

# Train Crash Survivor Willa Robinson Makes a Difference in Writing Books for Children

*Pam Vetter  
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Author Willa Robinson is not someone you want to whine to about little problems, because she will put your problems into perspective in a minute. Robinson survived a fatal train crash and made a choice to inspire the next generation with a series of books for children.

"I am all about empowerment through positive thinking," Robinson said. "My life has definitely changed since January 26th, 2005."

The date Robinson cites is the day of the Metrolink train crash in Glendale, California, in which 11 people were killed and nearly 180 people were injured. Robinson was seated in the second car when the train hit a sport utility vehicle that had been left on the track. As a result of the impact with the SUV, her train derailed, hit a parked freight train and collided with a second Metrolink train.

To say Robinson is lucky to be alive is putting it mildly.

Just before the crash, Robinson had been writing in her journal. Her words send shivers up your spine. "'Today is the first day of the rest of my life,'" Robinson wrote in her journal. "'I will now do what God has purposed me to do.' My journal was on the floor of the train and there was blood all over it. My bags were stacked up like someone had placed them there and the only thing out of whack was my planner. It was opened to the page where I was writing those words."

Robinson believes, "by the grace of God, I'm still here." She always wanted to write a book, but never acted upon that hope. Writing would take a back seat to recovery. "My legs were damaged in the train accident and I couldn't walk. They had to carry me off of the train. It took four months to physically recover, but mentally, I don't know whether I've recovered or not. I know that I'm not the same person I was before January 26th. I take life much more seriously. I say 'I love you,' to my family every day now and I wouldn't have thought about doing that before. I'm more cautious in how I treat people and how I show my love and affection toward people. It has changed me completely."

After a meeting with the LAPD as part of her job, she was inspired to follow-through on her dream of publishing a book series.

"I work as the Director of Advertising at an African American newspaper and I had an appointment with the LAPD. They were trying to do a lot of recruiting of African American officers. I presented a proposal to them, but it was long-term. They wanted a quick fix. So, I left that meeting with the idea that they wanted to put a Band-Aid on an open wound. I started thinking that kids needed a different respect for police officers. When was the last time you heard a kid say he wanted to be a police officer when he grows up or that he wanted to be a fireman when he grows up. That's where my book series was birthed. A year after the train wreck, I started planning and setting up my business, Knowledge Power Communications. As I started writing, I wanted to work with the police officers first, but they wanted me to set up a non-profit organization to work with me. So, then I thought, well, I'll start with teachers. There are so many professions that need respect. I know quite a few teachers and my first book is entitled, 'I Will Be A Teacher When I Grow Up.' I'm working on the lawyer next, then a doctor and nurse and the list goes on. I think young people need to see people who look like them in a profession and know if someone else can do it, they can do it, too. It's an empowerment series for young kids to start thinking about their careers at an early age. The illustrator did a wonderful job and I'm very pleased with the book series."

The "I Will Be" book series is focused on the positive.

"There are so many careers that kids never even think of because they don't get the publicity that is deserved. Beyond professional jobs, I also want to cover vocations and a variety of professions. I may create a contest through my website so people can send in ideas on their professions. I want people to feel empowered as though they're part of the project," Robinson explains.

What she suggests is amazing when you think about it. Imagine a child waiting in a pediatrician's office and picking up a book entitled, "I Will Be A Nurse When I Grow Up" or "I Will Be A Doctor When I Grow Up." Why shouldn't people be proud of their professions and create a new appreciation for each job?

"My long-term goal is to have a TV show so we could interview these people with different professions, have career fairs, and inspire the next generation. It's so amazing to me that I'm helping children, because even though I have two adult sons and two granddaughters, I never thought I'd focus on kids. It's a newfound love because of what I'm seeing today in our society with young people. I know we really have to step up with an African proverb such as 'it takes a whole village' to help these children and become a part of their lives. Whatever I can do, I want to make a difference." Robinson adds, "There's nothing in the market like this and I need to do this quickly. Time is of the essence. People lost their lives around me and it's even more apparent what I need to do."

For more information on Author Willa Robinson and the "I Will Be" Book Series for Children visit [www.knowledgepowerinc.com](http://www.knowledgepowerinc.com)