

# The impact of maya angelou's 'phenomenal woman' poem essay sample

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Maya Angelou's (1995) 'Phenomenal Woman' changed my life because of its grandeur to support a woman's self-respect. The poem was a trailblazer for all women searching for equality and respect during the earlier years of the 1990's. This inspirational piece changed the way women were perceived. In her poem, 'Phenomenal Woman', Angelou shattered the shadows I placed upon myself for so many years. Her words enlightened my spirit as I read the words of encouragement and such dignity "Pretty women ask where my secret lies/ I'm not cute or built to suit a model's fashion size/But when I start to tell them/They think I'm telling lies (p. 1)." The poem continued into "I say/ It's in the reach of my arms/The span of my hips/The stride of my steps/ The curl of my lips (p. 1)."

As a mother of four, I know what it means to have a full-figure. Angelou rejuvenated my need for understanding of what "true womanhood" could be. It led me to the conclusion that my womanhood is determined by my ability to make positive changes in others' lives. We, as a people, are encouraged to find happiness in money, clothes, and fame but true heroes are within our hearts. My deeds will lay seeds in the hearts of many. The work I want to pursue is not for my own glory, but for the glory of others.

With the curve of our lips, we (women) must speak out and let go of the media's perception of who we should be and what roles we are to play. I learned that the script must be rewritten in this society. To be a phenomenal woman, you must let your mind free to experience the greatness this world has to offer.

So what is the definition of a phenomenal woman? A phenomenal woman is a speaker of serenity, a believer of abundance, and a worker of truth. Angelou sparked flames in women movements around the world because of “Phenomenal Woman”. Now, I take her words with me in every stride I take because I am this phenomenal woman in progress. I understand that my personal growth will continue through my experiences, but where I stand today is just as graceful as where I stood yesterday.

#### Reference

Angelou, Maya. *Phenomenal Woman*. Retrieved August 24, 2006, from <http://www.feminist.com/resources/speech/insp/maya.htm>