

**Where you've been? Where are you now? Where are you going?**  
**By Jaquandra Rowe**

If I tell you where I've been, you wouldn't believe me. I was in a dysfunctional relationship, and to tell you the truth I didn't go far at all. I was in a relationship with a gangster. It is because of that experience that I am a strong believer that relationships could have a hold on your prosperity. You'll do things you never even dreamt or thought of doing.

My whole mentality on my life had changed. I needed help because I could barely live or think for myself, yet I didn't want anyone to help me. I didn't have a mindset to be anyone or do anything with my life. I always knew that I could be somebody, but at this point in my life, I didn't feel like anybody. Feelings of emptiness and loneliness had overtaken me. There were times I told myself, "I'm going to do better." Many times my mother begged me to do something with my life, but I just never had the motivation. I hung out with drug dealers and they couldn't influence me, they only put me under the influence; as a matter of fact I sold drugs, did drugs and drank alcohol. Yes, you could've called me a drug addict and alcoholic.

I paid the prices for the games that were played in my mind by this gangster, because I was lost and confused. As a result, I lost my mind, my respect for my family, and almost my life. I was abused mentally, physically and spiritually because I was lied to and cheated on. If I could remember, I was also raped. Something should be left unknown, but there's some things you don't know that could hurt you and I'm starting to believe that right now. It was definitely a struggle to get to the Gainesville Job Corps Center. It took a lot of praying, but when I was accepted I hustled to get here. This is a new beginning for my life so I can be successful. No more failures; the tragic lifestyle I was living is completely over.

I don't look like what I've been through. I shouldn't be here, but I am. If it wasn't for God on my side, His Grace and Mercy, I don't know where I would be. I could be laying in my grave, but I got another chance to make things right in my life and I'm not taking it for granted. Now I'm in the process of getting a career and my mansion nursing home I've been dreaming of. I have a plan, I know where I'm going and what I want to do. I'm on my way and I am only a few steps away from becoming my boss. I have a new mentality, a lot of support and the confidence to achieve my goals.