

Ashley Rhodes-Courter

New York Times Best Selling Author of Three Little Words

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Emotional Intelligence
- Inspiration / Achievement
- Mental Health / Psychology
- Motivation
- Overcoming Adversity
- Women's Empowerment

About Ashley Rhodes-Courter

Since her first National Keynote at age 14, Ashley Rhodes-Courter has shared her story with thousands in the United States and in over 7 countries.

Ashley Rhodes-Courter, MSW, is the quintessential American success story. Born in 1985 to a single teen mother, by the age of 3 she was in Florida's foster care system where she spent almost ten years being shuttled between 14 homes—some quite abusive—before being adopted from a Children's Home at the age of twelve.

Despite her ordeal, she excelled in school because she believed that, "my education was the one thing nobody could take from me." Early in her life she felt compelled to advocate for herself and the other children she lived with, particularly in the abusive foster homes.

Her efforts and academic achievements landed her Eckerd College's Trustee Scholarship where she graduated with honors and ahead of schedule earning a double major in Communications and Theater and a double minor in Political Science and Psychology. Ashley then went on to earn a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California.

During her undergraduate studies, she was one of 20 college students selected for the USA Today All-USA Academic Team and was named one of GLAMOUR Magazine's Top Ten College Women. She was also selected as one of the four Golden BRICK Award winners for outstanding advocacy for community change by DoSomething!. As part of their campaign, she was featured on 25 million bags of Cool Ranch Doritos.

By the age of 22, Ashley had become a New York Times Bestselling Author. Her first book, "Three Little Words" is now an International Bestseller and has been published in at least 4 countries. Her second book, "Three More Words" debuted at #1 on Amazon Bestseller's List. Both books are used in classrooms across the country in various community and First Year Experience Collegiate programs.

Ashley has received State, local, and National awards for her speaking, advocacy, and philanthropy. She has spoken on Capitol Hill and has been invited to the White House twice. "Three Little Words" is now being made into a major motion picture.

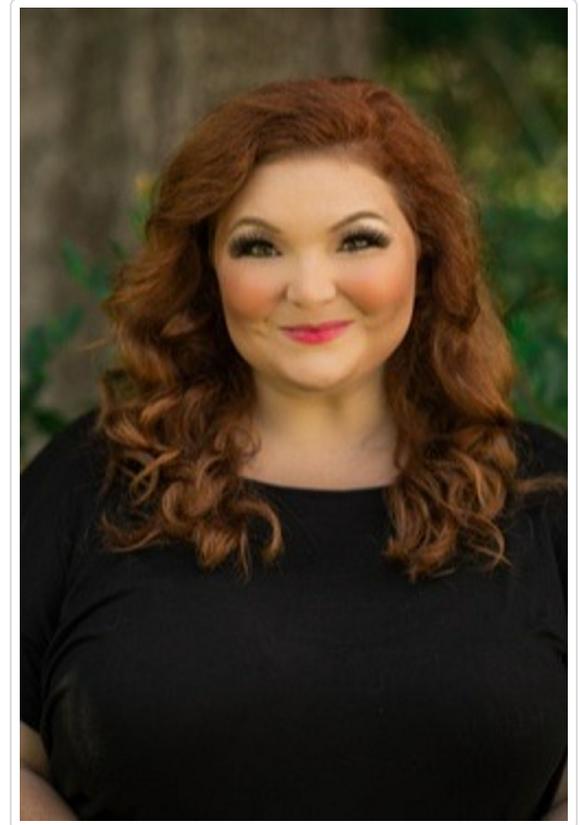
Select Keynotes

- **Motivating Change in Three Little Words**

(Based on her award-winning International and New York Times Bestselling memoir, *Three Little Words*)

Born in 1985 to a single teen mother Ashley was placed in foster care at the age of 3. Most of her 14 placements were abusive and overcrowded. In one home, 16 people lived in a small trailer where the children were regularly beaten, neglected, verbally assaulted, and starved. Another foster parent became a convicted pedophile. At one point, she was also placed with an alcoholic relative that was shot twice in front of her.

After spending almost ten years in the system, Ashley was finally adopted from a group home when she was twelve. Instead of seeing herself as a victim, Ashley has used her experience to find the strength to accomplish incredible things. She became a New York Times Bestselling author by age 22, holds a Master's Degree in Social Work, ran for Florida State Senate at age 26, created and heads a non-profit organization, and she has been a foster parent to more than 20 children. In this inspiring keynote, Ashley will show audiences how to overcome their own personal and professional challenges to accomplish more than they ever thought possible. She delivers her story with humor and grace, and attendees



will leave energized and ready to take on the world!

Partial List of Takeaways:

- ◊ Decode several key elements of resilience like: Accountability, optimism and openness, identifying constructive influences, and accepting and giving help
- ◊ Becoming a successful life strategist and overcoming fears or “failures”
- ◊ Impact positive thinking and introspection by turning set-backs into successes
- ◊ Give hope, inspiration, and motivation through a personal story of perseverance and determination
- ◊ Encourage community engagement

• **Four Letter Words & Three More Words: Finding Professional and Personal Balance**

Ashley has been a mother to more than 20 foster children while maintaining a career as an international speaker, writer, and non-profit director. Often, people feel as though they must sacrifice or compromise their dreams for either their family or a job. Ashley knows first-hand the delicate balance of navigating complicated family dynamics and successfully negotiating the unique demands in our daily lives. In this funny, riveting and inspirational keynote speech, Ashley encourages audiences to organize, prioritize, and sometimes, just enjoy. Ashley also pulls inspiration and anecdotes from her #1 award-winning memoir, *Three More Words*. Partial List of Takeaways: Maintaining focus in personal and professional environments filled with multiple, competing distractions; Creating a plan that bring focus, purpose, and passion to the things that matter most; Learn the power of saying “no”; How to rid yourself of toxic relationships

• **Power of One Person and Making a Difference: How One Person Can Change the Life of Another**

It takes only one person to change a life. We all know someone who has been ill, medically fragile, neglected, abused, impoverished, in foster care, or has a special need. As a foster child for almost a decade, Ashley had key teachers, workers, and volunteers that helped get her out of abusive situations and ultimately helped find her a loving adoptive family. Her story is an inspirational living example of what can happen when we give our voice to another. It only takes one person to change the life of another and Ashley’s story serves as a passionate example of triumph and inspiration. Sometimes, the biggest impact is being made when you’re not even trying! Heroes can be a mentor, nurse, teacher, foster or adoptive parent, CASA, relative, spiritual leader, peer, neighbor, sibling, counselor, community member, business owner, or friend. “Several people reached out to me and can be credited not only for my success, but my survival—and one was an unpaid volunteer.” Partial List of Takeaways: How to reengage or recruit employees, workers, or volunteers; Top 10 tips on engaging the local community; How to successfully raise funds for a non-profit organization or cause; Turn personal pain or tragedies into a powerful voice for others; How to help another while maintaining self-care and avoiding debilitating transference

• **Reframing Your Life and Leadership: What’s Good About Bad Experiences**

“Instead of letting my past experiences cripple me, I was able to put a positive spin on my experiences.” A negative force can give someone a rallying point and lead them to not only find solutions to their dilemma, but also provide a new path to happiness. It is often our adverse experiences that make us that much more capable of success. Ashley Rhodes-Courter grew up in an abusive foster care system but went on to become a New York Times Bestselling author by the age of 22, earn her Master’s Degree in Social Work, run for State Senate at 26, and start a non-profit organization. *Reframing Your Life and Leadership* helps both individuals and executives become better leaders by empowering them to embrace their life experiences and translate them into meaningful, productive contributions to business and community. In this humorous presentation, Ashley takes audiences through her personal story and highlights key elements of leadership and focus that allowed her to triumph despite initial tragedies. Partial List of Takeaways: Inspire compassion, motivation, self-confidence, and inner strength by exploring how our mistakes provide opportunity for personal growth; How to maintain a healthy attitude and workplace by seeing the positive side of a negative situation; Provide tips for self-care and burnout prevention; Move employees to be more productive at work, home, and in their communities; How to become the kind of leader others want to follow.

• **School as Sanctuary**

Ashley attributes education as a key cornerstone of her success. In this presentation, Ashley talks about the importance of recognizing strengths, engaging students and youth, and reminds us that school may be the only sanctuary some children have. Ashley gives us a unique glimpse into the lives of children that may have abusive or troubled home lives, and discusses how that can translate in the classroom. Ashley also gives customized presentations to students and youth for schools, colleges, libraries, graduations, and student organizations. “I was lucky enough to have teachers who took a special interest in me—an uncertain foster child—and nurtured me in the classroom where I felt safe. They made me feel special, talented, and encouraged me to continue to excel academically. Teachers or administrators also called in abuse complaints and tried to protect me—even when they were ignored many times. One anonymous call probably saved my life.” Partial List of Takeaways: ? Tips for teaching through tough times or connecting with troubled or difficult students ? Explore why some students act the way they do: the impact of coming from a broken home ? How to engage beyond the textbooks ? Provide potential assessment tools

Select Book Titles

- **2015:** *Three More Words*
- **2009:** *Three Little Words: A Memoir*

Select Testimonials

The buzz after the luncheon was palpable ~ our guests love Ashley! She is a brilliant speaker who tells a tragic story in a poignant way yet keeps you in stitches. Brilliant! And, on a personal level, I truly enjoyed meeting such a warm and engaging young woman. I so wish she lived closer ~ I'd love to take her to lunch to thank her, celebrate her and get to know her a little better.

– *Dallas CASA*

Ashley was amazing and very well received by the community, again! She is so powerful, inspiring and polished. She made people cry and laugh – her timing is perfect. We wish Ashley continued success and look forward to keeping up with her personal journey. We need more “Ashley's!”

– *Director of Development - Atlantic & Cape May Counties*

On behalf of all of us here at Pendleton Place, THANK YOU for being such an integral part of a very successful day! We've received so many compliments and messages of positive feedback about this morning's benefit breakfast including high praise for your ability to share such a critical message in an accessible way (with plenty of humor inserted to keep us all smiling!). It was our honor to host you, and your words have already done much for the children and families we serve. If you are ever in our neighborhood in the future, we'd love for you to stop by our campus and check out what we're up to!

– *Executive Director - Pendleton Place*

Ashley Rhodes-Courter was the Keynote Speaker for the Clearwater Community Woman's Club. She spoke of her life and that of one-half million American children who have grown up in the foster care system, and of the challenges, and sometimes the abuse, these children deal with in these environments. Ashley was fortunate enough to finally find a family that loved her and instilled in her the importance of a good education. This proved to be her way to improve her life and lead her on to become a nationally recognized figure and an author of two books: *Three Little Words* and *Three More Words*. She also started her own non-profit organization, The Foundation for Sustainable Families, through which she aims to help others to empower themselves to succeed. Ashley was very knowledgeable about her subject, and her sincerity and passionate presentation touched the hearts of our members. She helped us to understand the plight of many foster children and the need for change. The program was open to the public, and well attended. One of our guests, a former recipient of one of our Daisy Grants, Sewing Hope, presented Ashley with a blanket, made by their members, for her to give to a foster care child. Ashley was very touched and appreciative of this gift. The club also presented her with a donation for her Foundation. Ashley is a very caring person, and was a great personal motivator. She makes people want to strive to make a difference in this world. Her message was one that won't be forgotten and an excellent kick-off to our club year!

– *GFWC Clearwater Community Woman's Club*

She was fantastic! My folks enjoyed hearing her story so much. Many told me on their way out that this was their best back to school in service experience. Please tell her thank you again.

– *Superintendent - CCPS*

Ashley had us from “hello.” Her infectious personality, engaging delivery and true compassion were perfect for our celebration of 20 successful years in child welfare. Over the course of her presentation she had 150 guests alternating between laughter and tears. And she seamlessly tied her journey to Neighbor To Family's mission of keeping siblings together. She was generous with her time and spirit, remaining behind to chat with guests and listen to one of our many success stories as told by two siblings and what became their “forever family.” I can't think of a better person to help us mark a milestone in our agency's history.

– *Vice President - Neighbor to Family*

Ashley Rhodes-Courter demonstrated our mission beautifully on stage which touched many of our attendees. Some of which were in tears listening to her story. At the same time she was funny and connected in a way that was a blessing. She took time to speak and take photos after the event with all that wanted to which was very special for our guests.

– *Women Helping Women Fund Tri-Cities*