

Be more *Buffy*

A
guide
to slaying
every day



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Be more **Buffy!**

It's not an unreasonable assumption that a reader of a book called *Be More Buffy* might want to emulate the Great One herself but, you know, people are weird. So just in case you need a reminder of why we should all aspire to be more like the Buffster, here goes.

The great heroes have many qualities: incredible strength, stamina, grace, charm, kindness, humility and bravery.

And when we think of Buffy's main qualities? Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes and HELL YES!

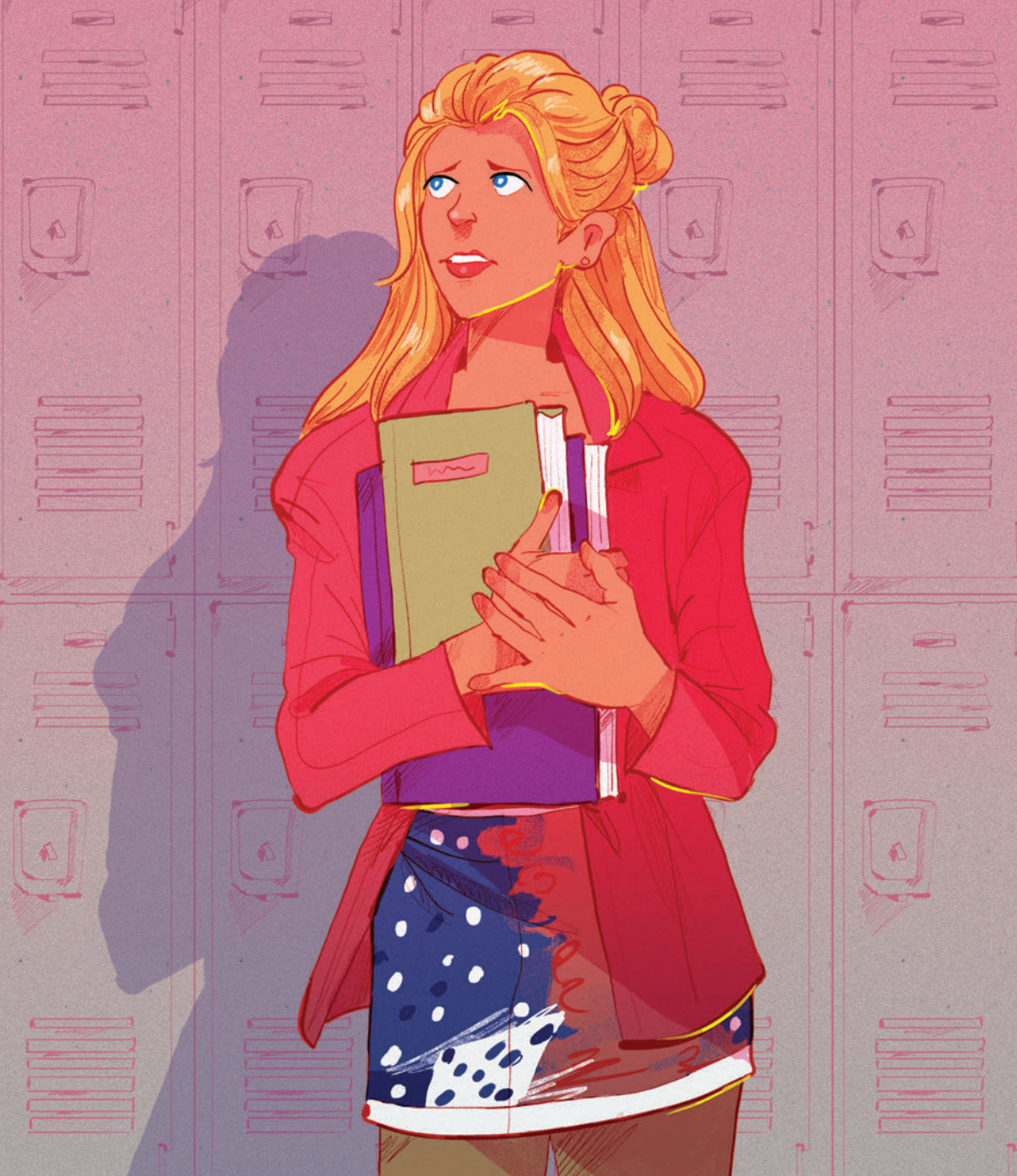
A pint-sized warrior for good, Buffy goes through all the crap things we do – high school, college, bad jobs, awful breakups, grief and loss – and deals with them the same way we do ... sometimes with stunning nobility, and other times crying on the couch eating Cheetos with a friend. We can identify. Yes she can drop-kick a marine across a room, but she also drops food down herself, breaks things, gets drunk, and sleeps with unsuitable people. Just like us.

Carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders, Buffy literally dies to save us, but does she see herself as a messiah who's here to save us all? Nope. She remains humble and hopeful for a world in which she can try and live a normal life, shouldering an unbelievable burden, which occasionally causes her to stumble, but never to fall.

Best Traits

Strong in every sense, brave, kind, loyal, wise-cracking, self-sacrificing ... oh, and she's the Chosen One – the list is endless. The right answer to any problem can often be found by asking "What would Buffy do" and, if we all did, the world would be a better place ... and we'd all have nicer hair too.

Shout it out loud – I Want to Be More Buffy!



Life Lesson

DEALING WITH A NEW START

Buffy Summers arrived in the demon-ridden town of Sunnydale, California, with butterflies in her stomach. These nerves were pretty unsurprising, since, in a short period of time she'd been kicked out of her old school for accidentally burning down the gym while battling demons, her parents had split up, she'd had to leave her friends behind, had to move house and even city, and lost her first Watcher - all this before the ashes of Hemery High's gymnasium were cold.

Luckily most of us don't get saddled with a mystical destiny that ultimately causes our lives to be turned upside down. That isn't to say we don't sometimes have to say goodbye to all that's familiar, pack up our bags and start again somewhere else, where everything is strange and new. At some point we're all going to feel like that scared 16-year-old girl - although probably without a burgundy pleather mini-skirt and structured bangs.

New starts are hard but that doesn't mean they have to be awful. Despite Buffy's grades being described as "dismal," a dead boy showing up in a locker on day one, and receiving her first blast of shade from Cordelia, Buffy gets through it. What helps Buffy through those early days in Sunnydale isn't her mystical powers, but belief in herself, a positive attitude and an openness to meeting new people.

The takeaway

We all know that scary feeling of walking into a new classroom, college dorm or office, not knowing a soul. But, like Buffy, we just need to put our best heeled boot forward, trust in ourselves and realize that things won't feel strange for too long. You never know, maybe we'll bump into a tall, dark brooding immortal behind the garbage cans of our new local nightclub?



Life Lesson

LOVERS WITH A PAST

Falling in love can be simultaneously the greatest and scariest experience of all time. Most people wouldn't classify Angel and Buffy's relationship as normal, and they certainly had their problems ... even aside from his thirst for blood. Angel was a man with a past - 270 years of it in fact - and a relationship history filled with the bad, the mad and the frankly demented.

We can all relate to good-looking people driving us crazy although, in the case of Angel, he did literally drive Drusilla crazy. The epitome of late-90s hotness, Angel's tortured pouting had many hearts pulsating and begging to be staked long before the sulky *Twilight* Cullens were even conceived. However, Angel's exes kept turning up in his unlife - first Darla and then Drusilla - causing chaos. Here's how Buffy dealt with it:

1. **ACCEPTANCE:** She didn't like the fact that Angel made most bad boys look like poodles, but also accepted that his past was his past. If she had him in her life she had to accept his whole life's story.
2. **OPENNESS:** Buffy knew that Angel loved her and could see the proof of it nightly. As such, she allowed her heart to intertwine with his and didn't hold his previous life against him. She loved him for how he treated her, not who he used to be.
3. **WISDOM:** Despite the many terrible things that happened to them both, Buffy never stopped loving Angel. That isn't to say, though, that when his behavior changed she blindly went along with it. She saw it for what it was and let go ... probably one of the hardest battles she ever faced.

The takeaway

Falling in love is something many of us will experience at least once. Just remember that, while everyone has a past, you should judge your relationship on the here and now.



Life Lesson

FIGHTING THE PATRIARCHY

**“In every generation there is a Chosen one.
She alone will stand against the vampires, the demons,
and the forces of darkness. She is the Slayer.”**

These words greeted us in the early days when we were still getting our heads around the Buffyverse. However, they're not entirely accurate as Buffy was never actually alone. From the earliest days she had her trusty Watcher, Giles, who trained and nurtured her abilities like a bespectacled, tea-drinking fairy godfather.

What eventually became clear was that Giles was the kind face of an ancient organisation called the Watchers Council, the epitome of Male, Pale and Stale. The other members of the Council saw Buffy as a mere tool, a weapon for them to wield in their battle against evil. Even a badass like Buffy took this BS for about two years before coming to an important realization – that the Council needed her way more than she needed them. Without her, they were nothing.

It's telling that a woman as smart, mature and brave as Buffy still took a while (and terrible circumstances – casual indifference to her undead lover's death from poison) to see the system for what it is – a group of men who used women to fight their battles and to boost their egos.

The takeaway

Even today, much of the world is controlled by the hands of a few powerful men and breaking through the glass ceilings that have been set can feel impossible. Two things helped Buffy that we can all learn from:

1. A refusal to accept that a group of men could and should set her future.
2. Belief in her own ability and judgment about how best to change her world.

If you have an equivalent of the Watchers Council in your life, tell them to close up shop as you're not working for them anymore. Your path is yours to choose.



Life Lesson

DEALING WITH RIVALRY

One of the great jokes of the Buffyverse is that the Chosen One is actually a Chosen Two! Due to a combination of Buffy's unfortunate death at the hands of the Master and Xander's CPR skills, a second Slayer is called. Fast-forward through a whole heap of conflama and you have the arrival in town of Buffy's ultimate rival - Faith.

The dark yin to Buffy's cheerleading yang, Faith was a leather-panted badass with a penchant for a purple lip. Initially she encouraged Buffy to rebel against the confines of her vocation and they became, for a while, best buds. Sadly it went rapidly downhill with Faith becoming a murderous psychopath in service to the Mayor - which is pretty hard to get beyond.

The takeaway

Having a rival can be tough and, at some point in our lives, we'll all have someone who tries to compete with us. Now healthy rivalry is a good thing, but it's easy to let it spiral out of control and end up in a pointless battle of who's better than who. What can we learn from the Buffinator?

- 1. Question your actions:** Are you doing something because it's right, or because you want to win?
- 2. Avoid collateral damage:** In our desire to win we can forget our usual values and others can get hurt.
- 3. Try and see the person behind the rival:** Put aside your rivalry for a second and see if you can work out what makes your competitor tick. Maybe there's been a misunderstanding somewhere down the line, and they think you are the competitor.



Life Lesson

BEING AN ALLY

Back in the pre-woke days of the late 90s, most of the world was still yoked under laws and social conventions that made being gay a tough existence – everywhere was like living on the Hellmouth if you weren't straight. Thankfully, people are now more able to freely and confidently express their sexual identity, which is a beautiful sight to behold – #loveislove.

Willow falling in love with Tara was a big moment for a lot of young gay people, who got to see a loving, gay relationship broadcast into their homes. Seeing Willow go on a journey of self-discovery, watching her fall in love, and seeing the joy and confidence that love brought out in Tara, was a powerful piece of magic.

Unusually for the times, but not unsurprisingly, the Scoobies adjusted to Willow's coming out with barely more than a comment. Perhaps it was seeing the change in happiness that Tara brought, or maybe it was just relief that Willow's new plus-one was less likely to eat them than her previous partner, werewolf Oz.

But being an ally remains as important as ever. With the awakening of people's minds to myriad different orientations and gender identities, there has been an equal and opposite reaction against it – Newton's Third Law of Assholes maybe? Even those of us in the LGBTQ+ family need to stick up for our fellow members.

The takeaway

1. **Be active:** Go on that march, sign that petition, slay that charity ball! Do whatever you can to raise awareness of social issues. If you don't, who will?
2. **Educate yourself:** The world is moving fast – like wicked fast. We're becoming more aware of new identities and ways of living by the year. Make sure you understand the community who you're speaking for.
3. **Enjoy it:** Being an ally is a great gift – for the world, other people and your soul. While passion is crucial, try and remember that the freedom to feel joy and love is what you're fighting for.