self-criticism to motivate yourself? If so, where do you think you learned to do this? What have been the benefits and drawbacks of this practice? What, if any, responsibility do educators have to model self-compassion for girls?

#### Discuss

Evolutionary psychologists believe self-criticism is an adaptive mechanism we developed millions of years ago to prevent complacency and protect us from physical harm. What do you observe girls today using self-criticism to protect themselves from?

#### Engage

Read Simmons's [article in \*The New York Times\* about self-compassion in adolescents](#). Project the three steps of self-compassion. Walk through each step as a group. Explore the benefits that might accrue to students who practice these steps, then consider how educators might incorporate one or all of these steps into teaching, interaction with students, and connection with families.

**Go Further:** Have your class listen to the [short guided meditation "Compassion Break."](#)

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Teach

Simmons highlights gender differences in self-criticism and the concept of “no pain, no gain” as a source of motivation. Where might we learn to beat ourselves up as a way to move forward – and as a strategy to avoid seeming “soft” or idle? In class, consider having students write creatively about how they would *compassionately* counsel a character or significant figure in history or literature away from “no pain, no gain.”

---

Consider starting a practice of reflecting on one thing students are proud of for that day. Emphasize that even the smallest sources of pride – I brushed my teeth, I didn’t yell at my mom on the way to school – are of value.

**Go Further:** How could you add a gratitude practice to your class each day?

---

## Chapter Seven: The Cult of Effortless Perfection and the Rise of Stress Olympics

### Reflect

How would you describe your level of self-care? How can you model self-care, cognizant that students absorb your behaviors and moods?

### Discuss

What does effortless perfection look like at your school? How would you describe the impact of this phenomenon on students and school culture? Where might students get the message that effortless perfection is valuable?

---

In 2014, the APA reported that “adolescent girls slept the fewest hours of any group of Americans,” and that the deficits of losing sleep were linked to “depression, anxiety, risk-taking, and emotional fragility” in adolescents. Arianna Huffington expands on this in *Sleep Revolution*, raising concerns around adults who “may wear [sleeping only 4-5 hours per night] like a badge of honor.” Huffington adds, “The science [in] being chronically sleep-deprived is the cognitive equivalent of coming to work drunk – so we shouldn't be congratulating each other for working 24/7.” Given this, what role should your school play, if any, in remediating sleep deprivation in students?

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Engage

Consider convening students and alumnae on a panel at a faculty meeting. The group should represent a broad range of backgrounds, races, learning styles, and duration attending the School. Ask the panel to sit before the faculty and answer prepared questions about when they were inspired, discouraged, or challenged at school. Have this panel discuss when they last saw a teacher act as a learner. Ask them to share what *they* want the teachers to know about learning, excellent teaching, and when they, as students or alums, felt heard or understood.

### Teach

Ask students to generate and share a list of all the roles they play in the course of a week, e.g., daughter, sister, granddaughter, teammate, student, friend. Then read an excerpt of *Enough As She Is* (p. 147, beginning with “In Anna’s classes at a Boston college” and ending with “It’s like a hamster on a wheel and it just doesn’t end.”). Ask students to react to what they have heard, using the list of roles they generated. Explain the concept of role overload found on page 146. Do they ever feel the way these students do? Why might some students feel pressure to play so many roles at once? Consider the role of class and culture in particular.

---

Ask students if they know what “Stress Olympics” is, and define it for the group if they don’t (consider reading the description of Stress Olympics in *Enough As She Is* aloud). Have students generate typical Stress Olympics comments that are made at your school, and get a discussion going on how they feel about this kind of communication.

- Why do you think people do this?
- What is the benefit to the speaker?
- How does the listener feel?
- Are there some students who avoid participating? Why might this be?

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

**Go Further:** Teach the three steps of active listening. Break students up into pairs and have one person briefly share a struggle they are experiencing, while the other can respond using only the three steps. Discuss how this “conversation” may differ from others they have had.

---

Explore the skill of support seeking with your class by introducing this hypothetical question:

Imagine one of your closest friends goes to school an hour away from you and calls you to say that she’s anxious and stressed. She needs to see her parents, but she has no way of getting home on her own, and her parents can’t come get her. She asks if you or one of your parents will come get her and drive her home to her parents. Would you get her (or ask your parents)?

Poll students’ responses (yes or no), and ask students to pair share about why they answered the way they did. Then ask: if you were in the same position as your friend, would you ask her or her parents to drive an hour to come get *you*? Why or why not?

Follow up questions:

- What are some reasons might some people not be comfortable asking for help?
- Are people more comfortable with asking for certain kinds of help over others?

**Go Further:** Post two pieces of flip chart paper around the room. On one piece write, “One area of my life I could seek support in is....” and on the other piece write “Support would make a difference in my life by....” Distribute two post-it notes to each student and ask them to anonymously answer the two questions with their post-it notes.

---

## Chapter Eight: Control + Alt + Delete: The Merits of Changing Course

### Reflect

Simmons describes the process of children learning to walk: falling down, then looking at their parents for empathy and reassurance. Girls continue seeking adults' feedback on a challenge long after they have learned to walk. In light of this, how can you intentionally respond to failure and struggle with a mixture of empathy and reassurance? What do girls need when they are challenged in order to feel inspired instead of ashamed?

### Reflect or Discuss

Simmons explains that, for girls, “on the road to figuring out who [they are], wrong turns are rarely dead ends. Whatever the reason - not the right school, not the right job, not the right time - a transition crisis can give [girls] the opportunity to reset,” and identify what they are most called to do.

Has this ever happened to you? What did you gain from a “reset”? Or, do you wish you'd been brave enough to embrace “wrong turns” in the road?

### Discuss

Consider the idea of a wellness day for students. How could you structure it to reflect the research in *Enough As She Is*?

---

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

How can you design an assignment that celebrates failure or prototyping (such as holding a Shark Tank or creating a prototype that solves for a social, environmental or historical problem)? This assignment would value iteration, test for success or failure, and involve failing all together, only to grow from that place. Consider learning about design thinking to enrich your thinking.

---

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Chapter Nine: We Can't Give Our Children What We Don't Have

#### Reflect

Simmons quotes Brené Brown, who has said, “we can’t give our children what we don’t have.” To what extent might this be true for an educator, too? Can educators give students skills and habits that they don’t have?

#### Discuss

Consider the story of the father who tells Simmons that he neglected to share his failures with his daughter, leading her not only to fear failure, but fear sharing it with her parents. Might educators who project an error-free persona have a similar impact on their students? What would healthy vulnerability look like in front of students? Would authenticity like this align with your school culture?

---

Choose one of the eight strategies Simmons shares in this chapter, and explore as a group how you might incorporate that strategy into your school culture. For example, “teach comfort with uncertainty:” what are some ways educators might cultivate a student’s comfort with an unpredictable situation, or one in which she can’t immediately know the outcome? Consider explicitly inviting students to raise their hands even when they are unsure of the answer or exploring the unexpected benefits of not always having an answer.

---



# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Chapter Ten: The Senior Year Slap in the Face: Life After College

*Note: We imagine that most readers of this guide are working in a K-12 environment. For this reason, we are adapting content for this chapter to apply to this setting.*

#### Reflect

Why is so much importance placed on having a plan for what comes next, whether it's college, graduate school, or the next job? What is the cost of so much future-thinking and attention to "what's next"?

#### Discuss

"If life were one long grade school," Stanford professor Carol Dweck has said, "girls would rule the world."

She means that school offers the kind of orderly, rule-based environment where girls tend to thrive: classrooms where you wait to speak, are praised when you have the right answer, keep a neat notebook, and hand in assignments on time. If girls come to excel at behaviors associated with compliance, how might this affect them after college? To what extent does your school cultivate skills that help girls disrupt, think out of the box, and adopt minority positions?

---

Consider Simmons's discussion of the all-important path on p.216:

"Who she was sometimes mattered less than what she was doing. The message she got, explicitly or implied, was that if she didn't do the right things, checking

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

off certain boxes on her résumé, she'd lose at a game that everyone else had figured out how to win....There was something soothing about this Path-centered way of living. Her goals were defined for her. She got to measure herself in a tangible way by watching her grades, internships, jobs, and activities pile up. Each time she did something right, she got insta-feedback."

How does path-obsession show up in your school? What can you do to help girls develop a critical perspective towards the myth that having a path makes you more successful than others? What is the value of serendipity in learning?

### Teach

Consider assigning Frank Bruni's *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be* as summer reading for rising seniors. How might this book be used in conjunction with what you have read in *Enough As She Is*? How do Bruni's arguments relate to Simmons's and your own teaching or school culture?

---

There is a popular saying: "We plan, God laughs." Ask students to reflect in writing on a time when a plan they had committed to did not work out. What did they gain from this surprising experience? How did the experience change them? How did it change their beliefs about the importance of a "plan"?

# Enough As She Is

## THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### Resources for Consideration

- *Adolescents and their Social Media Narratives: A Digital Coming of Age* by J. Walsh
- *The Confidence Code*, K. Kay and C. Shipman
- *Daring Greatly* by B. Brown
- *The Gift of Imperfection*, B. Brown
- *Growth Mindset*, C. Dweck
- *How to Raise an Adult*, J. Lythcott-Haims
- *Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters* by C. Martin
- *Self-Compassion* by K. Neff
- *Shrill* by Lindy West
- *The Sleep Revolution*, A. Huffington
- *Social Media Wellness* by A. Homayoun
- *Untangled*, L. Damour
- *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be*, F. Bruni