

# *Skip the Noise*

AND KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GOAL



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*“It is not every barking dog that deserves our attention.”*



African Resource Center of West Michigan  
Grand Rapids, Michigan



*Our elders say,  
“It is not every barking dog that deserves our attention.”*

*Life is full of noise.  
Some of them sing joyful, melodic, inspiring songs.  
Some sharpen our focus  
and help us concentrate on achieving our goals.  
But much of it distracts, irritates, or simply fills the air,  
like the sound of a barking dog.*



*It is not a call to action. Not a cry for help.*

*Just sound.*

*Discernment is the gift: knowing when to listen,*

*and when to let the barking pass.*

*It is not every bark that deserves your energy.*

*Not every annoyance needs your attention.*





*The human mind is like a garden.  
We tend it with care—watering it with wisdom,  
enriching the soil with our experience,  
and the kindness of the people around us.  
We pull a few weeds now and then:  
doubts, distractions, irritations.*

*But if we spend all day pulling every weed,  
We risk missing the blooming roses—  
or the colorful butterflies drifting from petal to petal.  
When we dwell too long on life's annoyances,  
We overlook the quiet blessings that surround us.*



*What you dwell on affects your emotional well-being.*

*You can't fix everything.*

*Someone may speak negatively about you,*

*whisper behind your back,*

*or try to provoke you.*



*Naturally, you feel the urge to respond,  
to defend your name, to call out bad behavior.*

*But not every battle is worth fighting.  
Some things must be released—for the sake of your peace,  
your strength, your emotional health.*





*You have the power to choose  
what enters your heart and mind.*

*You decide what deserves your attention or voice.*

*Respond to what brings peace, joy, and positive energy,  
both to you and those around you.*

*Let go of what stirs anxiety or fear.*

*Not every situation requires your presence.  
Not every provocation deserves your reply.  
Guard your heart,  
and speak only where your voice brings light,  
both to you and those around you.*



*Find a community that is friendly, healthy, and whole.*

*Protect your peace as if it were sacred—because it is.*

*Ignoring the bark doesn't make you weak.*

*It makes you wise.*





*You weren't made to fight every noise.*

*You were made to grow.*

*To heal.*

*To shine.*

*So next time the barking starts, smile, breathe.*

*And keep climbing like the squirrel.*

*Remember:*

*“It is not every barking dog that deserves our attention.”*

















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Portions of this handbook and its accompanying video—including draft text, images, and narration—were generated with the assistance of AI tools.

The final message and all editing decisions reflect the lived experience, values, and creative guidance of the African Resource Center of West Michigan’s media team.

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