



D DONNA HIGHFILL

SHINE ON

POWER UP YOUR SOUL

DONNA HIGHFILL

Soul Power



Sometimes days seem so complicated. We worry about work, and money, and the spouse or friend with whom we got into an argument.

I think about the plethora of people I have flipped off in traffic, and worry that they might someday become a torch-carrying mob.

We start our days hearing about wildfires and bombs and sinkholes.

And we become afraid.

I think if we took all of the good things that happen every day and lined them up, end-to-end, they would stretch far beyond the bad stuff.

The other day my eighty-something mom looked at a harried waitress and said, "*You are doing a good job.*" The face of that waitress broke into a smile, and her demeanor completely changed. I call these *soul moments*.

Today:

- Engage in one soul moment. Open a door, compliment someone, or offer a sad face a smile.

And, if you'd like, read my [Huffington Post Blog](#) on why I believe in each one of us.

Moving Others

"Story doesn't grab power. Story creates power."-- Annette Simmons

Finding our own power is the first step in making a difference in the lives of our friends, or colleagues, or audiences. When we believe in ourselves and tap into our authentic journey, others believe in us. Like the Velveteen Rabbit, we feel real.

I could give you all sorts of clever bullet-points about being real that would make you want to stick a fork in your leg, or I could simply give you part of the story of the Velveteen Rabbit.

"Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse. 'It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.'

'Does it hurt?' asked the Rabbit.

'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.'

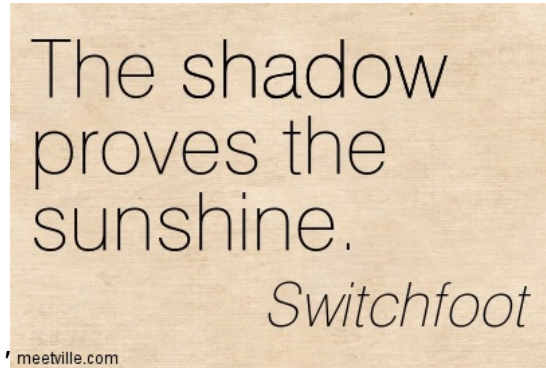
'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?'

'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.'" - Margery Williams

Stories Touch the Heart of the Matter

Anybody else feel this story in the middle of their chest? I do. Today, be real. Be yourself. Chuck the bullet points and tell a story.

Small Signs



Today on Facebook I shared a conversation I had with my mom. We were discussing the day my father passed away. We remembered that rain had been constant and intense all morning, the cloud covers low and dense.

Then, in the moment my dad released his last breath, the clouds literally parted, and the sun shone through for just a split second. Those who were there remember both the brightness of the light and the peace that it provided us.

And then the sun surprises us . . .

We've all had those moments where life's struggles seem so dark we are sure that we will never come to the surface again. Then something unexpected occurs. A friend calls from whom we haven't heard in thirty years, or a beautiful bird crosses our path, or the people at Walmart are polite to us.

Whatever the sign, and no matter how small, we must look for it.

We must also remember that darkness is relative. Sometimes small signs of hope come when we are in between jobs or depressed for no reason or on the third day of our protein diet.

We can't rate our dark moments, but we must know that we will emerge.

This weekend, look for the little winks of hope. And, with a smile or an open door or a laugh, provide them to others.

P.S. Here is a [link to my blog](#) on how to influence with story. Be sure to watch the trailer I provide.

Sea Witches

Look around you. Are you surrounded by people who encourage you, believe in you, and support you? I hope so, because they can change your life.

[Read today's blog](#) to experience a story shared by Kim Phillips, a woman who became an artist in her fifties because of the encouragement of one friend.

Unfortunately, not everyone is that helpful.

We all know them - the people who leave us exhausted after one interaction. Assholes are assholes for a reason. Like the Sea Witch in the Little Mermaid, they pretend that they value your presence while trying to steal your strength. They can be insecure - sure that everyone is out to get them. They are fearful, so they bully. They have no self-worth, so they try to rob you of yours.

So, what do we do about it?

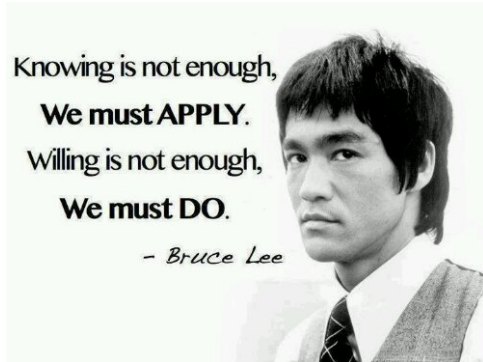
Invoke this rule - if you leave a conversation feeling like your energy is absolutely drained, you're probably in the presence of a Sea Witch. While you can't always get away from them, you can be aware of their motives.

Don't internalize their words, or you'll lose your own special power. Instead, make your voice stronger by surrounding yourself with people who:

- Make you feel lighter and happier rather than tired and concerned.
- Ask about you and actually listen to your response, rather than vomiting out their problems.
- Encourage your strengths, rather than making you doubt yourself.

You can't eliminate Sea Witches, but you can spend more quality time with those who make you a better person. And, by the way, you deserve it.

Move Forward



My son has repeatedly mentioned that there are no words he dreads from me more than, "I want to tell you about a dream I had last night." So, I apologize in advance for the dream I'm getting ready to share with you

Don't worry, I will give you abbreviated version.

In my dream, I walked out to my backyard and turn to our dogwood, which is filled with incredibly colorful birds. They're singing so intensely I can't separate their sounds. Then I start hearing it . . . each bird is saying a different word which forms this sentence:

"Move forward without fear; don't be afraid. Do you hear me?"

That dream occurred many years ago, and I am just now figuring it out. The one thing that has kept me from moving forward with my dreams is fear of losing a comfortable life. And we all have a fear of something. . .

Fear of failing. Fear of succeeding. Fear of disappointing. Fear of being afraid.

[Read today's blog](#) to hear my story [and to see Cher tell Nicholas Cage to SNAP OUT OF IT!].

If you feel confused about what you should do in life, just do *something*. If you have always wanted to write, sit down and write one paragraph a night. Don't worry about becoming Mark Twain, just write what you need to write. Maybe one person, in their lifetime, will read it and be changed by it. And maybe that one person's changed life is enough of a reason to write it.

Stop worrying about "what if," and stop trying to do it all. Just do something. Stop reading. And planning. And planning again.

Apply. Do. And each small step will take you in the right direction.

Guilt-Free Day!

Let's face it - we can't always have the "supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" kind of day. Instead of dancing around with our talking umbrellas, some days we are more like the chimney sweeps, covered in ash.

Perhaps we are worried about a relationship, or tired of keeping up with the Jones's, or frustrated about our lack of achievement, or have just weighed in for the first time at Jenny Craig.

Whatever the case, there are days when hanging in there is our highest and best goal. [Today's blog](#) is all about that very topic, and I hope you get a chance to read it. But here is the message that I would like to specifically send to you . . .

IT'S OKAY TO HAVE A DOWN DAY.

Life isn't always about sunshine and rainbows. Life is also about rain and storms and lightening and darkness. It's in those times that we need to get quiet and hunker down.

There are days when we just need to watch television and read a book that requires very little thinking and has a happy ending.

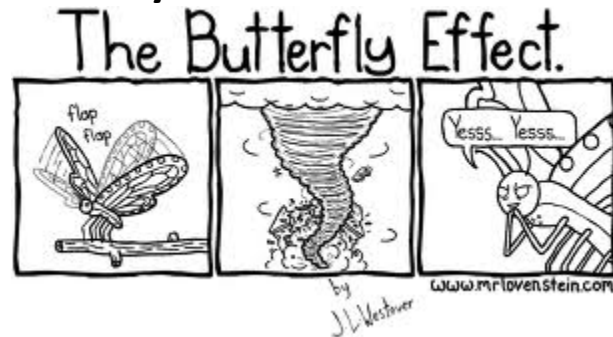
So, I give you a coupon for one guilt-free day. On this day, you can:

- Fail to shine at work
- Go home and be a slob
- Eat junk food
- NOT apply for a job
- Refuse to make eye contact with your children

It doesn't matter, because it's your day. And, on this day, you're not going to light a candle. You're just going to melt into your dark recliner and give yourself a break.

And you can start again tomorrow. Because this coupon is only for one day.

Butterfly Effect



Enough tragedy, already. I can barely get my first sip of coffee before my power is zapped by a million depressing stories over which I have no control.

To balance what is going on in the world, we are all going to have to flap our wings. No, not like the legendary Mothman. We need to flap our butterfly wings.

[Today's blog](#) is all about the Butterfly effect, which addresses the theory that the beating of a butterfly's wings in one part of the world can cause a tornado or typhoon in another.

Emotions are the same way. A rude gesture in one part of the world can have a domino impact that causes riots in another (which makes me feel horrible about my normal behavior in the car).

In this exclusive power message, I am giving you a few links to happy stories so that you can create a positive spin in the small universe of your life. We're power people. That's what we do. And, God knows, somebody's got to do it.

So, Get Busy Flapping . . .

All I ask is that you share one piece of good news with someone else in the next 24 hours. That's it.

Here are a few examples, but feel free to find your own (and share in the comments section of the blog so we all can see them):

<http://www.sunnyskyz.com/happy-videos/1066/Cockatiel-Sings-A-Happy-Song-I-Am-In-Love-With-This-Bird->

<http://www.sunnyskyz.com/good-news/816/Hero-Trucker-Saves-Grandmother-And-1-Year-Old-Granddaughter-From-Burning-Car>

<http://www.13wham.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/positive-prognosis-jim-kelly-14973.shtml>

Sensitivity to Light



We are made of the same stuff as the stars, yet our fear of making even one mistake causes us to live much smaller lives than we deserve.

[Read today's blog](#), and you'll see why I believe women, especially, sacrifice too much at the altar of fear.

You are bigger than you could ever imagine . . .

Below is my favorite quote in the whole world (I will say that about a variety of quotes, so don't hold me to it), written by Marianne Williamson.

This beautiful quote says everything I'm trying to only much more articulately.

This one's for you . .

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.

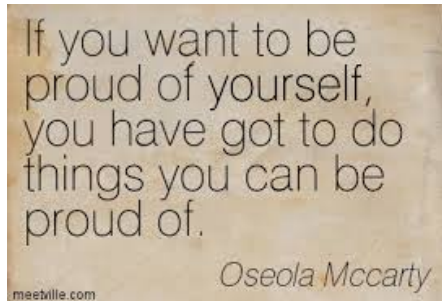
Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

--Marianne Williamson, [A Return to Love](#)

Giving Power



Sometimes power comes not in promotion or social media strategies, but in the simple act of giving.

[In today's blog](#), I talk about three messages we need to stop giving ourselves. They are messages that take away our power, because they focus on our fears. Perhaps true power comes in having a purpose that involves others.

Osceola McCarty spent most of her 87 years taking in other peoples laundry and returning it cleaned with love and a purpose. . .

She quit school in the sixth grade to go to work. She had no real opportunities in rural Mississippi, so she focused on the power of giving opportunities to others.

She spent almost nothing, living in her old family home, cutting the toes out of shoes that no longer fit her, and holding her Bible together with Scotch tape.

Over the decades, she saved \$150,000.00 and created a scholarship so students could have an opportunity to attend to the University of Southern Mississippi.

"I wanted to share my wealth with the children," said Miss McCarty in an interview with [The New York Times](#).

"I lived where I want to live, and I live the way I want to live," she said at the age of 87. *"I couldn't drive a car if I had one. I'm too old to go to college. So I planned to do this. I planned it myself."* She passed away at the age of 91, but not without leaving a legacy.

Sometimes giving feels better than asking ourselves "Why don't I have more? Why isn't my life easier?"

Perhaps keeping our eyes focused on someone else will give us a focused, powerful purpose.

God Moments



A friend of mine arranged for me to make a professional acquaintance in another city. As he walked into the room, I introduced myself. I told him that I knew the location because my father was a minister in the area years ago.

And that was it. We began to talk as if we had known each other forever. We talked about our lives and the times when we felt like we were stumbling around in a spiritual desert, totally disconnected, without an emotional map. And we talked about God moments -- those brief, incredibly precious times in life when everything makes sense.

We all experience those dark nights of the soul . . .

Author Thomas Moore calls our desert moments the [*dark nights of the soul*](#), times when every door seems to shut and there is no clear path ahead of us.

The conversation that was supposed to last one hour, exceeded two hours. The time flew by as we shared our experiences and stories. Things that I said connected with messages they needed to hear, and things I needed to hear were shared by them.

As my new acquaintance said, "this moment is out of our control. It was meant to be." And we all smiled and knew that was true. As we left the conference room, my friend said, "Is it just me, or did that interaction seem really important?"

Yes, it was really important. That was a "God moment."

So as you struggle through the dark nights . . .

Look for your God moment. It could be a smile from a baby or a conversation with a new friend. Whatever it is, your soul recognizes it as something necessary and familiar. And the person sharing the moment with you becomes an earthly angel, as you become theirs.

And suddenly the pain in your life seems very far away, swept up in the beauty of knowing that this moment, this one moment, is beyond any pain life might inflict. And you realize the map was there all along.

Serve Others



There's power in service.

In [today's blog](#), I share a story about my son and Michael Jordan and how one act of service saved our night.

But perhaps we struggle with service, because:

- We watch the news. Want severe depression to hit in record time? Yea. Watch the news. So, if you can't control it, don't watch it. Where does your depression add value to the world? Nowhere. Let it go.
- We are paralyzed by the sheer amount of need. We realize we need to save the polar bears and the forests and children in Syria and victims of shooting in America. There's so much to do that we do nothing. I usually end up eating a lot of carbs while in the fetal position. So, find one need. Open one door. Help one dog. Do one thing.
- We think service means being a volunteer at an orphanage in a tiny country that has no water. Powerful service can be done anywhere for anybody. Smiling at one person is contagious. So is opening a door. One small action can cause a domino effect that ultimately stops someone from doing something violent. Don't underestimate the smallest of service behaviors.

Make a difference today, and tomorrow, and the next day.

Five seconds a day will change the world. . . and power you up.

Our Tapestry



[In today's blog](#), I tell a story about the importance of being uniquely you. It involves a party dress and one red sock.

What inspired me to write this blog was a message I sent to my Facebook friends this morning. Their positive response let me know that this is a message I should share:

Today, just be you.

Don't spend time reading about anybody else. Don't try to copy anyone else's behavior. They're just as human as you are, and they have their own insecurities and flaws.

There are people who make you think every moment of their day is a huge success, that every second is a joy, and that their life is a breeze.

They tell you that because they are selling their story and need for you to buy it.

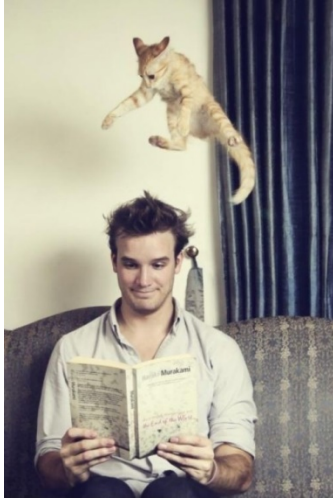
Don't let anyone else's story make you feel like a failure.

Life is wonderful because it is difficult. And the world is amazing because of the unique thread each one of us brings to life's cloth.

If we all try to be like each other, we lose that individuality and the beautiful pattern is lost.

So, today, be you. Your beauty is needed.

Destiny Cat



[In today's blog](#) are lessons I've learned as destiny has danced with me, stomped on me, and sometimes pounced on me.

Destiny is elusive. When we become focused on it, it seems to disappear.

Defining Destiny

I remember being in third grade and discovering that I could get a button for reading books. What? Get recognition for something I love to do? There was something in that experience that felt like destiny.

But, like the cat in the picture, there have been times when purpose surprised me, pounced on me, just as I was relaxing.

Do You Sense Your Destiny?

If you're:

- Suddenly dissatisfied with things in your life, or
- If nothing is working out for you, or
- If everything seems great but you still aren't happy, then . . . beware.

Destiny might be getting ready to make itself known.

We Can

We all know about the mess the world is in, but do we realize how easy it is to fix it?

Fear makes things bigger than they are. [This was the topic of my blog last week](#). I remember sitting in my bed worried about growing up, going to college, and being sucked up into a tornado. And I've survived two out of three. I'm pretty sure I don't want to chance the last one.

We live in a world obsessed with the dark things. Why? Because they always surprise us. We are a species made to love each other; that's why love feels like home. And when one of us walks into a building and shoots several innocent bystanders, we are shocked. And I pray that we always will be.

But I have a theory. If we make it our purpose to leave every person we encounter a little happier than they were when we first encountered them, the world will be revolutionized. Love will dominate fear.

We will all have to realize our weaknesses in this arena . . .

I am pretty sure that I do not leave slow drivers in a better place by riding their bumper for several miles, throwing my hands up in the air when they slow down at curves, and mouthing obscene words when they stop at a light before it's red. I know this, and will work on it.

Perhaps you are a delight at work, but turn into something much darker at home when you have sticky kids clinging to you. Or maybe you are wonderful at home and turn into a PowerPoint wielding, competitive monster at work.

Whatever the case, try to improve. Try to make others feel better. If only 20% of us do this, it will change the world. I totally made up that statistic, but I still believe it. Now, let's go change this world.

Get Quiet



Remember the book "[Goodnight Moon](#)?" Whether it was read to you or by you (at least one hundred times to kids who could not get enough of it), there was a rhythmic, calming cadence to that book that made me release the frustration of the day and get quiet. Especially the line –

And a comb and a brush and a bowl full of mush
And a quiet old lady who was whispering "hush."

Over the years I've begun to realize that when I have felt rudderless, when life's direction has been the most confusing, my spazziness has kicked in. The more I panic, the more I behave like Jan on *The Brady Bunch*.

During these times, I fill silence with new haircuts, new books, new plans, and a much more organized office. I tend to do anything but *hush*.

Transformational stories always begin with a breaking down, when the person being changed is driven to their knees. Inevitably, it is in the silence of the giving up that the epiphany arrives. Maybe we don't have to wait for the breakdown.

Perhaps we can listen to the old lady and just get quiet. Meditate. Pray. Do yoga. Stand in the shower and bow our heads under the relaxing warm water. Stand in our backyards and stare at a tree. Or sit in the bathroom and lock out our children and dogs.

We need silence to hear the direction that life gives. Because, as the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi said: "*Be helpless, be dumbfounded, unable to say yes or no. Then a stretcher will come down from grace and gather us up.*"

Being Ourselves



Force me to choose between "Love Story" and "A Football Life," and the latter will win hands down. I watch all NFL movies religiously. Perhaps I was a linebacker in another life.

I watched one of these biographical shorts the other night about Lyle Alzado, the defensive end who was best known as an L.A. Raider. Actually, he is best known for his steroid use -- something he courageously admitted when dying from a brain tumor.

What impacted me about Lyle was not his death, it was his fierce search for happiness. His abusive, drunken father made him feel inferior as a child, and he spent his entire life trying to prove himself.

At the end of the film, the once massive Lyle is only half his playing weight. As he leans against a door frame and looks into the camera, he seems calm. His words are, "*I no longer feel inferior.*"

In the silence of illness, Lyle found himself.

Sometimes death isn't our greatest loss; we can lose more by trying to meet others' expectations while we're still alive. Ironically, the most annoying, broken people are allowed to take our self-esteem. We accept their short-comings as our own, and try to prove who we are to someone who is so wounded he or she will never hear it.

Lyle's illness allowed him to quietly find his own soul. As he stared into the camera, frail from illness, I saw strength. Standing there was a man who stopped worrying about his father and met himself.

And he found peace.

Today, find your peace by focusing on the best part of your life - and, in case you're wondering, that would be you.

P.S. Check out my blog this week on the peace I found at my [husband's bone marrow scan](#), and the day I got [schooled by a raven](#).

If a laugh is what you need, check out my HuffPost article on [the power of the pen](#).

Meaningful Coincidences



The holidays are very Dickensian - they're the best of times, and they're the worst of times. Emotions can run from the elation of having family together to the rage that accompanies shopping. Well, that could just be me.

No matter what the emotion, we must believe that we are never forgotten. Proof can be found in something called "*synchronicity*," a term coined by Dr. Carl Gustav Jung. His simplified definition is "*meaningful coincidences*."

Have you ever had a friend call you just as you were thinking of them? Found a piece of jewelry that has been missing for years just when you need it? My blog about [my mom's locket](#) is a story of synchronicity - a picture long lost reappears when most needed.

Here's another example. My kids were young, and I was taking them to see their dad for lunch. My father had just passed away, and I was going to take some time for myself while they ate.

While walking down the sidewalk, we noticed a Jamaican man who was playing a steel drum and singing. He had a case open for donations, and I promised my kids that I would go to the ATM and contribute.

Once I dropped them off, I went to the ATM, and returned. As I handed the street artist the money, he put both of his hands on mine. He stopped singing and looked me straight in the eyes.

"I knew you'd be back," he said.
"I knew I'd be back too," I replied.

We smiled at each other, and an electrical surge went down my spine. I walked away feeling big. Not big in "*I just ate a burger and fries*" big, but universally powerful. Synchronicity.

Watch for it. You might see your favorite number at odd times, or find a new friend unexpectedly. Whatever it is, know that when the moment is accompanied by emotion, you are being actively loved.

Note: My blogs last week included a [story about how we are made of Stardust](#). If you are enjoying these Power Up messages, please encourage friends and colleagues to do the same!

Santa Claus



I realize that Santa is not a part of everybody's holiday season, but he's always been a part of mine.

I remember a 2nd grade substitute telling us a story about leaving baby powder around Santa's cookies to get prints (her dad must have been a cop). She said that in the morning the cookies were gone, but there were tiny little elf footprints all around the cookies.

For years I put a little powder on the table near the cookies to find those footprints.

So, why do some of us believe in Santa Claus?

Perhaps the concept of someone giving us something special just because we asked for it makes Santa seem a little more personal than the parents who gave us blue jeans and underwear when we asked for a tape recorder. Yes, I'm still angry about that one.

Perhaps we like to believe that there is a sleigh in the sky being pulled by reindeer that do not have to wear blaze orange to avoid being shot. And maybe we adore the thought of a man who is jolly and rocking his weight.

I know that Santa isn't the reason for the season, but . .

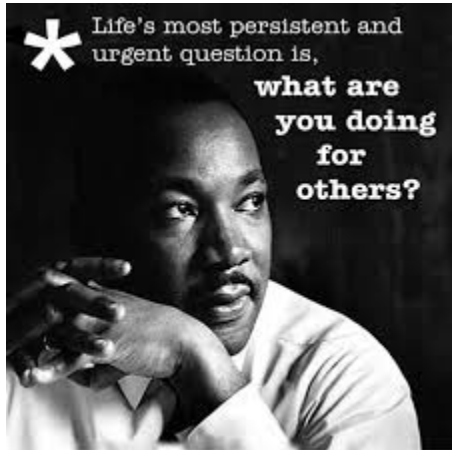
Santa represents love in the universe.

We become the carriers of Santa's spirit as we work to buy the right gifts for friends and fix the right food for family and hand out candy canes in the cancer center. And if that is all that happens, I still believe.

Because Santa is the spirit of giving. By the way, check out this week's Power blogs -

- ["Don't Judge the Messenger"](#) - A sign when I needed it most!
- ["Appreciating Family, Even When It Stings"](#) - Guest blog by Dr. Sarah Simmons

I Believe



You'd think that my husband's cancer would be a terrible thing. Granted, I wouldn't voluntarily invite it for a visit. Yet, cancer has brought the most powerful people into our lives.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of meeting (via Facebook) Connie Burnett Cruthirds, the mother of a 16 year-old young man with cancer. They are stationed in St Judes for an elongated time of treatment and healing.

In her time of need, she reached out to comfort me. I asked her if I could share her message with you.

To all people who sacrifice for love, here is Connie's message. . .

Donna, what I want to share with you and your husband is that we can learn everything from teachers and information, but we can't be fluent until we are fully immersed. This experience has been an immersion of grace, surrender, faith, and tenacity. Someone gave my son a wristband one day that said "cancer sucks." Adam wore it, but reluctantly. He finally told me that it was a negative thought and made him feel like something about him was bad. He said that cancer teaches him daily . . . so on the tough days, we end it with "What did cancer teach us today?"

Adam still has 117 weeks of chemo left. He sees things going on without him while he's at St. Jude. He had three different chemos today and has another oral one tonight. Some days I cry a whole lot and that's okay. I stay focused on the fact that fifty years ago my son would not be alive.

I love this quote - "My barn having burned, I can see the moon."

That's part of what cancer is teaching me, to see the beauty beyond the pain. Mostly, I pray for you and your husband to feel peace - the kind that surpasses all understanding.

Connie and Adam are power people. So are you. Please send Connie and her son Adam all of the light and power that you can spare.

Check out this week's Power blogs -

- [Move Forward Even if it Hurts Like Birth](#) Why crawling backwards should be saved for horror movies.
- [Yes, I Have Seen Spirits -- Oops, I Said it Again](#) - Yes, I've seen them. Because those who love us never leave us.

Don't be afraid of your light - shine brightly this week!

Greatest is Love



The photo above is of my daughter and two of her very best friends. Once a year, these young women find each other. And when they are together, their faces emit sheer joy.

Love can do that to you.

Love transforms . . .

While we relegate it to candy hearts and roses, love is busy revolutionizing the world, one heartbeat at a time.

I remember a 6'4", 300 lb man who started attending our church in California. He had been in prison for violent behavior. Everybody was afraid of him, except for my dad.

After many conversations with my father, this frightening man dedicated his life to God. Suddenly, his face was softer, his determination to help others stronger, and his hugs so firm you'd have to grab oxygen after he walked away.

He became a big, bold, ambassador of love.

Love.com . . .

Match.com and Eharmony.com and Farmersonly.com (my favorite commercial) are just a few of the businesses that prove we are all searching for love. At the ripe old age of 54, I'm finally realizing that love is just waiting for us to do something before it comes a-calling.

If you want love to be part of your life, then invite it over by helping out a friend who is struggling. Or by taking care of an abandoned animal. Or by giving your spouse a random pat on the back, and not in that firm way you do when he/she wakes you up in the middle of the night by tossing a pillow on your face (reliving that one from last night).

To power up this month, share your heart. Because love isn't something you can order for \$19.95 . . .it is a muscle. Practice love every day. I can't promise you'll find that perfect farmer, but I can promise that you will spend so much time helping others you might not need him or her quite as much.

Faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

Check out this week's Power blogs -

- [Power Comes One Day at a Time](#)- How daily power comes from focusing on the face in front of you.
- [Let's Tell Bigger Stories](#)- Because the size of our joy is directly related to the size of our stories.

“Everybody” Who?



[I have no reason for this picture, other than the little owl makes me happy.]

"There are so many hateful people out there," my friend said as we discussed some of the angry comments made about people at the Oscars this year.

"Not as many as you think," I replied. "There is a small percentage of people who are angry - and they're loud. Or they surprise us with their violence. The shock is big, but the percentage is small. Most of us are trying to live good lives."

I believe that is true . . .

Maybe I have to believe it or I will get really, really depressed the way I did after watching "[Brian's Song](#)" or the scene in every Disney movie where the mother dies (Walt had a little problem with mommy, I think).

I watched the Oscars last night, and saw the tears streaming down faces after John Legend sang "[Glory](#)." I saw the joy as artists congratulated each other on their wins.

Don't trust the noise. . .

Too often fear creates media noise that becomes the flaming head of Oz - all big and scary and insurmountable.

We allow little people to be our representatives, such as the guy on Twitter who targeted Meryl Streep as she cheered on Patricia Arquette's call for equal pay for women. The guy tweeted that Meryl Streep was a "slut who has all the money in the world."

As my son says, "*Mom, most of those guys are 13 year-olds sitting in their mother's basement.*"

So, the next time you get worried that the world is going to hell and everyone is mean, pull back the curtain by defining "everybody." Ask yourself - "*How many truly cruel people have I run into in my lifetime?*"

Most people aren't cruel, they're scared. Or they should be ordering Proactiv for their acne rather than commenting on the internet.

Let's not be afraid. . . . it blocks the light.

Check out last week's Power blogs -

- [The Things We Do For Those We Love](#) - Meant to make you laugh, a true story about how we help each other.
- [You Have More Power Than You Think](#)- The power of small actions, and why I love the guy at UPS.

Yes, it's the month of hearts (or massacres if you're a history buff). People are afraid. Be brave. People can be mean. Be nice. "Everybody" isn't nearly as big as you think.

On Patience



Last Friday I sat in a small wooden chair watching my husband as they blasted him with chemo on "rapid drip." The treatment was three hours late due to a scheduling issue, and I was irritated by the delay, and angry that an already tough day just got tougher.

Then I looked at the couple across from us. The wife was getting chemo, while the husband sat in his military jacket, straightening her blanket and making sure she was comfortable.

I shaped up . . .

Rather than continuing to focus on my frustrations, I decided to compete with the other caretaker. I asked my husband if he needed a blanket, or a pillow, and I got him water.

While I was in my race for "most caring spouse," a beautiful thing happened.

I stopped being irritated. And impatient.

I truly started feeling calmer. . .

When the couple across from us left, the husband smiled at Neil and gave him a "thumbs up." That thumbs up went straight to Neil's heart.

I read recently that impatience comes from a belief that our needs and wants are more important than anybody else's. BINGO.

They nailed my biggest vice in one sentence. I hate it when that happens. Today, maybe we stop being in such a hurry to get somewhere, and we shift that intensity to assistance. We let go of anger - it's so 2014. And we focus energy on making somebody's life better. It's as easy as one thumbs up.

Check out last week's Power blogs -

- [Yep, Love Means Having to Say You're Sorry](#) - No matter what Ali MacGraw says, "I'm sorry" can be two of the most important words in your vocabulary.
- [Bulging Discs and Other Messages](#) - Sometimes our bodies tell us what we need to know. I just wish my back weren't so verbal.

A woman with long blonde hair is sitting on the edge of a large, dark rock. She is wearing a dark, short-sleeved top and dark leggings. She is looking out over a vast, hazy valley. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow filter. The text is centered in the lower half of the image.

DONNA HIGHFILL
CHANGE WARRIOR

donna@donnahighfill.com
804.370.6665

www.donnahighfill.com