

The Power of Self-Inhabitation

For much of my life, I believed strength meant endurance.

I could push through discomfort. I could show up when I was exhausted. I could carry responsibility without complaint. From the outside, it looked like resilience. Inside, it was something else: disconnection disguised as capability.

I was functioning well — but I wasn't fully there.

Many women learn this version of strength early. We become perceptive, responsive, adaptable. We read rooms. We anticipate needs. We hold things together. These skills are praised, and they are useful. But when they come at the cost of our own presence, they slowly erode something essential.

Because real power does not come from managing everything around us. It comes from inhabiting ourselves.

Self-inhabitation is not an idea. It is physical. It is the lived experience of being inside your own life — in your breath, your sensations, your boundaries, your desires. It is the difference between performing strength and being rooted in yourself.

For many women, the journey toward this kind of power begins when the old strategies stop working. Over-functioning leads to burnout. Constant awareness of others turns into exhaustion. The ability to override our bodies results in symptoms we can no longer ignore. What once helped us succeed begins to cost us our health, clarity, and sense of self.

This is not failure.
It is a threshold.

The moment we can no longer abandon ourselves without consequence is the moment something truer begins. We start listening to signals we once pushed aside — fatigue, tension, intuition, longing. We notice where we say yes while our bodies say no. We feel where we shrink, where we overextend, where we disappear to keep things smooth.

This noticing is not weakness. It is the beginning of authority.

An unstoppable woman is not one who never breaks, never feels, or never slows down. She is a woman who is no longer willing to leave herself in order to survive. She makes decisions from alignment rather than fear. She allows her body to inform her choices. She understands that boundaries are not barriers to connection, but structures that make real connection possible.

From the outside, this shift can look subtle. Fewer explanations. Clearer no's. More deliberate yes's. A steadier presence in the room. But internally, it is profound. Energy that once went toward managing perception returns to the body. Attention that was scattered outward comes home. Life is no longer something she handles — it is something she inhabits.

This is where sustainable power lives.

Not in pushing harder, but in standing more fully inside yourself. Not in proving capacity, but in honoring truth. Not in being everything for everyone, but in being unmistakably present as yourself.

When a woman is truly inhabiting herself, she becomes difficult to manipulate, difficult to diminish, and impossible to replace. Her power is not loud, but it is undeniable. It comes from coherence — from the alignment between what she feels, what she knows, and how she lives.

This reclamation of presence — and the cost of living disconnected from it — is terrain I explore more deeply in *Remembering MySelf — A Journey Through the Threads of Time*, a full-color hardcover volume and woven literary work of memory, image, and lived remembering. The movement from survival into self-inhabitation unfolds there not as theory, but through embodied experience.

This is the kind of strength that endures.

This is the power of self-inhabitation.

If this reflection speaks to something you're living, you can find more of my writing, artwork, and current offerings at www.dkhillard.com, where I share the work as it continues to unfold.