

Trent Willmon lends his voice to his mom's heartwarming book about appreciating yourself for who you are, not what you are.

THE KNO

Anyone who's admired Trent Willmon's singing, songwriting, acting or other artistic pursuits shouldn't be surprised that he's not the only one in the family who knows how to tell a great story.

A few minutes into *The Knock-Kneed Cowboy: A Tale of Being "Just Right" ... Just as We Are*—a powerfully uplifting book for kids of all ages by Trent's mom, Billie Willmon Jenkin—and it's clear that Trent comes by his talents honestly. He also adds another highlight to his résumé with his excellent narration on a three-CD audio version of *The Knock-Kneed Cowboy*.

"This book is kind of an extended version of a story my mom would tell us when we were kids," recalls Trent, the pride for his former schoolteacher mother apparent in his voice. "It was just kind of a fun little story that had a cool little lesson. The story was just a great way to put it into perspective for [my brother and me], 'cause we grew up on a ranch out in cowboy country."

"A lot of the illustrations that are in the book have been around

for 25 or 30 years. And now she's takin' it to the rest of the world, so it's pretty exciting."

Trent's narration helps convey the book's messages about self-esteem and self-acceptance through his interpretations of several very different characters, including Grandpa, Honey (a fifth-grade girl with "I'm too tall" issues), Troubles (a bad-luck cow dog) and Gus (the fairy god-frog).

"Casey is a knock-kneed cowboy who wants to be bow-legged like all his peers," explains Trent. "The book at first appears to be just for kids, but it's really a parable for anyone who feels different."



Trent admits that his own self-esteem took a slight hit when he first started to record the book's narration. "The toughest part for me was that I'm not very comfortable reading out loud," Trent admits with a chuckle. "So I tried to pretend I was readin' it to my 11-year-

old daughter, Montana. 'OK, this is my kid sittin' here next to me hearin' bedtime stories.'"

The result is truly heartwarming. And, along with the wonderful illustrations and captivating storyline about a young cowboy who doesn't "fit in" and a girl who doesn't appreciate herself, Trent's mom has peppered powerful motivational quotes throughout the book. She delivers potentially life-changing lessons for kids of all

Trent's mom did this and all the other illustrations in the book!



CK-KNEED COWBOY

STORY BY DAVID SCARLETT

ages to read and hear. To order the book and/or recording, go to empoweringforchange.com/trent-willmon-records-3-cd-album/.

With the narration behind him, Trent's focusing on more familiar career territory. He just recorded a live DVD at Gilley's in Dallas, where, he explains, he "Toby Keithed it up" with a couple of female backup singers, some horn players and other special guests. Trent's also hitting the road from May through September with Mark Wills and Jeff Bates on the Honky Tonk Tailgate Party Tour.

But his primary focus in 2009 will be on his own songwriting. "I'm very excited about the songwriting aspect of my life," he proclaims. "To tell you the truth, I am really lookin'

forward to havin' a normal life and not tourin' 250 days a year. I want to get married. I want to settle down and have kids. And

I want to write. Not that I won't continue to tour ... I will. But I think that focusing on my writing will definitely allow me to at least stay home more."

And how's Trent's self-esteem these days?

"In the business I am in, it is very difficult to *not* value your self-worth based upon your accomplishments or how you're doing," he confesses. "So there's always a need for looking

at yourself and believing that God made you for a purpose, and it's not because of what you *do*, it's for who you *are*." CW



(Left) Trent records his vocals and (right) shares a warm moment with Billie. Trent's proud of his "very creative" mom. And she rightfully calls him "a pretty good hombre."