



A Transformation Story of Overcoming

**FALLING INTO FABULOUS:
A PHOENIX RISING**

by Trisha Trixie Hunter-Merrill

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Foreword

Let's take a trip back in time to 1969. My mother, pregnant with me, had been 3 years stagnant & told she would never bear another child again. Cancer ridden, taking chemo and radiation, was told to abort me because of "potential dangers the chemotherapy and radiation could cause". They prayed about it and decided not to abort but tested me at birth for mental defects. I could have been born with missing arms, legs, eyes, ears, etc. All the tests came back normal. My mother told me (mind you this is even written down and glued in a scrapbook):

"Now God had a plan for your life from the beginning. God did not bring you into this world under ordinary circumstances and your life has never been ordinary, nor will ever be ordinary. No matter how hard you try to be 'Just Ordinary', you will never be, because God always gets the last word. So take notice: God will send you Extraordinary people, to take you where God wants you to go. Your life is destined to be extraordinary. So anyone who does not see the awesome person you are Patricia, (birth name), you have to know in your heart that they are not being honest with you or themselves. People can only be who they are. Love them, but no more than you love you. You are God's kid, so how are you allowing people to treat God's kid? You will always be a survivor, because God planted that seed in you before you were born. You survived a pregnancy that you should have never survived. You have been a survivor ever since. Your first trip was down the farmhouse basement steps at 6 months into the pregnancy. You survived. You will always be a survivor. What you are here to teach and to learn, may never catch up with you, but for sure you will gain a new power to control your destiny. That destiny is to greater things than you can ever imagine. So surround yourself with people who believe in you and the wonderful, caring, loving person you are. Love mom.

~ Mary Selmer Berg Circa April 2009"

Intro

I have suffered much in life. In fact that is the biggest understatement of every century in every existence I have ever known and I am not kidding. I found myself by finding what I didn't want and what I did through dating, business, entrepreneurship, and more. I overcame. I was not just burnt, I was singed. I truly believe I went through the refiner's fire and I was left to nothing but ashes. I rose from the ashes and I came out a Phoenix. This is my story.

Falling
Into
Fabulous:

The
Inspiration

Falling Into Fabulous: The Inspiration

I love to listen to Christian Music. I am very in tune with myself and to things around me. I noticed the song “Be Held” every time it came on the radio but the words didn’t sound quite right to me. I kept thinking different words every time it came on. The inspiration behind this book is from the song: Be Held by Casting Crowns”. I was listening to this one day while driving home from seeing my family in New Mexico. I had heard this song many times but for some reason certain words of this song really jumped out to me. This is how I heard it... (The words in parentheses are the words I hear when I hear this song)

Be Held by Casting Crowns

Hold it all together (I am holding on)

Everybody needs you strong (I will be strong)

But life hits you out of nowhere (Often when I’m not expecting it)

And barely leaves you holding on (Hold to the iron rod as tight as you can)

And when you’re tired of fighting (Sometimes I get so tired)

There’s freedom in surrender (I surrender all)

Lay it down and let it go (I will let go and let God)

So when you’re on your knees and answers seem so far away

Your world’s not falling apart, it’s falling into place

(You're not just falling into place, you are falling into fabulous)

Falling Into Fabulous: A Phoenix Rising

*Just be held, just be held (**Be Held and Be Fabulous**)*

If your eyes are on the storm

*You'll wonder if I love you still (**I know I am loved**)*

But if your eyes are on the cross

*You'll know I always have and I always will (**I know, I know**)*

*And not a tear is wasted (**I know my tears are tears of growth, overcoming and perseverance**)*

In time, you'll understand

*I'm painting beauty with the ashes (**Paint me into something beautiful. Let me rise glorious, victorious,
from the ashes of my past and I will rise into the Phoenix that I am**)*

Your life is in My hands

Your world's not falling apart, it's falling into place

*(**You're not just falling into place, you are falling into fabulous**)*

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P.S...

I wrote this book nearly the WHOLE time I was going through Cancer Treatments. Six months of treatment and constant hospital stays were the placeholder for my ambition to get this book complete. May it help you as much as it helped me to write it.

Chapter

One:

Falling

Down

Chapter 1: Falling Down

If I were to say to you “I fell down”, the first thing you would most likely ask is “Oh no, are you okay?” This is because it is preset in our minds that falling is bad, hurtful, and harmful. In most cases this is true. However, I am on a mission, set out to not only change your mentality about this idea, but to change your perception around the idea about falling as a whole, for you to see falling as a good thing. When you fall, the only place to look is up.

Falling down can be a breakdown. A breakdown can be a breakthrough.

A breakthrough is the light at the end of the tunnel that will set you free.

Things fall apart so that things can fall together. This is all good. Not bad.

Many people who know me, know that I have undergone some dramatic, hard and unbelievable trials and adversity in my life. I was very fragile when younger and even in my twenties up to my thirties...I believed I was a victim and though I was still smiling, underneath I had *NOT* released those insecurities and thoughts that were weighing me down. I once had a counselor ask me how I stayed sane and I replied:

“By the grace of someone more powerful than me, that's for sure!”

I could have looked at my life and said “*I give up*”, and I almost did, but when I got my senses back I pulled up my bootstraps and dusted myself off and I realized...

I was actually blessed.

I know you might think I am a whack-o-doodle for saying that, however; I think there are many times in life people only see the telescope of life in front of them. I choose to look at the *Kaleidoscope of Life*.

Life is really beautiful, you just have to open your mind to it all.

I could have turned away from life, dug myself into a hole and stayed there. I could have pulled the covers up over my head, and told the world I was not going to come out. You may have felt like that as well. Maybe you are reading this and thinking that right now. But don't. Don't cover your head. Don't bury yourself in the sand. Instead, look up, then look inside.

Look inside the fabulous you that is there.

Through the pain there is healing. Through adversity there are blessings in disguise.

It is in the eye of the storm that if we only look, we can see the light. In the eye of the tornado, you are halfway through. That is when it feels like we can't go on anymore. We are tired, broken, but it is then that we have to keep pushing and trudging on.

You have to hold on to whatever it is that can get you through.

Perhaps that is faith. Perhaps it is strength. It is something different for each of us.

I am not going to be one of those who says “*The Universe never gives us more than we can handle*” type of people; because there were times the Universe **DID** give me more than I could handle. I will say the Universe is trying to tell us something. There is a message in there somewhere; we just may not know it at the time. More than likely, the Universe was trying to send us messages all of our life, through various trials and adversities, but perhaps we were not paying attention. For me, I felt like my whole life was like that. I got to a point where I thought, “**COME ON! NOT ANYMORE, MAN!**” I really felt like I just couldn't take **ONE MORE THING** life threw at me. Ever felt that way? Guess what? You are not the only one. You know why they call it *burnout*, because we keep getting singed over and over but sometimes we fail to see it. We come so close to the flames and sometimes actually keep getting burned but just keep doing those same things over and over not paying attention.

Eventually, I think the Universe smacks you over the head with a lightning rod like in those cartoons until you stand still like “*Whoa, what just happened?*” You find yourself dazed and confused wondering what you did, how it happened and you don't know how you got there.

This is your wake up call.

That's usually when your world falls apart into a gazillion, million pieces and you think “*I can't keep this all together, I am barely holding on. How am I going to survive this?*” You feel at your weakest. You feel like you are not strong. You feel like there is just no way in H-E-double hockey sticks you are going to come out of this alive. You shake your head furiously “No” and keep telling your friends, (*who mind you are doing everything they can to help you but you just KNOW they have no clue what you are going through*), you just can't do it anymore, you aren't going to make it. Then you fall. You fall apart. You fall flat on your face. You fall down. You fall so hard, your heart hurts, your body hurts, your everything hurts.

You and the dirt have made friends with each other. You have started naming the blades of grass because you are on the ground so much. You have melded into your pillow and have hugged it so tight it has now become you.

You think you have fallen into despair.

I am here to correct you.

You have fallen into fabulous.

This is where it is all about to get interesting.

This is where change happens.

This is when you finally realize there is nothing more you can do. You finally let go. You don't know why you are letting go but you realize that holding on hasn't gotten you anywhere, and though you don't know who or what you are letting go of and don't know who or what you are letting go to, you release. You figure "What the hell! What have I got to lose?!?" Nothing. That's what. You have nothing to lose. You have everything to gain.

This breakdown has allowed you to break through.

Break through those barriers that held you back.

Break through the walls that were keeping you from moving on.

Break through to see past the old you into the new you that you need to be, want to be and were destined to be.

It's time for introspection.....IT'S TIME FOR FABULOUS.

Chapter

Two:

Born

For

This

Chapter 2: Born For This

Ever since I heard the song “*Born For This*”, I have felt such a connection to that song. If you read my introduction you read my story about how destiny had a hand in me being born on this earth. I didn’t hear that story until I was almost 40 years old. I was at my wits end. I had already been through so much in my life. Two failed marriages, custody battles, and a failing relationship that I was so desperately struggling to hold on to. Looking back, I am not even sure WHY my mother sent me that message. Most likely we were talking on the phone or I had just visited her crying about all the failings in my life. My mother, being an intuitive counselor, healer, psychic, as well as many other talents, must have just known I needed to hear those words for comfort and encouragement. I felt so destitute, so down on myself. I felt like such a loser of life. I couldn’t keep a man happy. I couldn’t win custody of my children. I couldn’t hold a job. I felt like I couldn’t do anything right. I never felt like I fit in. I never felt like I was in the right place. I never felt like I “fit”. Ever feel that way?

Then here comes this letter from my mother to remind me that, *I am fabulous*. I am not only fabulous, I am miraculous. I wasn’t even supposed to be here, yet here I was.

“Now God had a plan for your life from the beginning. God did not bring you into this world under ordinary circumstance and your life has never been ordinary nor will never be ordinary. No matter how hard you try to be ‘Just Ordinary’, you will never be, because God always gets the last word.

So does my mother.

So take notice. God will send you Extraordinary people, to take you where God wants you to go. Your life is destined to be extraordinary.

At that time, I was feeling LESS than extraordinary. But one does not argue with my mother, even in a letter.

You will always be a survivor, because God planted that seed in you before you were born. You survived a pregnancy that should have never survived. You have been a survivor ever since. Your first trip was down the farmhouse basement steps at 6 months into the pregnancy. You survived. You will always be a survivor.

I'm a survivor.

That song by Destiny's Child starts playing in my head now....

*I'm a survivor
I'm not gon' give up
I'm not gon' stop
I'm gon' work harder
I'm a survivor
I'm gonna make it
I will survive*

What you are here to teach and to learn, may never catch up with you, but for sure you will gain a new power to control your destiny.. That destiny is to greater things than you can ever imagine.

I have my work cut out for me. This starts culminating in my brain now. *"What you are here to teach and to learn, may never catch up with you"...* *"That destiny is to greater things than you can ever imagine"*

My mother can be quite, shall we say, cryptic at times.

The point of it all is this...

It's like the *"It's a Wonderful Life"* story. What if I had never been born? How many lives would never have been touched? I started looking at my life and thinking "Have I made a difference in this world thus far?" I was put here on this earth for a reason. I have always felt it was a to make a positive difference in the lives of others. I have had numerous people tell me "Well, you are JUST one person. You can't make a difference to everyone!" No, I can't. But it is like the Starfish Story. If I only help one starfish, at least I made a difference to that one.

If I was never born, I would have never met the people I did in High School. They would not have made an impact on my life. That impact helped me come out of my shell. Helping me come out of my shell helped me to open up to others. Once I opened up to others I was able to see past my anorexia and past my insecurities. Once I did that, I wasn't afraid to do things in life. Because of that, I took a chance and went to Europe. Going to Europe opened my eyes to the world. Coming back from Europe helped me open my eyes to others around me. Little by little all of these things slowly had to unfold and take place to shape me, mold me and make me the person I am today.

Who is that person? "I am Trisha Trixie, Falling Into Fabulous: A Phoenix Rising"

What if my mother had listened to the doctors?

What if I was never born?

Would the world be a better place without me in it?

You may think that, but you are wrong.

You too are destined to be here.

We each have our place in this world.

Sometimes, we just need a road map to find it.

You too can find yourself Falling Into Fabulousness: You too can be a Phoenix Rising

Chapter
Three:

Dealing
With
Rape
And
Molestation

Chapter 3: Dealing with Rape & Molestation

Unfortunately, this is something I have had to endure. It is not an easy subject to bring up and if you have endured it as well, it may not be an easy subject to read. At first I didn't know when this horrible thing had happened in my life. I just knew something was wrong. I knew things about my body that no one at such a young age should know. I was only 8 years old. I am going to be very real, very open and very honest here.

When I was 8 years old, one of my sisters walked upstairs and caught me underneath my bed. My hands were where they shouldn't be. I remember trembling for fear of being caught in that position and remember a man in my life telling me never to tell anyone where I learned that. The problem was, I was so afraid I couldn't remember who it was.

When she asked me what I was doing, I responded in the most childlike way I could in a sing-song voice "Nothing, just playing!" and ran down the stairs and outside. I ran so far, I ran out past the hollow (that's what we called a big hole we threw junk into that no one wanted) and past where I wasn't supposed to be. Next thing I knew I found myself at the Ledges State Park and then I didn't know how to get home. Sadly I found myself there too often. Looking back at those experiences where I always found myself at the Ledges. I wonder if this was because these bad experiences kept happening to me so to run away to this place was the only place I felt safe.

When I was older I had a counselor who made me go through Regression Therapy. I am no counselor but as someone who went through it, I will tell you it was the worst experience of my life.

"Age regression in therapy is an increased access to childhood memories, thoughts and feelings as part of a psycho therapeutic process."

When we started going through everything I started to remember these horrible experiences that I had tucked away and compartmentalized so efficiently in my mind like TV dinners. Molestation, OK, you go over here where the dessert goes, abuse, you go where the mashed potatoes go, feelings of abandonment, you are the main course, and so on.

As we were talking a memory came into my mind of myself in the front room of my grandparents house. It was like I was right there. I could see those odd off-color peach plastic couches they had. The green Niagara chair my grandfather used to sit in. The Zenith TV next to the door. I could hear laughter and chatter from the next room and lots of people. My mind concluded that it must be a holiday event. My sisters were in the other room at the table playing cards or cribbage or something. That is what the family always did. I was too young and didn't understand those games. My aunts and uncles and cousins were all there. Yes, I remember now. It *was* a holiday or reunion or some family gathering. My Uncle was sitting in the peach chair in front of the window and I was on his lap. I was 8 years old.

As the counselor and I were talking I began to tremble. I started crying. She assures me I am safe and that no one can harm me. This is how the process goes. I carry on. This memory is starting to sink in now. I don't like it. I don't WANT to remember. But I go on....

My uncle and I are casually talking. To strangers I was very shy but to those who know me I could talk their ear off. I was talking to my uncle about school and friends and then the stars and the flowers and all the while he is listening and then he slowly runs his hands down my back. But sadly, it doesn't end there. Without going into detail, let's just say, it wasn't good.

I never told anyone what really happened until I was much older and only a rare few know even to this day. At that, only a select few understand the situation. I am not here to name names. I am here to help others along their path.

Come back to the room to my counselor. I am a swell of tears and have a bundle of tissues in my hands that I don't even know how got there. I am shaking furiously. I am angry at my Uncle, angry at the counselor for making me go through that and frustrated at the memory that now has been brought up; that I have never forgotten.

I learned something from that experience though. We can forget.

Forget what hurt you in the past, but never forget what it taught you.

I don't have to carry that horrible memory around forever. I am re-telling it to you now, but in general. I don't walk around with that memory day in and day out. I used to, but I don't anymore. That moment does not define me or who I am as a person. That moment in time helped me become the person I am today because it made me stronger. Would I want it to happen again? Hell no. Did it happen though? Yes. There is nothing I can do to change that.

Sadly, that wasn't the only time something like that happened to me.

When I was 14 a very good, married, friend of our family decided that he wanted to have sex with me. I used to go over to their home all the time. I played games with them, ate with them, spent the night at their house all the time. I looked up to them. They were like an older brother and sisters to me. I never would have thought anything different. I was very sheltered in many ways and not told many things because my family tried to protect me, not knowing of these horrible tragedies that were happening to me behind closed doors. One weekend it went too far. One weekend changed everything.

I came home from the weekend and started putting in boxes everything they gave me. Every bit of clothes, books, shoes, everything! My mother asked me two weekends later if I was going to go spend time with them and I said no, made excuses about having to help out at the library I volunteered at, and that I didn't know if I would have time anymore that summer. Then she casually asked where all my clothes were they bought me. I said I didn't like that style anymore and wanted something different.

Later on in life, she told me she knew something was wrong but didn't want to press the issue. I told her what happened and she told me she had a hunch but they were close so she didn't know what to do. She said I came home and immediately gave away everything and cleared out my room. She knew something happened, but didn't know what. As a mother in those situations, what do you do? Is your daughter acting up or did something happen? I don't blame my mother in any way. Let's get clear on that.

I am done blaming

The closest to blame I would say is the men that did these horrible things to me. Yet, in that I also don't. You may not understand that because you haven't lived my life. You also don't have my understanding about these things that happened to me. I have moved past them. These things shaped me and molded me and built my character and made me who I am today.

The last thing I want to share with you along these lines is something that really shaped my future.

From the time I was 14-18 I didn't date. After the 14 year old incident I was scared to death of men. I don't think I really 'consciously' remembered the thing that happened when I was 8 years old, but somewhere in the back of my mind it was there. On one hand I didn't think guys would want me, on the other hand I was afraid they would. Many in my family were obese and I was deathly afraid of being obese as well. I was in ballet and modeling and the teachers were always on my case about my weight. I became anorexic and barely ate through high school. I ate when I needed to, in front of others, with family, if friends persisted, and so on. I would take clumps of lettuce to school and lived off of the bare minimum. I got a job working in the snack bar and cafeteria and would snack there from time to time. I was a size 00 most of my high school life. I didn't have dates to proms or high school dances and my diary is filled with which boy I had a crush on which week. I always wonder if that diary will be worth money someday!

At 17 ½ I was at a school dance and a friend invited a friend from another school and I finally had my first kiss. I felt like I had broke free from my shell. About the same time a very close friend, my best friend who was a guy, had a heart to heart with me. He told me what a really great person I was and how I should open up and let others see the great person I was inside; that I was graduating soon and that I should live my senior year in style. I took this pep talk to heart and started slowly opening up. My senior year started becoming fun. I had a fun nickname that one of my teachers started and people jokingly called me "Bunny". Up until that time people called me "Brain". Not a bad nickname to have but of course Bunny was way more fun! I bought a fun car, a bright red Toyota Celica GT. I even decked it out with tweeters, woofers and lights underneath. It was 1988 and I was living the 80's in style. I wasn't so shy, I was enjoying life. I moved out of my parents' house and was staying at a friend of my mother's who was out of town. She needed someone to watch her house, and in the effort to be liberated, I moved out of my parents' early, "thinking" I was ready.

My mom had a friend who had a younger daughter who knew some friends in the area. She introduced me to a few and I met a boy and his sister who lived with their dad. They always had friends over and it

seemed like a nice group of kids my age to hang around. The sister was much younger and I really took to her. I was the baby of my family and didn't have a younger sister, so it was nice to have someone to dote on, hang out with and shelter a bit. I liked showering her with affection and spending time with her and she liked hanging out with me. She didn't have a big sister, only two big brothers so we had each other. I spent a lot of time at their house and vice versa.

One weekend we were all hanging out at their house and the older brother had a group of friends over. It was common that the kids were drinking and often smoking pot. We were taking it easy and drinking and things got out of hand. He had too much and started getting rough with me. His little sister was upstairs playing and came down to get something. She saw what was going on and yelled at him. He yelled at her to get into her room and she went storming into her room crying. He yelled at his friend to make sure she didn't come out of her room. His friends went to her door and held it shut. I could hear her crying and yelling.

I began pleading with him to leave her alone. His friends egged him on to shut me up.

When people are drinking and doing drugs, anything can happen. All I knew about was the weed, but when I look back on the incident, I can't help but think there had to be some other drug at this party or this wouldn't have happened, but I can't say that for sure.

Before I know it he has me in a compromising position in front of all his friends...while they are watching.

I'm begging and crying for him to stop. I, like most people in this situation, go into another place. I don't want to be here. I escape into my own reality until I don't have to face it anymore. Then it is over. With torn clothes, tear strewn face, I gather myself and run out the door.

As I get to my car it dawns on me, the sister is still inside. I'm sitting in my car sobbing, not knowing what to do. These are the days before cell phones, so I can't call her. I tell myself that he won't hurt her and that I can't do anything for her in my current state. I drive myself home and run into the house. I go to the bathroom and tear off my clothes and jump in the shower and end up falling to the floor. I cry and cry and cry for what felt like an hour. I wash myself up and put on some new clothes.

I take my torn clothes and go out to the pool area and find an old trash can. I put my clothes in them and get lighter fluid from the barbecue and douse the clothes and set them on fire. I remember falling to the ground watching the flames and crying some more.

Falling.....

I fell in the shower.

I fell to the ground.

I just kept falling.....

Even after the flames were out and nothing but smoke was left, I remember just sitting there on the ground. I kept thinking, “Why?”

“Why is this happening to me?”

How many times have you had a horrible thing happen to you and THAT is the question you have asked?

You know what?

I don't ask that anymore.

It has taken a lot in my life to come to terms with *not* asking that. Mostly because the only answer I ever got was “It's a lesson” or “you have something to learn here”.

So, now I ask “What am I supposed to learn by this?”

And then you wait....

Wait for the answer.

I often give this analogy when I give a talk...

When you call someone on the phone to ask them a question, do you spend the time to call them only to ask then hang up the phone? No. You ask, then wait for their answer. Some friends answer you right away. Some friends take more time. They need to think, process, then answer. This is how life works.

You have to wait.

Even at that, the answer might not come right then.

The answer might come three years later. I think that is when those “AHA” moments happen.

Be patient. The answers will come. Just maybe not when YOU want them to.

Now, you may be thinking I am cuckoo, off my rocker and thinking, so, Trixie, you were MEANT to be raped and molested? No, I don't think that. But I don't think I could have changed what happened. Those men did horrible things to me. Maybe horrible things like this happened to you too.

Do I forgive them? In my own way yes.

Have I forgotten what happened? In my own way yes.

Most of all I will NEVER forget what it taught me.

It taught me I am strong. It taught me to...

Be BOLD

Be BRAVE

Be FEARLESS

Be FABULOUS

It taught me that those things in my life did NOT define me.

Those stories are NOT who I am. They are THINGS that happened to me. They are NOT me.

If things like this happened to you, that is what I want YOU to know too.

They are moments in time that passed. They happened. Let them go.

Let the moments you want to release go like balloons floating in air.

Write them down and burn them. Put them on helium balloons and let them float away into the sky. Meditate on them and then go to a sink and wash your hands with soap and water and watch them float down the drain with the bubbles to never come up again. Find a way to release them.

Let your heart heal.

YOU did nothing wrong. YOU are wonderful. YOU are beautiful. YOU are Fabulous.

YOU are the YOU that YOU are supposed to be.

Those experiences, are just that...experiences. They happened. Those moments are in your past.

Today is your present. It is a gift. Let's make it beautiful, together.

"Let this be the opportunity where you too can be "Falling into Fabulousness: that you too can rise from the ashes and become "A Phoenix Rising"

Chapter

Four:

Death

And

Dying

Chapter 4: Death and Dying

I learned at much too young an age what death was all about.

When I was young my Uncle Harvey passed away. He was very dear to our family and meant a lot to us. He was funny and delightful. He brought joy to our family and to others wherever he went. I truly admired him. He was greatly missed.

When I was sixteen my best friend's father passed away and I felt like my gut dropped to the floor.

But those aren't the losses that changed my life.

The loss I am speaking of is the loss of my father.

My father passed away when I was 10 years old. He was only 42 years old.

The year was 1980.

The season was Thanksgiving/Christmas.

I didn't cry at my father's funeral. I was astonished. I couldn't believe it. It wasn't real, it didn't happen.

I had just spent the morning with him. I kept telling myself "*This can't be happening.*"

To give you a little backstory, let me fill you in.

A few months prior to my father's passing, my mother, who had been divorced from my father for years, had come back to Boone, Iowa from California. She wanted to see if they could work things out, to attempt to get back together. She got a job as a hairdresser at Rondo's Hair Salon again like she had in the past. She found an apartment on Story street, above Fisher's Shoe Store, and she made attempts to spend time with us girls. The older girls were cautious, bitter, distant, but I was young and hopeful and didn't know any better. I was like any youngest child and wanted my parents back together.

I would hear them talking on the phone and would see my father's smile when he spoke to her. He would usually walk around the kitchen for a little while waving the squiggle cord back and forth a little bit and twisting it between his fingers. Then us girls would get noisy or Grandpa Hunter would tickle one of us girls and we would get too loud. My father would look annoyed at us, then smirk his mischievous smile and then go into the front room. He would go sit on one of the peach plastic couches or the peach plastic

chair by the window and cross one of his legs triangular wise across from the other, you know, like guys do.

Sometimes they would talk for a few minutes and sometimes they would talk for hours. I wondered at times if the other girls even knew who he was talking to. But I knew. I always knew. All you had to do to know was see how his face lit up as soon as he answered the phone and heard her voice. She was his kryptonite. She was horribly dangerous in his family's eyes, no way were they alike or was it ever possible that they could really be together. Inside, they both knew it, but they were each others' drug, their kryptonite. Regardless, they loved each other and wanted to be together and that is what I believed in and hoped for in my youthful 10 year old mind.

One particular evening they were talking and as they were wrapping up I overheard my father say something to my mother about "...if I go, you know what to do..." and I couldn't help but interrupt... *Where was my father going? Daddy can't leave!* So I pulled on his janitor shirt, looking up at his tall, muscular frame, that of a former military man, and asked,

"Where you going Daddy?"

"Nowhere, honey, but if I do, or if something were to ever happen to me, I want you to go live with your mother, do you hear me? You be a good girl and do what I say and go live with your mother." Then he pats me on the head and hugs me to his knees.

Unscathed or bothered, I agree "Yes, Daddy" and saunter off.

A week later my father fell off a ladder that was on a 12 foot scaffolding.

I will never forget that conversation my father and I had. It is ingrained in my brain; Forever.

What did I do?

You're damn right, I did what my father told me and went to go live with my mother. (I'll fill you in later about that.)

That time in my life left such a vast impression on me for so many reasons. Things happened so oddly at that time in my life. There were things that led up to that moment in time that I will never forget. Things that, when one looks back, seem so surreal. It almost seems as if it were destined to be a movie from the start kind of thing.

You see, my father's birthday is November 26th. Depending on how Thanksgiving fell on a given year, sometimes his birthday would fall directly on Thanksgiving Day. My father, being a man, and being a military man, really could have cared less about this affecting his birthday. I, however, caring about such things, and caring about my father so much, mentioned how awful it was that my father had to share his birthday with a holiday to my 5th grade teacher Mrs. Moeller. She suggested to the whole class that we all

make Mr. Hunter (My dad) birthday cards! He was a janitor for the United Community Elementary I attended and the United Community High School as well, so he knew all the kids and teachers. It wasn't unheard of that the kids would do something like this. I thought it was a grand idea!

At the end of the day, we collected all the cards together and the teacher sent them home with me to give to him. I was so proud and excited that MY class had thought of something so awesome and grand! When we got home for Thanksgiving weekend, after we ate supper and settled in to watch TV, I gave my father all the cards the kids and I made for him. He beamed with appreciation and cautiously opened and read each and every one, setting each one aside carefully so as not to tear or ruin them, as some of them were still a little wet with glue and sparkles!

That was one of those moments leading up to his passing; as I said his birthday was November 26th and he left us on December 7th of that same year. Just a mere eleven days later. Eleven days, can you believe how little and quickly time flew by in those moments?

It was so precious and special to me, it is etched in my memory like white etching on black scratch-board. I can see where he was sitting. I can smell the scent of oil and dirt on his clothes like it was yesterday. I can feel the grease in his hair he used to use to slick it back when I touched it to give him a hug. I can feel his embrace so tight I could barely breathe and how I would beg him to let go. Oh how I would beg him to hold tighter now. I can still see the dirt underneath his fingernails. I can still see the smoke rings between his two fingers where he held his cigarettes. I can see the shine on his shoes like he was still in the military. I can see his smirking, ornery, sly, smile and the gleam in his eye. How happy that gleam and smile would make me.

I remember that moment vividly when he drew me near to him and hugged me from the side and said, "You done good kid! Thank you. That was the best birthday ever!" Then gave me a second little quick hug in a hug and messed up my hair on top, letting me go.

A few days later, the morning of his accident, it's almost like he knew. Sometimes I wonder, because why else would things happen the way they did? Why else would he have asked me to go with him? Why else would grandma have been making fry bread that morning? I don't know the answers to those questions, I only know they happened.

The morning of the accident I smelled fry bread cooking downstairs. It was very early as Grandma and Grandpa Hunter were farmers in their early years and still kept farmer's hours. As well, my father worked at United Community and had to get to the school early. He had many jobs there as School Bus Driver, Maintenance, and Janitor and all of them required he arrive very early.

I couldn't resist the smell, so I went downstairs. Grandma was actually making her homemade bread and with some leftover pieces she was making up some fry bread. Grandpa and my father were sitting at the table eating breakfast with her. She asked if I wanted any and of course I said yes. After nibbling on some fry bread and homemade jam, Daddy turned to me and asked me if I wanted to go to work with him. Being daddy's little girl and knowing what a special treat it was to be asked I jumped at the chance. He

ushered me to hurry up and get ready so he wasn't late and I ran upstairs and got dressed in a flash and came bounding back downstairs!

We headed to work together and got there before nearly everyone else. It was so quiet when we first got there. We went into a break room that was behind some pipes and what seemed like a hidden door. There were a bunch of other guys in janitor outfits and uniforms similar to what my father wore and he introduced me to them. The room had coffee and donuts and hot cocoa. He let me pick a couple of donuts and made a hot cocoa for me. We sat there for a little bit while he discussed his day with the other guys and talked about what needed to be done. Then we walked around some of the rooms emptying trash cans into larger trash bins and replaced trash bags. We wiped down some desks and he let me help clean off some chalk boards. I think it was the first time I really got to see what my father actually did for a living. I don't even know if I knew before then what a janitor was. We went into the high school and did the same thing in a few more rooms and cleaned up the band and music room. I had never been in those rooms before and it was magical to me. The Elementary and the High School were connected, so to go from one to the other was not really that far. He introduced me to a few of the high school teachers and some that I met were my sisters' teachers. Everyone was very nice to me. Time went by very fast and a bell rang. Dad mentioned that he'd better take me back to my class and he walked me back to Mrs. Moeller's room. She was surprised to see him walking with me and asked:

“So what is this all about?”

Dad replied,

“Just a morning with dad helping out”

I beamed a huge grin.

“Well, that must have been fun?!” She replied.

I nodded shyly, not speaking a word... (I used to be shy; Shocker I know.)

He turned to me, “Well, kid, I gotta go. You be good now, I'll see you later.”

I gave him a hug on his legs. He leaned down to hug me sideways. Then he tousled my hair to tease me like he always did! I waved goodbye and went to class. He walked away, his keys jangling in the distance.

Little did I know that was the last time I was gonna see my him.

Little did I know that was our last goodbye.

Little did I know, that was the last hug I ever would receive from him.

So you see, later that day, when I got on the bus to go home, I no sooner sat down and someone hollered out my name, and not just my name but my FULL NAME...

“Patricia Ann Hunter!!”

I think, *Oh no, what did I do?*

I stand up and go to the front of the bus. A woman is standing there and she tells the bus driver:

“It’s OK, I have her. I will be taking her home”

I am thinking *You will? Who are you? I don’t even know you. Why are YOU taking me home?*

She says “ Something has happened to your father.”

Just like that. She just blurted it out like that. No warning. Nothing. No buttering me up, no softening. I am only ten years old. She could have softened the blow a bit. Maybe that was soft to her. I think she is from the High School. Yes, I met her earlier today. She IS from the High School. She probably doesn’t know how to talk to Elementary kids. I can’t talk. What am I supposed to say. What is she talking about. Nothing happened to my dad. I was just with him. He is fine.

“What are you talking about? What happened to my dad?”, I barely get out through wavering tears *where did those tears come from, why am I crying?*

She softens her voice and slowly whispers to me and kneels down to my ear:

“Your father fell off a really high scaffolding and had to be rushed to the hospital. I am going to take you home and your family can explain it better to you.”

Now the waterworks happen. I burst into tears. I don’t know what to think. I really am confused now. “*I was JUST with him this morning!*” I am thinking. “*He’s fine, I am sure he is fine. OK, if he is so fine, then why am I crying so hard?*” My brain is on overdrive now. I get in her car. I am so upset I don’t even remember what kind of car. I don’t remember her name. I don’t remember anything about her to this day. Odd how some moments are so VIVID and some are so VAGUE. The drive from school to home isn’t too far. We don’t live super far from the country school but far enough we can’t really walk. I think she took some paved roads and some gravel. At some point you have no choice but to take gravel because we lived at the end of a dead end gravel road in a rural area. She pulls into the driveway and I do remember getting out of the car and my Grandma Hunter being there, waiting for me. When I saw her face, I burst into tears again. Grandma’s face was scared, nervous and very worried. That worried me. The lady passed me off and said something to Grandma. I fell into Grandma’s arms and I vaguely remember her saying something like:

“There, there, it’s OK. It’s all gonna be OK”

But it wasn't OK.

That was December 5th or 6th. They pulled the plug December 7th. His funeral was December 10th.

They closed both the Elementary and High School.

They closed United Community for his funeral. I think the whole school came too. Or at least there were so many people at his funeral, it sure felt like the whole school AND the entire town came.

"Mr. Hunter, Mr. Hunter!" they called him. Everybody loved him. My sisters' friends, my friends, people in the town, farmers, railroaders, the guy at the drugstore, the guy at the ice cream shop, the grocery checkers at Fareway, everyone.

He was a man that left a legacy.

That is what I want too.

I want to be a person that leaves a legacy. But not just any legacy. I want to leave a Legacy of Love.

I want to make my father proud.

Like when he told me to go live with my mother.

I did.

I chose to live with her. Here I was, ten years old, already faced with a choice in my life that was a HUGE fork in the road. Which way did I want my life to turn? Did I want to grow up in the country? Did I want to stay with my father's family or did I want to do as my father had asked me to do and go live with my mother? I had no idea, but I knew ONE THING. My father said to me:

"If anything is to happen to me, I want you to go live with your mother"

If there was anything I could rely on at that time, I knew I could rely on those words.

Those words were my faith at that moment in time.

I was TEN YEARS OLD. I didn't know anything else. I had been brought up in multiple churches, with different prayers, different ways of doing things and different thoughts in life. I wasn't sure about my faith in a higher power at that time. I would like to say I did, but I didn't. Sometimes, we don't have that. Many of us may not have that

But we all generally DO have faith in something. We generally Do have faith in a knowledge of something that we can truly say we believe in, somehow. Even if we can't explain it. For me, at that time in my life, that's what it was. So that is what I did. I went to go live with my mother.

From the moment of my father's death I learned more about grief, loss, humility, tolerance, love, patience, empathy, kindness, compassion, courtesy, trust, perseverance, acceptance, understanding, endurance, sympathy, tenderness, mercy, charity, care, concern, humanity and faith than I think most any other person could have ever learned.

I fell harder than I thought I ever could. How was I at ten years old supposed to pick myself back up from this? Where do I go from here? Where do I turn? Where do I look?

*From that young, tender age, I learned to look up.
I learned that I was strong.
I learned that I could overcome this.
Once I learned that the power was always in me
And it was up to me,
That is when I fell into fabulous.*

Chapter

Five:

Watch

Out

California,

Here

We

Come

Chapter 5: Watch Out California, Here We Come

This chapter really should segue into my other book because I think this is really where that one takes off, now that I think of it. Funny how my first book, *Days of Corn Tortillas*, was about that.

But I digress.

Here I am ten years old, left with a choice. Stay in my grandparents' home or go live with my mother like my father told me to do. As you saw, I chose to live with my mother.

When I first moved in with her, I didn't know we were leaving Iowa or going to be traveling across the United States to California. No one told me that was part of the plan. I am not even sure my mother knew that herself. Maybe she did, maybe she didn't. Regardless, it happened.

When I first came to live with her, I was still attending the country school over at United Community. I don't quite remember how I got out there every morning. I think mom drove me out there, or I think she drove me to my grandparents' and then the bus picked me up with the girls. I'm not sure, but I kind of remember something like this.

The problem was that not long after my father passed away, I couldn't really handle being at the school day in and day out. He worked there and every time I would hear a worker pass by with jingling keys, I nearly fell apart. Remember, I said I didn't hardly believe it and I was serious. I was in a state of shock about my father's death for about three years after he died. Yep, you read that right, three years. Well, it was just too much to bear to keep hearing those keys jingling and so I told my mother I wanted to go to school in town so she arranged for me to go to school close to where her friend, Karen Smith lived. I ended up going to Lincoln Elementary in town for the last half of my 5th grade year.

My grandparents were furious. They felt my mother made my decisions for me and that she was ruling my life. But that was because she had protected me since I was too afraid to tell my grandparents that I didn't want to go to United anymore. They were already very upset and hurt that I chose to live with my mother. I was worried at how they would react if I told them I didn't want to go to the school where their son worked anymore. So I told my mother how scared I was about telling them and she said she would handle it.

So of course, by "handling it" she protected me and said it was her idea and she felt it was better for me. See, that's what mothers do. People always thought my mother never did anything for us girls or never put us first. But that wasn't true at all. I never thought that.

***I knew my mother would walk through fire for me and
I felt sorry for any person that got in the way of her and her baby girl!***

So, there we lived. On Story Street, above Fisher's Shoe Store. As I write it, I realize how it sounds like something out of the movie "It's a Wonderful Life" or something. Mom worked and I went to school. We finished out the year and then all of a sudden it was summer time. Next thing I knew we were moving to California. All I remember is being part sad and part mad at the same time. I had already had a hard enough time transitioning from leaving my friends at United to going to the town school. But I thought, at least we still live in Iowa. My friends and I had slumber parties at each others' house a few times and spent the nights on school nights once in awhile, so it had been tolerable. But now, mom was moving me across the states. Yet, at the same time, I was happy for a fresh start. No one really knew me in California. Yes, my cousins and Aunts and Uncles, but this would be a new school with new people and that both excited and terrified me at the same time!

We packed up our things, mom took out the back seat of the Chevy Rambler, packed ice, washcloths, several jugs of water for her radiator and off we went. IT was a crazy adventure. As I said, that's all in my other book, so no need to rehash it here, but it was crazy and fun and not your average road trip.

I was able to bus tables, I slept on top of boxes and we pulled off to slept in truck stops with no one bothering us. We pulled off to the side of the road as well and strangers often helped us. We never even thought to worry about our lives or even be concerned. But that was 1980. Not that there wasn't crime, but those still were different times and going across the country was a lot safer then.

I find it odd, however, that out of all the things that happened to me in my lifetime, that a time in my life when I should have probably been in the most danger in my life, was actually when I was the safest.

Yet, here we were, traveling across the states.

I don't know how long it took us. I know we went down to Oklahoma for awhile. We stayed with my Aunt and Uncle for a bit and helped out around the place. Then we headed across "the 40". That's what everyone kept calling it but later I found out it was actually called Highway 40. We took the Southern route. I remember it being really, really hot. Super hot when we went through Death Valley. So hot that my mother told me to take the Pizza Hut pitcher that had ice water in it, take a washcloth and put some of that ice water and pour it on the wash cloth, and then put it on my forehead. Then she told me to lie down and take a nap. That's because it was so hot that otherwise I wouldn't make it and would end up getting real sick. I did as I was told and lied down. Next thing I knew, we were in California on one of the big freeways. Not long after, we were pulling up to my Aunt Irene's house in Gardena, California. We stayed and visited for hours and then we went over to my mother's friend's house where we were going to be living in Lawndale, California and that's where we lived for years until we moved to Orange County.

It was an arduous journey and filled with lots of tall tales, which you can find in Days of Corn Tortillas. I liken it to a quote taken from one of my favorite books “The Tale of Two Cities”...

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the [summer] of hope..”

Many could look at these instances in my life as falling and failing but I instead desire to see the fabulousness of it all. Yes, we had hardships and hard times. We often times had little to eat and only had fried corn tortillas. My mother worked a lot to provide for us. I see how people showed up and shined who said they were friends or family. I saw how strangers were not always bad and many times were there for us more than those who knew us. I saw all the silver linings at this time in my life and was able to see hard times and trials as a blessing. We wouldn't be the people we are today. Our characters were not yet built. This is where my mother and I grew up together.

Chapter

Six:

Self-Harm

And

Other

Coping

Mechanisms

Chapter 6: Self-Harm & Other Coping Mechanisms

Somehow while suffering through the trials and adversities of life I decided that the way to deal with the hardships and tragedies of my life by harming myself. In my early twenties, after losing custody of my children, escaping a marriage that was a mess in many ways and trying to survive, I started hitting myself, and whenever I was unable to deal with the emotions that came along with life. I never cut myself, or did other harmful things, so I justified my actions; “I wasn’t taking it out on anybody else so why would it matter”. I would always make excuses for the bruises on me, just like I made excuses when I was abused.

The year my husband & I lost his mother to Behcet's related death and illness. It hit me extremely hard and I found a counselor, Jim. It wasn’t until I saw him that I discovered I am Bipolar and have Asperger’s. We develop coping mechanisms to help us deal with life in a way that we can understand. I think, before we can grow and deal with things, we must trust in ourselves and mostly believe in ourselves.

I didn’t believe in myself. I felt I was failing and falling.

I didn’t believe I could manage my anger. I was scared and felt alone and afraid in my life. I ended up with vast feelings of hopelessness. I was filled with despair and was quite often despondent to life around me.

As I aged into my thirties, I thought it would eventually stop and I wouldn’t need to do hurt myself anymore. I was too blind to see that it would stop when I decided it would stop and no one or nothing could make me stop hurting myself until ***I*** made the conscious choice to do so.

I had fallen into the pits and depths of sadness and sorrow. I didn’t know how to get myself out.

One of the things I speak about in the Road-map part of my workbook is Brave Girls Club. Melody Ross, the leader of the Soul Restoration course, had us do a timeline of our life. We were to highlight the good moments that we remembered in our life and in some way mark the bad moments. The timeline folded out like an accordion and when I was done with the project, I was taken aback that my earliest negative memory was when I was eight years old. I had marked my timeline in black for those areas and as I unfolded the timeline, I saw more and more black. No wonder I’d had such a hard time in life. No wonder I had struggled so much with men, dating, emotional intelligence and so much more. I then realized how many coping mechanisms I had developed over the years. Self harm being one of them. Some were good, like attempting to give myself positive encouragement, and affirmations, but they always felt so wrote to me that they didn’t sink in.

It wasn’t until I experienced Melody’s Art Therapy, videos and reading her words that I realized that I WAS hurting myself. Not just physically, but mentally as well. I had believed all the lies others had said to me over the years and had allowed those words to rule my thoughts, actions and deeds. I made a decision that year, in 2011, to transform my life. To cherish all the good things in life that had happened

to me, for me, and with me. I honored the blessings in my life and became grateful for the trials and adversities I had and to see them as character builders and strengtheners of life.

At that time, I stopped hitting and hurting myself. Instead I gave myself regular pep talks in the mirror. I sought out a counselor, Sara, who helped me along the path of happiness and the ability to see myself as I really am, Fabulous.

Change it not easy. I failed a few times and hit myself in the leg from time to time, causing bruising again. But this time, when those moments happened, I accepted them for what they were. To me, it was a cry for help. I reached out to my counselor, those close to me like my sisters and my friends, to help me through the struggles I was facing. Through Brave Girls Club, I learned to see the wonder of myself and the amazing gifts and talents I had to offer the world. I knew I had to share the story of my life and this too is part of my story.

I know far too many people who hurt themselves. Not all do it by physical means, some do it by telling themselves those same lies that I used to tell myself.

I am ugly.

I am not enough.

I am not worthy of anyone's friendship.

I do not deserve love.

You know what all of those are? LIES.

Lies that we have taken as our own. Lies that we heard in our minds as truths. We then made up a story that goes along with those lies and retell them to ourselves. I want you to replace those lies with positive truths. I want to help you search inside yourself and dig deep and pull out the amazing truths about yourself. I want you to change the way you think, starting today, starting right now, at this very moment. Copy this, print it, write it yourself somewhere else, but make these statements and other statements you may come up with a part of your NEW life. A life of joy, happiness and self-love instead of self harm. Turn away from those negative coping mechanisms you have and embrace love in your life as a coping mechanisms instead!

You have permission to make mistakes.

You have permission to fail.

You have permission to stumble.

You have permission to feel broken.

You have permission to feel grief-stricken.

You have permission to be sad.

You have permission to hide...sometimes.

You have permission to feel.

Give yourself a break...

Stop being so hard on yourself.

Take time for you.

Take time to breathe.

Take time to just be.

Guess what?

You can't do it all.

You can't be there for others until you are there for yourself.

I CANNOT STRESS THIS ENOUGH!

We are supposed to make mistakes.

We are supposed to struggle.

We are supposed to have adversity.

We are supposed to have trials.

We are supposed to fall.

How else will we know when to reach out a hand?

How else will we know to look up?

How else will we grow?

How else are you supposed to RISE UP to become the fabulous person you are supposed to be?

All we need is a little faith.

Time to catch your breath.

Time to get a second wind.

Time for the momentum to kick in.

It's Time for Fabulous!

It's OK to fall...

I'm here for you until you can stand tall again.

That's what I do.

That is what my Heavenly Father called me to do.

I've struggled in life so I could have empathy for you.

So I could understand.

So I could be here for you.

So I could Fall Into Fabulous, for you...

You Are Only Human...

We are supposed to make mistakes.

We are supposed to struggle.

We are supposed to have adversity.

We are supposed to have trials.

We are supposed to fall.

How else are we supposed to RISE UP to become the fabulous Phoenix we are supposed to be if we don't fall down first?

Chapter

Seven:

The

Anorexia

Decision

Chapter 7: The Anorexia Decision

I think one decides to become anorexic like one decides to take up running or jogging. One day you wake up and there it is, in front of you.

You make this decision in your life on a whim and your life has changed.

Maybe you didn't even know what you were getting yourself into in the beginning. Like Forrest Gump or something. You just started running and the next thing you know, you are running for miles.

At least, that's what becoming anorexic was like for me. I was at school, looking at all the amazing beautiful girls who were always being asked out by all these boys, going to all these dances, hanging out at all these parties and I told myself that awful lie that if I was skinny the boys would ask me out. That it must be that I was fat. Yes, that was it. I must be overweight. Not that it could be that I was different, that I was odd, that I was weird, that I was shy, that I was a recluse, or that it was anything else. Nope. I decided somewhere between walking to Algebra and Drama class that it was because I must be overweight. Or maybe it was when I was staring at my ceiling lying in bed at night. Who knows, I just know, I looked around and got that silly notion in my head. Why do I say silly notion? I was a whopping ninety eight pounds if I was lucky. The last thing I needed to do was lose weight.

But you see, my family was a family of highly overweight people. Aunts and Uncles on both sides were overweight and had a history of one physical ailment or the other because of the weight issues. All I ever heard was them griping and complaining about how their back hurt or their body hurt in one way or the other because of their weight. I heard how hard it was to buy clothes. I heard how difficult it was to find men, to keep men and to satisfy men in their lives. I heard about constant diabetic issues, gout, and other doctor visits as well as emotional and mental trauma brought on because of weight. To me, being overweight was a serious issue and in no way a good thing, it always led to bad things in life.

Please do not take offense to this. In no way am I trying to say anything bad or negative about anyone who IS in this condition. I am merely giving you my perspective of life, from a teenage view, through my eyes at age fourteen, being a young freshman in high school. I was lonely. I wanted to be asked out by a boy. I wanted to have a boyfriend too.

I wanted a boy to look at me the way they looked at the popular girls.

I wanted the boys to look at me the way they looked at the girls with the curvy figures. The funny thing is, I didn't know how to get those figures. I assumed that by not eating I would have that. No one told me about health, nutrition, proper diet, balance, and a healthy workout regimen. I didn't learn all of that until WAY later in life! I was always crushing on some boy, longing or yearning for something I was in no way ever going to have by continuing to starve myself the way I was.

What was even sadder is that for four years, no one seemed to even notice. Not friends, not family, not even strangers or school personnel! I ate when I had to eat. I wasn't a true anorexic however, so maybe that is why no one noticed. Maybe I just hid it too well. I didn't starve myself all of the time. I always packed my own lunch and when I worked in the cafeteria/snack bar I did eat from time to time, just very little is all. The rest of the time I squeaked by eating small amounts of cereal. Cereal was easy. A bowl here or there and that made everyone happy. At school I would have a piece or two of crumb cake and maybe a chocolate milk. That would be my food for the whole day if I was lucky. It wasn't that we couldn't afford it either, because we could. I just didn't want it. I kept up with the belief system that if I was slender, then the boys would notice me, they would ask me out, they would want to date me. It never dawned on me that my belief system was wrong to begin with.

Until Ed happened. Ed does not give himself enough credit for the transformation in my high school years. I doubt even he realizes how much he impacted my life. I met Ed through a Drama play and through a series of events we somehow started exchanging notes. You remember passing notes don't you? Oh, if you are a millennial or later you might not know this exchange. It was when you wrote words on paper and handed them back and forth in class trying not to get caught. Just kidding. I assume everyone knows what passing notes is, but maybe not. Regardless, he was two years older than me and we actually didn't have any classes together only mutual friends and passing in the hall, so we passed notes when we happened to see each other. I worked in the library in the early morning (*yes I was a true geek*) and from time to time in the afternoons and he would stop by. One afternoon after my library shift we sat down near the library at the picnic table close by and were just chatting and he said something I have never forgotten.

He said,

***“Pat (he was the only one who called me this)
You should really let people get to know you more.
You really are a great girl!”***

Not long after that we went on a “date” if you can call it that. He took me to see *Pretty In Pink* and we “almost” kissed, although it's a good thing we didn't because we have been best friends ever since! He made me think about that statement though. After he said it, I went home and stared at the ceiling. My mother accused me of being high. I was just in that deep thought phase. Afterwards, I opened up a bit more, joined the Pep Club, volunteered in school events and tried to open up the best I could. I did make a few more friends. I inherited the nickname “Brain”. Nothing cute or fun, but at least I was getting noticed. In my senior year, things began to change. I finally had a little more freedom. I was allowed to use some of my inheritance money to buy my first car and get my license. I traded it in quickly and got a better car and then I was “styling”! I was permitted to start driving myself places. I was allowed to drive to church alone, go to school alone and even drive around on my own. I never knew how freeing this time would be. I was able to secure a spot in the senior parking lot. That alone meant a lot. Early on in the school year those spots were taken quickly. I didn't even get my car until late in the year so being able to get a spot meant a lot to me and meant a lot to those who saw me go to my car at the senior lot. Prior to this I had to

bike everywhere or get rides from my mother or stepfather to do everything. Now, finally I had freedom to be my own person and do my own thing; be my own person and go my own way. This opened up a whole new world for me. In my senior year I grew, I changed, I opened up. My nickname changed from “Brain” to “Bunny”, given to me by Mr. Surek, our Photography teacher. I was modeling more and feeling more confident and I owe it to one thing and one person.

I was able to go visit Ed, who had graduated two years earlier than me. He worked at Sears in the mall and I could finally go visit him. From time to time I would ride my bike to go see him and his friends at his apartment on the weekends, but I would have to make the visits short so I could get back in time my mom wouldn't know and I wouldn't get in trouble. Visiting him, though we were only friends, was one of those things that changed my life. I say this because I ventured into a new world where other people paid attention to me and noticed me and I realized that the world inside high school wasn't the only world that mattered.

You would think I would have known that being in ROP (Regional Occupation Program) for Cosmetology, but I only went from school to ROP and then straight home, so I never really noticed. The other things I did were the same. I was in modeling, dance, gymnastics and ice skating. All of those things were very structured and all I ever did was go to training, lessons and then straight to school or from school to home, so my world seemed very small and minuscule. My world seemed so tiny compared to the world of freedom I had once I had a car. But I digress.

By going to see Ed at the mall and at his apartment, I had more time and a new world to explore. I met new friends of his, coworkers. and got to spend time with him in the real world, outside of high school. Meeting others and seeing life outside of high school I started to gain confidence, faith in myself, strength and bravery. I felt secure in who I was and how I came across to others. I started eating healthy, normal meals. I ate when I was hungry. I cared about the food I ate and even wanted it made a certain way. That was a different issue and became more of a detriment because then my picky eating got in the way, but at least I was eating. I overcame my anorexia but not all at once. It was a slow process. I still had body issues and what they call Body Dysmorphia. When I looked in the mirror I still saw a fat girl. I still wasn't being asked out to dances or proms and even went to my prom with my best girlfriend and her date. My first kiss wasn't until I was 17½ and he was a friend of a friend and sometimes I wonder if that was a setup as a favor to my friend for me. Maybe one day I will know. Maybe I will never know. Regardless, it took time. Even now, I still have issues.

It takes work to NOT be anorexic

Maybe you can empathize and understand and maybe you can't. Maybe you are reading or hearing this and thinking “Oh yes, poor skinny, thin girl!” and you are rolling your eyes. Thin girls do have issues too.

Just so you are aware...

Life is not always roses and chocolate.

Everyone has their issues and baggage and problems. Mine might be different than yours or perhaps they are the same. If you are in the same boat as me, I am here to tell you that you can overcome them. Being anorexic does not have to rule your life.

“You can choose to not be anorexic as quickly as you chose to be anorexic.”

Life is about the choices we make and I want to remind you to keep choosing fabulous. To be anorexic is not fabulous. It is less than fabulous. It is horrible to your body, your teeth, your intestines, the inner workings of your mind and soul. It strips away the part of you that makes you whole.

Make the choice today, right now, in this moment, to live.

Because that’s really what it is. A choice to live or die because if you keep on the destructive anorexic path you are on you will die. I chose to live and I hope you will too. That choice, the choice to live, is the choice to be fabulous. Come choose to be fabulous with me, won’t you? By ending the anorexia you can be Falling into Fabulous which can lead you into becoming the Phoenix Rising from the Ashes

*Chapter
Eight:*

A

Run,

Run,

Run,

Run...

Runaway

Chapter 8: A Run, Run, Run, Run... Runaway

I never realized how much of my life was spent running. All I needed was a pair of shoes sponsored by a famous market and I would have been all set. Looking back I see how it all happened. All it takes is once I believed, I was hooked on running. I think of it like a drug. It makes you forget what you went through. You are disoriented for some time thinking everything is perfect again, only to find out that your problems catch up to you and you find yourself just wanting to run again. Sounds like something needs fixed to me, don't you think?

They say we learn from our parents and examples rub off on us. I would love to believe that in no way did my mother's leaving us at a young age have an effect on me, though in reality, we all know it is 90% likely it's true. The sad fact is that later in life, I found out the **REAL** reason why she did and it had nothing to do with abandonment or selfishness. It was quite the opposite actually. My mother was quite sick and in a means to protect us, she left us so we did not have to go through watching her suffer. I remember much of my younger life being taken care of by my older sisters, uncles and grandparents, though I did not know why. Then around the age of six, my mother moved to California. I remember it only because I remember going to two different kindergartens, then a first grade and half of second grade before being shipped back from California to my father. When asked how I ended up with mom after she left I was informed, "You asked to go live with her, so we put you and your sister on a plane and sent you out there." Because, what I didn't know is that they actually weren't sure my mother was going to live long because of her spinal deterioration and the chemo and radiation she was on. Now, you see, it all makes sense.

At age eight, in essence, I ran back to my father in Iowa. I don't know why and most likely it was a whim just like my other one, but here is the real kicker and destiny of the universe sort of thing...If I had NOT gone back to my father at age eight, I would have missed two wonderful years with him before he passed away from this earth.

How can you not believe in fate, destiny and the universe and our higher power working in such magnificent order!!?

I'm always still in awe when I think about it. It all just seems so profound to me!

When I about sixteen or seventeen, I tried to run away from my mother and stepfather. Call it teenage angst or what have you, but I felt like I was all alone and raising myself. I thought, if that were true, I might as well be! My mother worked three jobs and was never around, even when she had the time, she chose to help someone else. I felt second at that time and really felt the need to be first. I couldn't take it anymore so I left my mother a note before I left for school. She didn't get home until after I would get home in the afternoon from one of her jobs and she would find the note then. Funny thing is, I have no clue what that note said now.

I had the day all planned out. I was nervous all day but extremely excited as well. I packed clothes in a bag and shoved it in my PE locker and went to touch base with my friend who was going to let me live with her until I could get on my feet. She had even talked to her mother about it and everything was good to go. For me, the end of the day could not come fast enough. School let out and we both got on her bus. She told the driver I was spending the night for awhile and might be riding this route with her. He waved his hand and we both sat down. The fear of what my mother would think or say started setting in. My heart was racing and my hands were all sweaty. Something was wrong, I could feel it. Now I am worried.

We got off the bus and walked into her house. There were suitcases on the floor and her older sister and brother-in-law were there and her sister was pregnant! Guess who needed a place to stay because they might be going into labor? Yup. Which meant, yup, you guessed it, no place for me. I started crying and freaking out. I screamed that I needed to get back home before my mother found the note because if she found it and I got back home my mother would kill me! Her mother tried to call me down and she apologized but she said if I talked to my mother maybe she would understand. We got in the car and she drove me up to the gate at my apartment complex. I didn't see my mother or father's car, and thought I might have made it out without anyone even knowing I was planning on running away.

As soon as I got in the house, I saw the letter still on the bed and I grabbed a lighter and lit a candle then burned the note. I was shaking pretty fiercely but as the note burned I started to calm down. My mother came home about an hour later and I was in my bedroom doing my homework. She came in, said hello and asked what I wanted for dinner. Everything was normal. I made it out alive with my mother never knowing. Ha, who was I kidding? Of course my mother knew, she was a psychic for the police department at one time!! It wasn't until, when I turned thirty, while visiting my mother, we were reminiscing and one topic led to another and the topic of my running away came up..

She smiled sweetly and said quite calmly "I knew."

"But the letter was still on my bed when I got home." I burst out.

She replied, "I came home for lunch and saw it and read it. I put it back on your bed because when I touched it, I knew you were coming home so I wasn't worried. It made me cry and broke my heart, but if you remember, after that I quit my two jobs and only worked my business with my partner after that. That didn't happen by accident. You said in your letter you felt as if I was never around and you felt like you were raising yourself alone. So I changed so you didn't feel that way."

"Why didn't you yell at me or say anything to me about it?" I asked.

"Because, I felt if you really felt that way and I was lucky enough for you to come home, then I was just glad you were safe and you chose to come home and if you came home, I was going to be better and that meant I had to let it go. So that's what I did. "

Now I'm crying. I thought, "*You can never get anything past mom*".

That night I overcame the fear of holding on to something that was keeping me from moving on with my life. Fear of a secret. Fear of many secrets. That night, my mother and I talked all night. I told her all the rest of my secrets too and we have been closer than best friends ever since.

However, my running continued a few years later and I kept running, and running and running, and...running....

At age 18 I ran away to Europe on a college trip for the summer and attempted to try to be the one in control to TRULY lose my virginity to a 21 year old, only to be MORE confused getting into the PARTY scene (because you could at 18) in a land with no family, no friends, and no one to explain it all.

At age 19 I ran away to Iowa; within 4 months of being there got pregnant and honestly didn't have a clue how it happened, married an abusive husband months later and made some hard decisions...

When I was 21, I attempted to join the National Guard. I wasn't happy in my marriage and at the same time wanted to earn my keep. I also wanted to honor my biological father who served and thought this might be a good way. I would be home most of the time with the exception of one weekend a month. I also wanted to fly but since I couldn't fly or learn to fly because of my eyesight, I had interest in Flight Ops and joined the 187th Med Unit in Boone, Iowa. I was sent to Ft. Jackson, South Carolina to receive my training.

Once I got there, things just weren't right. I can't explain it. I suffered greatly, and just a few days later, I had a hunch I was pregnant. I did ask for a test, but wasn't given one. I was told I was not prepared for military life and was put into psychiatric care. It was over a weekend so I had to stay longer before I could go home. I remember it well because I remember "raking sand". Oh, the glamorous life of sand raking. When available, they sent me home with a discharge that would not allow me to be called back into military duty ever again. Three days after I got home I got tested and sure enough, I was pregnant with my 2nd child.

When I was 23, I had a severe fight with my first ex-spouse and ran from him in the middle of the night. He wouldn't give me the keys to my car so I walked through a blizzard to my sister's house, freezing, with a paper grocery bag of clothes. I left her home and then ran away even further to Oklahoma because he wouldn't leave me alone and kept tormenting me. I stayed with friends for awhile, came back a few months later and then left for California to get my life together.

Then I ran away to California. However, that was one of the best decisions I ever made. I was able to get back on my feet and get my life back in order. It wasn't perfect but I started fighting for custody of my kids almost immediately upon moving to California, clear up until they were teenagers. Leaving was one of the hardest things I had to do, but I also knew I needed my life back.

***Sometimes, running away doesn't necessarily mean bad things.
Sometimes we need to run to something safer, more secure, more stable.***

I walked into Manpower Clerical and pretty much said “I know nothing but am willing to learn”. My first job was taking a sharpie and crossing out the wrong information on cups for an event and then rewriting the correct information above it. It wasn't glamorous, but it was work.

I did what I could. I took any job available. I even cleaned toilets while working a clerical job for two bosses, and worked part time as a waitress to earn money as well. I will never understand those people who say they can't find anything for work because I could find a ton of jobs to earn money on. I was willing to do anything so I could stop running.

I felt like no matter what I did I was failing and falling deeper and deeper. Later in life I came to realize that this too was falling. Falling into a pattern of running and it needed to stop. One day, I finally made the decision to stop running and start living.

Sometimes running “to” something is what we need instead of running “from” things in our life.

Constantly falling is what helped me "Fall into Fabulous" and become the "Phoenix" rising from the ashes, no longer running, just rising, rising above the challenges I face day to day. Rise above the ashes and be the Phoenix you were meant to be.

Chapter

Nine:

Addiction

Chapter 9: Addiction

Originally this chapter was not going to be in my book. I was nervous about sharing any part of this journey in my life with you; or anyone really. Then something happened. People on Facebook and other Social Media groups started asking me “Have you ever suffered from an addiction?” To them, I was honest and truthful and told them about my battle with meth. Yet, I was still hesitant to put anything about it in the book. Then a friend of mine said to me: “If this is part of your falling and rising, I think you would help so many lives by sharing this part of your story as well.” Well, how could I turn away from that kind of encouragement? I couldn’t.

When I was in my twenties I left my abusive spouse and ran away to my friend’s in Des Moines, Iowa. I roomed with her and her spouse and a friend of hers, who was male. Because I do not want to expose this person I am changing his name in the book to Jake. Jake and I hit it off very well. We ended up moving in together and becoming entangled in each others’ lives. We were both working for Pizza Hut at the time but then he got fired, so I went to Domino’s with him to work over there. The hours were long and he was a manager. As the nights got harder and harder he turned to meth. He started sharing with me, every time he bought some. As I was struggling to make money to provide for myself, taking meth at the time seemed like a good idea. I had more energy. I could do more and no one would really know, so what did it matter? Besides, it wasn’t like I was buying it. I was just sharing. I kept telling myself I could quit anytime and I didn’t need it like he did.

The more I had meth, the more I wanted it to the point that one day I bought it for myself. That was it. That was the moment where I took a long hard look at my life and realized, this was not a good idea. I woke up one day and as I grabbed my Mary Kay Pocket mirror with a small envelope inside, I realized, *I was addicted*. I was hiding it in my purse. I was now taking it to work. I had made this addiction a part of my life. It was two-fold. The realization was two-fold. Buying the meth and hiding it were clear signs to me that I had an addiction. I started thinking about the friends I hung around with and they all did meth. I only had a few friends who didn’t and I hid it from them. There was another clue. If I can’t tell my friends about this, then is it really a good thing? No. It wasn’t.

I flushed the meth down the toilet and found a Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group to go to that day. It wasn’t really my style and wasn’t for me, but I heard a lot of good advice. I told Jake he needed to stop as well and he agreed, at the time. A week later I found he had bought more and I gave him an ultimatum to stop or I would leave. The next week he lied to me about gambling and I caught him with another woman. So I left him.

It was further clear that by staying in this toxic relationship with him, that I was not going to get better. I called a good friend of mine, Ed, and confessed the whole thing. He was, as always, very accepting of me and we met for lunch and talked through it. It took some time for me to feel like myself again.

The addiction to meth is very hard to get over. There are many times where I still have cravings for it, but I know better and have not had any since that time. **The withdrawals are immense.** There are

moments when I would be at work and then I would get this horrible craving for just one more line. One line wouldn't hurt me, right? *Wrong*. I would shake my head and sometimes even shake my whole body to try to get rid of the feeling. You experience withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, dry mouth, sweating, depression, anxiety, shaking, insomnia or excessive fatigue.

“The withdrawal symptoms of meth are traumatic and painful, and can cause the user to take more of the drug in hopes of counteracting the withdrawal process. However, doing this may lead to a downward spiral of repeated meth use, which can develop into a full-blown addiction. By the time many users realize they have a problem and try to quit, they find that the withdrawal effects have become too powerful to overcome on their own.”~ Addiction Center, Meth Withdrawals

“Although individual experiences will vary, symptoms typically peak between seven and ten days after the drug is no longer being consumed. Depression and cravings may persist afterward, but the withdrawal symptoms have generally subsided.”~ Addiction Center, Meth Withdrawals

I cured my meth addiction on my own. I ate better. I only hung around non-toxic people. I spent a lot of time with my kids and my family. I went back to church and got my life in order. It wasn't any one thing that mattered, it was everything all together.

When I thought about my family, my friends, my kids, my job, my life, or at least the life I felt I could have; those things made me change my life.

The thought of losing it all made me realize how much I wanted it.

I changed who I hung out with. I changed who I went to visit. I changed who I spent time with on a daily basis and even who I spent time with every now and then. I made it harder for myself to even be near where meth was at. In essence:

I lost everything to gain everything more.

Because I worked in a delivery job, I always had cash on hand. Cash on hand makes it far too easy to just swing by a pal's house and get what I needed. Instead, I always changed out my bills to the highest currency and then put it in an envelope until the next day. Then I would go to the bank and put it in the bank so I was not tempted to buy. I put every obstacle I could in my path to keep me from going back.

I know this chapter will be short and I meant it to be. I don't want to get into a long drawn out discussion about meth and drugs and how bad they are for you because we all know that. You don't need to hear another diatribe from me. I will say this...

If you are addicted to anything. STOP. Please, stop.

You are a great person.

How do I know? Because you are reading this book, which to me, means you are ready for change in your life. You are ready to let the light come into your life. You are ready for something more.

You don't need drugs or alcohol to be or feel fabulous.

Life is fabulous. Life is abundant. Life is beautiful. Life is good. Life is love.

You have so much to offer this world. You have amazing gifts that can be shared. You have talents that need to be seen. You are lovely inside and out. You are enough. You are wonderful. You are loved. Maybe you don't see it or feel alone or desperate in your life, but **you are not alone**. You may not have found the right tribe, but it is out there. You may not have found the right groups of friends, but they are out there. Remember you need to be a friend to have a friend.

You are more.

You are more than your struggles.

You are more than your trials.

You are more than your adversities.

You are more than those that hurt you.

You are more than those that told you lies.

You are more than any addiction.

You are more than your pain.

You are more than you think.

You are more than those things people said or did that were mean and hurtful and hateful to you.

You are more than that.

You are more than your past.

You are your own future.

You are fabulous. Today, tomorrow and always.

You can rise up.

You WILL rise up.

You will conquer your addictions.

You will conquer your despair.

You will become the fabulous person you were meant to be...

Because you already are!!

Chapter

Ten:

Homelessness

Chapter 10: Homelessness

I was homeless off and on throughout the years. I lived out of my car in my twenties, working odd jobs here and there. Sometimes I was a receptionist, sometimes I worked as a hostess or cocktail waitress. I wasn't able to leave food service completely because, of course, as we all know, cash tips.

During the ten years from 1997 to 2007, while I was married to Scott we lived out of our car, at one time in my thirties, as well. We parked near a Von's Grocery Store so I could go to the bathroom late at night (I swear I always have to go at 3 am) and then we got a gym membership so we could still be active but mostly so we had a place to shower and get dressed, do my makeup, go to work, etc.

I don't remember how long it was that we were homeless during that time. I know it happened because of the mortgage crisis and my husband at the time was working in the mortgage field, which meant of course, he got laid off continually. Every time he would get a job he would get laid off again. There was literally nothing we could do. I went back to work doing crappy jobs and I went back to waitressing; even worked at Olive Garden for a while, and sometimes worked 2 jobs just for us to pay the bills.

We did everything we could to survive.

Luckily we had emergency preparedness back up that the church had taught us so we had about a six month supply of food. We had a 3 month supply of water, we had another supply of candles and glow sticks and things like that to keep us lighted so we could still function through this time period while we lived in our car and in Priceline motels and hotels.

Sometimes I think if it wasn't for our church I don't know that we would have survived. Thankfully our church helped us pay for bills, they helped us pay for rent, they gave us groceries when we needed and every now and then we would get a card or something from someone in our PO box that had a check or money in it. One time I even remember someone sent us a card with over \$400 in it because our tires went out and our car needed repaired. We were so blessed and so fortunate to have received the money at that time because it made such a big difference to us. I'll never know who sent the money but I'm so grateful to them. I think I know who it was and we've told them thank you a thousand times for all the things they did for us. In the event it isn't them and you are the person that happened to send us the money that time, I take this moment to thank you now, because it was the biggest lifesaver and health saver for us at the time. I seriously don't know what we would have done without it.

Not long after, one couple from the church found out that we were living in our car and they asked us to come and stay with them. It was actually quite an interesting event living with them, staying and eating with them; they were a very unique couple and we learned so much from them and grew so much. We were so blessed to not have to live in our vehicle anymore and to be able to have a room to call our own, a key to go into a lock, to be able to have a kitchen to make food in, a bathroom to go to in the middle of the night. These are the things that most people don't realize are the little amenities of life that really make a difference to us humans.

Because people in our church were there for us and because of our church helping us we were finally able to get back on our feet. We found a place to live in the area of the church, be with our church family and get back to our normal lives; or so we thought. Not long after all this my son, unfortunately, got into some trouble and we ended up moving back to Iowa so we could be there for my children. The luck of that was that my family was there and the price of living in Iowa is so much lower that we were able to survive for a few years.

Many people think that being homeless is a choice and I'm not saying that it isn't because I did have a homeless non-profit at one time called Warriors for the Homeless and I knew that there were some people that would rather live on the streets than live in a nursing home or live with family who hated them and so on. However, most people don't choose to live that life and we were always two paychecks away from being homeless most of the time. Do you have your house in order? What would happen to you if you lost your job today? Would you have the resources needed to survive and to provide for yourself and your family financially, mentally, physically and spiritually?

When I was homeless, I felt like I had truly fallen into the cracks of the earth. I felt like I fallen so far down that the depths of life, hell and everything in between had swallowed me up but instead it was all part of my becoming the Phoenix .

***Homelessness is a lifestyle all on its own that challenges your character
everyday you live it.***

Chapter

Eleven:

Suicide

Attempt

Chapter 11: Suicide Attempt

One of the greatest blessings in my life is that when I tried to attempt suicide by taking a bottle of pills, my brain was smarter than my body and I immediately went to the bathroom, made myself throw up and contacted 911 so they could come and rescue me. They were there within a very short time, but since they

had not seen me throw up the pills I had to drink charcoal with 7UP to purge my stomach so they could be sure there were no more pills in me.

I was at a time in my life that I felt so alone and I felt so worthless. I felt like I had no friends in the world and I had no family to support me; that it was all just too hard and it was all just too unbearable to deal with anymore. Looking back I can't believe that I ever felt that way, that anybody ever feels that way, that someone could truly feel so alone that the only choice that they feel they have is to take their life.

If anyone understands loneliness I truly do.

My life has never been easy, it's been one trial after another and as you are reading this book I'm sure you are wondering if all of this could really happen to one person. The sad fact and the reality of it all is that it really did happen to one person and you aren't even through the whole book yet.

I look back now, almost 20 years since that incident, and I'm so very grateful that I did not succeed in killing myself and that I am still here on this Earth, to this day, at this time. You see, "*God had a plan for me*". I didn't know what that plan was. I don't think I ever truly knew, but I had an idea. You see, after a few things happen to you in life like has happened to me, it makes you start recollecting your life, looking back and thinking about why that happened; "Who was that lesson for? Was that lesson for me or for someone else? Did I learn the lesson that I was supposed to? Or maybe all these things keep happening to me because there's an underlying lesson I've yet to learn."

Now I can say I look at my life and I know the answer to that question.

The answer was simple:

Humility	Courage
Empathy	Inspiration
Perseverance	Love to others
Endurance	Charity
Patience	Love of Life

Through the years I have learned these and many other things. I have learned to be strong. I've learned to be tough. I have learned endurance, patience, tolerance. I have learned diligence. I have learned perseverance. Out of all this what I have learned most is love. But not just any love, Christ-like love. That "charity-never-faileth" kind of love and I put myself in line with that and ask myself often if I am the epitome of that verse. If I am not, then I keep striving and striving and striving until I feel like those

things, those words, those concepts have meaning not just to my heart but to my soul. Love that shows the type of character and person that I truly am.

In the scriptures you can find this verse but I want to read it to you now and share it with you:

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

⁴*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

⁵*Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*

⁶*Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*

⁷*Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

⁸*Charity never faileth:*

Now... where it says charity put your name in that place instead. Can you say those things about yourself? Trisha suffereth long; Trisha envieth not; Trisha is not puffed up, Trisha does not behave unseemly, Trisha does not seek out her own, Trisha is not easily provoked, Trisha thinketh no evil; Trisha rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoice in truth; Trisha bears all things, Trisha believeth all things, Trisha hopeth all things, Trisha endureth all things, Trisha never faileth.

So did you pass the test?

When you put your name in place of charity can you truly say yes to all those things?

Do you have the Christ-like love of Christ?

I am honored and blessed to still be here on this Earth and if my sole mission is to embody Christ-like love and share it with others then that will be the mission for me.

I know there is more that my heavenly father wants me to do in life. He desires me to be there for others. I know that he wants me to make a difference. I know that he wants me to truly love others and the only way to do that is to serve and I want to serve in every capacity possible. I want to serve you. I want to serve you with my knowledge. I want to serve you with my growth. I want to serve you with my understanding. I want to serve you with the tools that I have learned in my life to overcome, to be empowered and to be the fabulous person that I am today. I want to teach you to be the fabulous person that you are today and to accept the you that you are; that you are enough, you are loved and you are whole. Most of all, I want you to know that God loves you and so do I.

I think I know what is in store for me and my future but maybe I don't: maybe I think I'm giving *you* all this wisdom and knowledge but maybe the lesson in itself was writing this book. Yet deep down I don't feel that's true because you see I have visions and I have dreams of my future and of your future and of our futures together.

It's not about the fame, it's about making a difference.

It's about touching lives.

It's about touching *your* life and it's about making a difference in *your* life; and that's what I want to do and that's my mission for this book and that's my mission in my life, period.

These visions and dreams that I have, I see myself standing there talking to you, helping you, sharing these life lessons with you, period. I see you standing in line waiting for a book to be signed and I hear you saying to me “You made such a difference in my life, you don't even know”. You see it's not about the fame it's not even about you giving me credit, it's not about you acknowledging what I've done for you it's again about the fact that I have been through so much in life and have overcome *all these little things* through these coping mechanisms and tools that *I want to teach you*, that I want you to have to empower your life. I want you to be encouraged. I want you to be inspired. I want you to *want* to hear me so that I may help you so that you may have a life full of love and light and life and that you get all the things that you deserve in life and that you feel at peace and comfort with your life. By the time I'm done, if I have even accomplished a mere sniveling of what I feel like I have done, my duty here is done and that this is part of why my suicide did not take place.

This is a huge reason why that suicide did not take place because I was meant to go through these trials, because I was meant to learn empathy for you, because I was meant to learn perseverance, to learn tolerance, how to have the true love to share that with you AND be a missionary in this work till the end of my days.

*Chapter
Twelve:*

*Why
Not,
Let's
Add
Cancer*

Chapter 12: Why Not, Let's Add Cancer

No one wants to hear those fateful words "You Have Cancer", but for me it was real. I wasn't in as much shock as they thought I would be because the more we delved into what was wrong with me, the more and more it started looking like Colon Cancer. After my CT scan, I had a strong hunch. I, of course, didn't want to believe it, but kept preparing myself for the worst news. After the Colonoscopy on October 26th, 2016, things had been a whirlwind. This is from my journal...

*October 26, 2016 I found out I had Colon Cancer. Surgery was November 1, 2016 to remove a tumor that was 1 inch in size and the length of my sigmoid. Lymph nodes tested with 5/22 cancer cells still in my body. November 5, 2016 I went home. November 14, 2016 I got a C. Diff (Colostrum Difficile) infection that attacks the colon. I was on major antibiotics to heal. Started chemo in January 2017, after my incisions healed from Robotic Assisted Laparoscopic Surgery. Unusual side effect, thrombosed hemorrhoids. Had surgery to remove. Got C. Diff again, time for more antibiotics and probiotics. Finished Chemo June 28, 2017. June 29, back in the hospital for C. Diff, **again!** Healed a few weeks later and on my way to recovery.*

The day of my colonoscopy, I had barely woke up when Ben, my spouse, arrived to pick me up since he couldn't be there to drop me off and the GI doctor, Dr. Nichols, says to both of us, "Can you drive over to see the surgeon **right now?** We need to get this tumor out of you as soon as possible." He showed me pictures and told me my tumor was so large that it covered my colon and was the length of my sigmoid. He said he had to push through the tumor to make sure I didn't have another one on the other side and was happy to report I did not. However, the tumor was so big that he had to take large biopsies and the colon camera wasn't bigger than the end of a pen and he still could hardly get through. The nurse had just handed me a cranberry juice and I was not even sitting up yet. I got dressed and slowly, via wheelchair, went out to the car. Ben went to go get the jeep and away we went. It was all overwhelming.

I felt like I was falling into despair.

The surgeon, Dr. Hornbarger and Ben and I spoke about surgery and scheduled it for Nov 1st. That was the first day the surgeon could get for the Robotic Assisted Laparoscopic, Sigmoidectomy and Colon Resection. Basically they were going to take out the infected area of the colon, pull it out through my old C-section scar and I would have five small incisions on my stomach where the robot helped. Then they would reconnect my colon together. We discussed any complications and all the what-ifs. He gave us pamphlets and had me stay on a soft food diet so I wouldn't have to drink so much Go-lightly (otherwise known as The Glug) to prepare for surgery.

I left there well informed though nervous about this upcoming surgery. In the past when my youngest son was born the epidural didn't take and they had to shoot locals in my stomach until they got him out and then they put me under anesthesia after I had him so they could finish up. It was NOT a pleasurable experience and left me haunted about surgery for years and this surgery was no different. It was all too much to absorb for one brain and life. It was overwhelming and exhausting.

That night I was in a lot of pain and my bowels had huge chunks of blood in them. Early the next morning I called the the doctor on-call because I wasn't feeling well. Things didn't feel right and my pain level was

going higher. They suggested I go to the ER and after much crying about it and deliberation, we decided to go. Ben and I got a bag ready in case I needed to stay over and away we went. I checked myself in and then I was put in an ER room. They ran some tests, gave me some Dilaudid for pain and then came back stating they thought I had an infection. They insisted I take some antibiotics for this "supposed" infection. I made them argue with my surgeon about it and the final consensus was that I would take them. I was in the ER most of the day and finally went home to get healed.

The closer the date to my surgery, the more panicked I became. On Sunday October 30th, I couldn't take the fear anymore. I went to Mormon.org and found the missionary's number to call for my area. I had not been a member of the church for years, but something inside me just knew I needed that blessing. I called them at 7am on a Sunday morning. They called me back and I told them of my situation and asked if they would come give me a Priesthood Blessing.

***I truly felt that without a Priesthood Blessing
I was going to die.***

They came over that night with some members from the church and after talking awhile they gave me a blessing. I immediately felt peace and tranquility come over me. My heart was at peace and I was no longer worried or had any concerns about the colon/tumor surgery.

A few days before I needed to start prepping I wasn't handle things too well. I was having a hard time with migraines and stomach issues. The day before I was supposed to drink the Go-lightly, we had thought that if I stayed on soft food, broth, yogurt, jello, etc that I wouldn't have to drink the whole gallon. Unfortunately, I was so blocked by the tumor that I nearly had to drink it all to clean out, 8oz every 10 minutes. The two hours to finish it wasn't enough time. I was down to the last two 8oz glass and my body would not let me take anymore. I kept gagging and barfing every time I would try to take it. The Suprep for the colonoscopy was much easier to take as it had a sweeter flavor to it. This just tasted like yucky saltwater. Now I know where they got the nickname, The Glug.

I called the surgeon's office to ask them what to do and they said it was OK if it was only the last two. My bowels were not perfect, but they were OK with "cloudy". The rest of the night was awful. I was starving and couldn't eat anything. The antibiotics the surgeon gave me were huge and strong. I had to take the Zofran, an anti-nausea pill, just to get my pills down.

The day of the surgery my friend Donna came over and went with us. My mom wanted to come but I felt she needed to stay down in New Mexico to take care of my Uncle and Dad who were not well. She is the caregiver and I worried about her leaving them for me. They are over 70 years of age and I am 46. I felt like I could do it. With Donna and Ben there, I knew I would be fine.

Right before the surgery the doctors and I were laughing and cutting it up. I felt happy and totally at ease. My surgery was 4 hours and my recovery time was 2 hours. I was a lot longer in recovery than they thought I would be and some visitors ended up leaving and coming back. Evidently, Donna and I had a whole conversation that I didn't even remember when I woke up in my room.

Falling Into Fabulous: A Phoenix Rising

I already knew from the Colon Cancer Support Group I was a part of on Facebook that I needed to do a few things before they would release me: Walk, Eat, Poo. Almost as soon as I woke, I sat straight up. The next day I was walking with my pole around the hospital. By the next day I was walking alone. And boy did I walk. I walked and walked nearly any chance I could get. I would scoop into every wing of Skyridge Medical Center and just walk. If I was feeling down, I would walk. If I was ancy, walk. In the middle of the night, when I couldn't sleep was when I would walk the most. From 2-4pm was always the hardest for me. I don't know why, but it was. Too many thoughts in my head I guess.

A few days later, more bad news. They DID remove the tumor and the resection went well, however, there was Cancer in the surrounding lymph nodes so that moved me to Stage 3b Colon Cancer and I was going to have to do Folfox chemotherapy starting in January. That, of course, put me in a bit of a tailspin but I had so much love and encouragement from others that I snapped out of it. I was determined to think and feel and be positive through this journey, one way or another.

Early Friday morning I finally had a bowel movement. That was good news because then I could move to a more normal diet and get off just soft liquids. The food at Skyridge however was not as good as everything else. People here in Colorado kept telling me they call Skyridge "Spa Ridge" because it was so nice. In every other way it was, however, the food was horrible and the kitchen staff was horrible about getting it to you on time. My hot food was always cold and my cold food was always warm. Blech.

They said I could go home Friday night but I felt safer waiting another day. Saturday they allowed me to go home. The Compassionate Service ladies from the Mormon church brought me meals on Monday, Wednesday and Friday to help out and I had a lot of visitors.

I was doing so well and walking at home, nearly 5 miles every day, then Saturday, November 12th hit. I had a lot of visitors that day but wasn't feeling quite right after they all left. I started having severe diarrhea. Sadly my loose bowels did not stop and come Monday, I was starting to get worried. I called to make an appointment and they got me in that day. I called Ben at work and told him I needed him to take me and I was worried. He had me call his stepmom Anne and while her and I were talking Ben got home early. We went to the doctors and they had me tested for C-Diff. A lethal diarrhea infection that can be deadly if not caught early enough. A few days later, his office called and stated that I had the infection and needed to get on antibiotics right away. I had Ben go get them as soon as they were ready and the pharmacist called me to warn me not to take them with any alcohol or anything that has alcohol in it, mouthwash, cough syrup etc as it can cause a violent reaction and be fatal.

However, on the flip side, the doctors told me I could take some Mylanta for my sour stomach and to get off the Zofran, as it can make it worse. The second day I was on the medications I took some and not long after Ben came home and fixed me dinner, I start throwing up. I thought it was just my migraine as the barometric pressure had shifted that day. The next day when I was feeling a bit better but still sour, I started to pour another dose of Mylanta when I noticed it says it has 2% alcohol in it! Good grief! Are they trying to kill me? No wonder I was so sick.

Two days later, I had a follow up with the surgeon and he said I could take some Pepto chewables or the drink instead. Otherwise, I was doing well and the incisions were healing nicely.

I had a follow up with my Family Care Physician, Dr. Kaiser and he said he is putting me on another round of the antibiotics and to start taking the Spectra Nutri-Probiotics they carried at Clinix Medical Center. These have over 30 microorganisms that start getting your gut health back to it's natural state. I was to take them twice a day and Ben was to take them once a day for safe keeping. We don't want my Hunepants sick as well as me. That won't help me at all.

Now I take a higher variety of probiotics. I alternate between the Women's pills and the Colon pills. They are each higher in microorganisms needed to heal the body and that has really helped me overcome C. Diff and have healthy bowels again.

This has been a crappy road (pun intended), but I think it's slowly getting under control. I am taking a B12 supplement daily for a bit more energy and that has helped. As well as COQ10 for energy. I also started taking my CBD/THC chews as well and needed to get more, so Hunepants took me to the dispensary so I could do that. They have really made a difference in how I feel and in my appetite without me having to smoke anything. I like that.

I have added a few supplements to my daily intake now that I am done with chemotherapy. Sadly, I am still at this point, recovering from C. Diff as well and trying to get back on my feet. Now I take Curcumin, Ashwaganda, Astragalus, Beta-Carotene, Green Tea Extract, Magnesium, B12 and B2. These are the ones Hunepants has done research on and we found these to be the best supplements for me. I am taking the Magnesium because chemotherapy has made me Magnesium deficient. The B vitamins help with energy and stopped the tingles going through my legs and hands. The oncologist said this will slowly go away, but the supplements can't hurt to help it along.

I am very positive and upbeat and know I got this, I can make it through this. I have come this far in life and I am not turning back. I have overcome much in my life and Cancer was just one added trial or adversity I had to deal with in my life. In the end, it made me stronger, more appreciative of life and allowed me to have more empathy towards others. I often say, "This too shall pass" because I know now that it will. I know now that trials will come and trails will go, how we handle them is really all that matters! Stay strong. Be Fabulous. If I can do it, you can too! I love you. I believe in you.

God gives his toughest battles to his strongest soldiers.

There is nothing my Heavenly Father and I can't handle together. This is just another fall in my life and I always say, "The only thing to do when you fall is look up!"

*Chapter
Thirteen:*

*As
If
Cancer
Wasn't
Enough,
Along
Came
C. Diff*

Chapter 13: As If Cancer Wasn't Enough, Along Came C. Diff

My tumor was removed Nov 1st, 2016. I healed very well and was home after 5 days. Then sadly I got C-DIFF for two weeks and had to recover. In January I was supposed to start my chemo based on my PET Scan. My PET Scan in November came out NED (No Evidence of Disease). What that means in the cancer world is they can't find anymore cancer; but there are still microscopic cells that the oncologist can't see and so they want me to do chemo to make sure we kill those little bastards. I wouldn't do it and remain on my home remedies I was already doing but my spouse begged me to do the chemo as it has a higher length of life past five years.

The chemo gave me a horrible side effect causing me to have the need for a hemorrhoid surgery. The oncologist and the rectal surgeon were all on board as I had only done two chemo treatments and my counts were still high so we thought it was fine.

Yet, I came down with a horrible infection, bladder retention, and a high fever. My white blood cell counts went way down and my neutrophils crashed and I became neutropenic. I have had C. Diff four times now and even had a dental infection recently. Life is a series of ups and downs.

Let me shed some understanding on the topic as many people have not heard of this or don't know what it is or what to do about it...

Clostridium Difficile, also known as C. Difficile, or C. Diff, is a bacterium which infects humans, and other animals. Symptoms can range from diarrhea to serious and potentially fatal inflammation of the colon. C. Diff bacteria and their spores are found in feces. People can get infected if they touch surfaces contaminated with feces, and then touch their mouth. Healthcare workers can spread the bacteria to their patients if their hands are contaminated. For healthy people, C. Diff does not pose a health risk. C. Diff is contagious. Microorganisms can be spread from person-to-person by touch or by direct contact with contaminated objects and surfaces (for example, clothing, cell phones, door handles). Some individuals are carriers of this bacterium but have no symptoms of infection. Some people carry the bacterium C. Diff in their intestines but never become sick, though they may still spread the infection. Signs and symptoms usually develop within five to 10 days after starting a course of antibiotics, but may occur as soon as the first day or up to two months later. Choose fluids containing water, salt and sugar, such as diluted fruit juice, soft drinks and broths. Good nutrition. If you have watery diarrhea, eat starchy foods, such as potatoes, noodles, rice, wheat and oatmeal. Other good choices are saltine crackers, bananas, soup and boiled vegetables. The new study shows that donor stool transplantation effectively cured 90 percent of patients' recurring C. Diff infections. Transplanting donor stool is effective because it replaces the good bowel flora that was killed off by the use of antibiotics and naturally combats the invasive bacterium.~

www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/c-difficile/manage/ptc-20202429

This is where I come back in to give my two cents, for whatever they are worth.

For me, just when I thought I would be celebrating that my chemo was over, C. Diff came along to join the party. The day after my last chemo, I was in severe pain. I had watery stools for more than two days and my body and mind were telling me "Uh, oh. This looks and feels like C. Diff again." I went to the clinic to see my doctor as I was in severe pain. Since it appeared like C. Diff, I went ahead and brought my stool sample with me. I am often teased now about that incident by my family that only I would bring in my own stool sample.

As I sat in his office, doubled over in pain, I could hear the nurses and my doctor talking about me going to the ER. Dr K. walked back in and said “*You can either go to the ER in an ambulance or someone can pick you up, but I really think you need to go to the ER.*” I nodded and told him I would call my spouse.

I burst into tears and dialed. I called my spouse on the phone and asked him to come get me. Luckily it was later in the day and he could get away. After I got off the phone with him, I cried some more. Yes, I cry. My world is often not sunshine and rainbows or roses and chocolate. It is often filled with trials and adversities. This is my life. It is also filled with amazing and wonderful blessings. Sometimes, it is hard to tell the difference between the two. I always think that life has to be bitter for us to enjoy the sweet. If we never knew heartache or turmoil, then we would never be so happy when the victory has come.

My spouse arrived to take me to the ER and we left my car at the clinic. They gave my stool sample back and told me to take it to the ER with me. As I was sitting in the Jeep while Ben was driving I thought “*Why does this keep happening?*”. Then I shook my head, as if to get the thought out of my mind. I asked Ben if he thought there was anything else we could do to keep C. Diff away from our home? He shook his head no and replied he felt we were doing all we could. I felt the same.

I went into ER and told them my story. I told them about the stool sample. They put me in a room and started me on some Dilaudid for pain. Then they took me to get a CT Scan. Everyone kept running around but it felt like no one was really listening to me. They kept saying they were unsure if it was C. Diff and I kept reminding them about the sample. Finally, someone took the stool sample and had it tested. They were going to let me go and I said no, if there was something wrong that it would be better if I were in the hospital.

The next morning they confirmed I had C. Diff again. They put me on liquid Vancomycin, some probiotics and some other medications. I went in June 29th and I was let out July 2nd. I still had to take pills for two more weeks, but I was allowed to go home and finish recovering.

We bleached the whole house and all the blankets, towels, and clothes that we could. We got some spray bottles and bleached every inch of the place possible. In all our research, bleach seemed to be the only thing that removed C. Diff from the home and it had to be constant.

A week went by and I started feeling better. Ben and I went out to restaurants, the Renaissance Fair and on walks. I felt like I was starting to get my life back. I had a ton of energy and was feeling really good. Ben started saying he wasn't feeling well and in my second week of recovery, he got sick. We still don't know if that weekend he had C. Diff and just recovered from it, or he had a stomach flu. Either way, both of those could have made me sick.

Then a few days after Ben started feeling better, I woke up and I had watery stools again. My stomach hurt but not as bad as before. I didn't have an appetite again and I started to worry this was C. Diff again. I made another appointment to see Dr. K. I brought in another stool sample but since it wasn't in their packaging, I had to transfer it to their container. They originally had me scheduled with my old doctor and I boldly refused. The last doctor I had wouldn't even listen to me. I have always felt that if it was not for Dr. K. I would be dead.

Since I wouldn't see the doctor they wanted and would only see Dr. K. I had to come back later that day. I left my stool sample there and when Ben came home he brought me back. We figured it was better for him to drive, just in case they sent me to the ER again.

The good news is that I didn't need to go to ER. The bad news was that yes, I had C. Diff again. Dr. K. started me on Vancomycin again but a different dose and regime. Because it is such an unusual prescription, I had to go to a Pharmacy nowhere near my house to pick up my prescription. That meant more driving, an uncomfortable car ride, but one step closer to healing.

Once we got the prescription filled, we headed back home. Once I got home, I immediately took my prescription and a probiotic. Every time I would take an antibiotics, I would take a probiotic. This kept my gut flora healthy and able to fight off the C. Diff. The antibiotics kill good and bad flora in your gut, so you have to take the probiotics to make sure you have good gut flora as well. Ben bought me some Kefir and I started drinking that daily to help boost my gut flora.

That wasn't all. Because I had had C. Diff four times, they said I was most likely a candidate for a Fecal Transplant. They basically put good poop with medicine in your body so it can cure you from the C. Diff. It has been shown to be 90% effective after the first dose.

I had the transplant and then it was a wait and see game. Wait a few weeks and see if the transplant cured me or if I need to do other things, like talk to an Infectious Disease doctor.

As time went by, I started to feel better. I had more energy. A friend commented to me, "Your skin looks healthy, your eyes look healthy, your whole body looks so much better than it did before, so I think you are past it." I had to agree.

It amazes me that this type of procedure would even make a difference. Modern technology and clinical trials and studies are amazing in this day and age. Who knew that by taking one person's good poop and putting it in another person's body would make their gut flora health cured from C-Diff?! I know I didn't, at least, not until now.

I finally feel like I am back on track and ready to conquer the world!

This past year has not been an easy one. Along with Cancer I had hemorrhoid issues, and then C. Diff four times!! Sometimes I truly feel that the C. Diff was more deadly than the Cancer! It definitely taxed me more and drained me more, or so it seemed. I am not trying to diminish the Cancer in any way because the side effects from the chemo did cause all sorts of issues, one of them being C. Diff.

I am thankful to modern medicine but most especially Dr. Kaiser and his team for being a great Primary Care Physician. I am also thankful to his team for going above and beyond. They would often contact me before or after a procedure or both and check in on me and see how I was doing. I often say, and I truly feel this, if it wasn't for Dr. Kaiser, I would be dead. I feel that he and his team constantly were saving my life this past year.

I am also thankful to the other team of doctors I had throughout this journey. By the end, I had acquired a team of five doctors and they all did their part to make and keep me healthy and as happy as I could be.

Love the doctors that love you and you will live to enjoy another day!

The End?

No my lovelies, not nearly the end, only the beginning. It's not even the end of this book for it continues into a workbook study to help *you* along your journey into Fabulous. Won't you continue to travel with me into the following pages as I help you, too, to rise from the ashes to become a Phoenix!

Let's Fall Into Fabulous!

Introductions

are

in

Order:

Order Up

Introductions are in Order: Order Up

For those of you who have not read my book yet, I would like to start off by introducing myself, and why I think I am the right person to lead you on your quest to Be Fabulous. My full name is Patricia Ann Hunter-Merrill, but most of you know me by Trisha Trixie. I am 47 going on 48 (though I don't look it), and I am a lover of life. I am Fabulous.

Many people who know me, know that I have undergone some dramatic, hard and unbelievable trials and adversity in my life. I was very fragile when younger and even in my twenties, up to my thirties...I believed I was a victim and though I was still smiling, underneath I had NOT released those insecurities and thoughts that were weighing me down. I am a child of divorce, loss of a father at a young age, molested, moved around to different states, raped, beaten, abused, lost my children in multiple custody battles to a manipulator of the system, I was hospitalized, I tried to kill myself on two occasions. I have suffered car breakdowns, loss, homelessness, drug addiction, multiple marriages, horrible breakups, and the list could go on. I once had a counselor ask me how I stayed sane and I replied "By the grace of someone more powerful than me; that's for sure!".

I could have looked at my life and said "I give up" and as I said I tried. When I got my senses back, pulled up my bootstraps and dusted myself off, I realized...

I was actually blessed. I know you might think I am a whack-o-doodle for saying that, however; I think there are many times in life people only see the telescope of life in front of them. I choose to look at the Kaleidoscope of Life. Life is really beautiful; you just have to open your mind to it all. I could have turned away from life, dug myself into a hole and stayed there; I could have pulled the covers up over my head, and told the world I was not going to come out. You may have felt like that as well. The reality is: Life Happens. We need to just get on with it because it is going to go on no matter what. I don't want to walk around grouchy, grumpy, or angry. I choose to live it in a happy, blissful state of mind. I choose to not let the trials and burdens of life and people weigh me down anymore.

I choose to be me. I choose to Be Fabulous!

Isn't it time for YOU to Be the Fabulous person you were meant to be?

*The
Tools:
Workbook
Time*

The Tools

- Where I Learned
- Introductions Are In Order
- Workbook
- Be Fabulous
- Intrinsic Motivation
- Letting Go
- How Do You Spell Relief
- The Happiness Hot List
- My Road Map Destination Guide
- The Least List: Yucks, Hates, Ain't Gonna Do's and Nope, You Can't Make Me
- The Most List: Likes, Loves, Laughs
- Manifesting Miracles & The Law of Attraction
- Goals, Resolutions and Intentions
- Vision Boards, Moon Boards & More
- Be Strong
- Be Grateful
- How Has Your Life Changed
- Final Words of Fabulousness

Now, The Tools

In the following pages are my transformation tools. These were the things that helped turn my life around. Plus, pulling back out of my closet old books like Crucial Conversations, How to Say It At Work and At Home, as well as learning my Love Language and asking others if they too would take the Love Language test. Knowing their love language and then applying that to how I interact with them and asking them to do the same with me.

There are many times in my life I have hit rock bottom and I thought there was nothing I could do. And yet, there always seemed to be a sliver, a glimmer of light somewhere, shining from up above.

I have been singed.

I have been burnt.

I have walked through the fire and not felt a thing.

I have stood in the eye of the storm and looked up to see the beauty that is awaiting me on the other side.

I have been left to a pile of rubble, rocks, dirt and ash....and I rise up...I always rise up...I am the Phoenix Rising...rising from the ashes to conquer the trials of adversity, to enjoy the blessings that come after we endure and overcome those hardships, to live life to the fullest, to remember to savor life in all its forms, good or bad, to remind myself and the world that all things are wonderful and all things are here to teach us and help us learn and grow and we will be victorious, we will overcome, we will **BE BRAVE, BE BOLD, BE FEARLESS** and we will **BE FABULOUS!!**

Where I learned...

In 2011 I started learning more about Dream Boards and art through healing from [Brave Girls Club](#). This transitioned into learning more about Full Moon Boards from [Jamie Ridler at Ridler Studios](#). Jen Allen at [Right Brain Business Plan](#) had us do visual mappings as entrepreneurs to get us in the right mind frame. As the year progressed I learned more and more about canvases, books, boards, etc. for Visual Inspiration. Through the teaching I found Carolyn Rubenstein's [A Beautiful Ripple Effect](#) and started gathering quotes and pasting them with Mod Podge like a madwoman for more inspiration. I joined [Goddess Leonie's Circles](#) and made Visual Permission Slips to see every day. I followed [Danielle La Porte's blog](#) and print and post her words at work, in my car and at home for encouragement. I started following Brene Brown's [Ordinary Courage](#) and took her words and put them in my [SOAR](#) journal as well as the wonderful writing and learning I gathered from my [SOAR](#) class itself. Then the universe led me to Stephanie St. Claire and [Blissbombed](#). After a hard break up and an uncertainty I couldn't bear, I followed her blog, read her old blog and gladly signed up for the Daily Note Card to hear her words. I took her Bad Ass Broad Workshop and it was the best thing for me to kick my ass into gear and get me back on track with my life. And yes, I even made a Bad Ass Board to keep her words in my head at all times as well as a [Hell No and Hell Yes Board](#) from her blog of the same.

The Workbook

What will be in store for you? All of this is up to you to participate if you desire. I will give you the tools and information. You have to have the desire. I have listed the basics of what I plan to offer you; if you choose, you may create any of the items that you will need. Some people have taken even to making one BIG journal and clip, where they clip and paste everything. This is YOURS, and I want you to do whatever YOU want to do.

BE FABULOUS in YOUR OWN WAY!

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation is when one is motivated by internal factors, as opposed to the external drivers of extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation drives others to do things just for the fun of it, or because they believe it is a good or right thing to do. Why do we do the things we do? What is it that drives our behaviors? An intrinsically motivated person will work on something they like, because it is enjoyable. In either case does the person work on the task because there is some reward involved, such as a prize, a payment, or in the case of students, a grade. That is called Extrinsic Motivation. Intrinsic motivation does not mean, however, that a person will not seek rewards. It just means that such external rewards are not enough to keep a person motivated. Intrinsic Motivation is the WHY. Why is this person doing this thing? What do they get out of it? How intrinsically motivated are they? A little bit? A lot? All of these things matter. As leaders, teachers, instructors, etc...it is important, I feel, to first find out the why. How are we best able to help others if we don't know the why or why not, in some cases.

So my question to you, I want you to ask yourself, before you go on is:

What is my Intrinsic Motivation? *Write Down What Your Intrinsic Motivation is.*

Letting Go

What if we let go? What if we let go of misconceptions of who we need to be, how we are supposed to act, what the world wants from us and instead think about what we, ourselves, want for our lives. Letting go allows us to live. Letting go allows for those things in our life that are waiting for an opening to arrive. For some of us we are holding on to past hurts, regrets, mistakes. For others we are holding on to victimization, hurt and heartache. For others we are holding on to “Jones Mentality”, meaning we are trying too hard to keep up with everyone else...in life, business and love. But what if we just Let Go? “Let Go and Let God” my mother used to say. Let go of the past. Let go and give it to your higher power, the universe, or the sky. Just let it go. Tell yourself “This no longer serves me. I am ready to let go of this hurt, anguish, heartache, or story”. Once you can truly let go, you can truly Just Be. When you can release those things that are weighing you down or holding you back, amazing miraculous things will start to happen in your life!

Take a moment, meditate, close your eyes, breathe in a good deep breath, let it fill your belly and chest, then exhale and think for a moment...What Am I willing To Let Go?

Write Down What Are You Willing To Let Go:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How do YOU Spell Relief?

How do you relieve your pain? For most of us, we probably take a pain reliever, Advil or Tylenol or some other medication. Some do alternative medicine, with Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Some do nothing. But, what about the pain inside our hearts and heads? I bet you haven't thought of, or perhaps forgot that "Happiness" is a great healer for all things. Happiness helps people to live longer. Happiness can cure or even deter the common cold. Now, although I am generally a happy person, life still gets at me and to me sometimes. We are all human. It happens. However, I found a secret to being happy when I don't want to be happy... What is that, you ask? Well, that is how I spell Relief. I wrote down a long time ago what things help me to get back to happy. Basically, when things feel outta whack or outta happiness. I pull out my Happy Hot List and allow myself to do something off my Happy Hot List! Regarding physical pain, what most don't know is that I am a Chronic Pain Sufferer with degenerative disks in my neck, back and sacroiliac. I thought I would never find something that "helped" me get through the physical pain. But I did! I found Pain Relief through Yoga and Meditation. I follow Carrie Hensley at <http://www.carriehensley.com>. I like the way Carrie teaches because she works within everyone's limits. Not like other Yogis. I like Guided Meditations but some just like music. I found out about Calm and fell in love. I have this app on every device and computer I own. Try <http://www.calm.com>

How do YOU Spell Relief?

Happiness Hot List

When you think on it, how do YOU spell Relief?

What makes you happy?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes you smile?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What warms your heart?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes your heart happy?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What helps you to "Get Back to Happy"?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes your heart soar?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes you laugh big belly laughs?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write Down How YOU Spell Relief?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is on your Happiness Hot List?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

My Road-map Destination Guide

What is the best thing you can do to reach your goals, dreams, desires? Sounds simple but it is true. I did not get here on my own. I am a self help junkie. OK, not junky, enthusiast! Let's say it that way! My transformation came in 2011. Years had gone by with my life going up and down, constant drama, constant toxic people in my life, constantly allowing people to use me, abuse me and walk all over me. I have been through the muck of life. I have been molested, raped, beaten, abused, suffered huge loss in life, love and business, I had been homeless, lost a thriving business, ended up in divorce, again and did not have a great relationship with my children. I was constantly carrying more and more baggage as my life went on. Does this sound like you? Does even one part sound like you? Can you relate? Most can in some aspect or another. I also knew I wanted a better life. I had better desires, dreams and goals for my life. I wanted more, yearned for more, hungered for more. From that point on, I found more and more sites I resonated with, connected with, aspired to be like!

I am going to give you a list of other sites that helped me and will also help you. Take them as you can and don't overdo it. You need to be mindful of how much you take on. I know, you're all excited to get going, but ease up on the gas and take it easy. You don't want to blow a gasket! Also, not all of them will speak to you like they spoke to me.

Follow someone else. All I ask is that you look into the ones I gave or check out one of the ones you have been interested in, but have yet to do. Now is the time. Get in your Self-Care Car and travel down the road with me....Let's journey together my friend!

~Brave Girls Club: <http://bravegirlsclub.com>

~Declaration of You: <http://www.jessicaswift.com/the-declaration-of-you>

~Right Brain Business Plan: <http://www.rightbrainbusinessplan.com>

~Carolyn Rubenstein: <http://carolynrubenstein.com>

~Jamie Ridler: <http://www.jamieridlerstudios.ca>

~Leonie Dawson: <https://shiningacademy.com>

~ Danielle LaPorte: <http://www.daniellelaporte.com>

~Brene Brown: <http://brenebrown.com/my-blog>

~Stephanie St. Claire: <http://blissbombed.com>

~Elizabeth Gilbert: <http://www.elizabethgilbert.com>

~Create Every Day: <http://creativeeveryday.com>

~Willowing Art Therapy: <http://www.willowing.org>

~Natalie Malik: <http://awkwardnbeautiful.blogspot.com>

~Twinkle, Twinkle Art Therapy: <http://twinkletwinklelikeastar.blogspot.com>

~Julie Cameron: The Artist's Way: <http://juliacameronlive.com/the-artists-way/>

~Coach Me for habit setting or breaking: <https://www.coach.me>

The Least List: Yucks, Hates, Ain't Gonna Do's and Nope, You Can't Make Me

What Excites you the Least? Those things that excite you the least are those things you can hire other people to do. Or if you don't have the money to hire others to do those tasks or things you hate, find another way, a workaround. When I couldn't afford to hire anyone, I took on College Interns. I found out they need the hours and you need the work. You fill out a few sheets and ta-da, you have a helper! There are also homeless and VA organizations that will help you find people who might be interested in work study type programs to help them in their career path. Similar to an intern, your payment is time. You devote time to them and they devote time to you. Reach out to friends and family who support you on your mission. Word of caution, only work with those friends and family you can stand, though. If you already don't get along, please do everyone a favor and don't try to work with them! Aside from that, think of other ways you can barter or trade services or items. Think outside of the box and I am sure you will come up with many ideas! Write those down. What makes you feel yuck? What do you really dislike?

What Excites you the Least?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

The Most List: Likes, Loves, Laughs & Money

Now what do you Love to do?

What excited you the most? If you could do anything, money's no object, what is it that you would do? At Home? For Work? At Play? In your personal life and/or Professional Life? Write down what all those things are. Take the things you like to do list and the money-no-object list and compare them. How many things match up? What are the TOP items that match up or that jump out to you? Do that thing. Money is the driving force for so many things. But it doesn't have to be the source for you to start something, if you really want to. If you REALLY desire it. If you Dream about it. If you wished with all your wishes and might that you could do that. If only... Well, guess what ...YOU CAN. The only thing stopping you is you. There are so many resources for Startups, Entrepreneurs, Thriving Artists, Creators, Left-Brainers and Right-Brainers, you name it! Talk with others who have done what you want to do. Tweet them, email them, Facebook them, go visit them if you can. Chew their ear off. They probably already have a list of resources to give you. If all else fails, start with a local networking group or Small Business Centers. They are loaded with tips, tricks and tools!

What are the top things you want to, would like to, would love to do?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Manifesting Miracles & The Law of Attraction

One thing I claim to be and know that I am good at is Manifesting. One of the courses I took was a Course in Miracles and Manifesting by Stephanie St. Claire from Blissbombed. I know I got it going on, but that girl is the queen of miracles. Manifesting is all about the Law of Attraction. But most people only know this through the book *The Secret*. *The Secret* teaches a simplified version of what I grew up knowing it as Name it and Claim It! If you want it, go get it. Write it down, say it is yours and you will have it right? WRONG. A couple of rules I have learned along the way. The universe does not understand the word DON'T. You can't, can't say "I don't ever want to lose my job". What the universe heard is "I want to lose my job" Understand? Also, you have to do more than name it and claim it. You have to believe it. If you don't believe the affirmation, if you can't believe it, your mind knows it, your heart knows it, thus that miracle Will Not Happen. Manifesting Miracles aka Law of Attraction.

What are the things that would be a miracle to you? Write them down.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Goals, Resolutions, and Intentions

I don't believe in setting Resolutions. Shocked you there, huh? I don't believe in Resolutions because resolutions fail. We all hear the "I want to lose weight, eat less, read more, etc" But that momentum only stays within us for a month or so, if we are lucky. However, Intentions, are a whole other thing. When we *intend* to do it, we have a lighter thought about it. We WANT to do it. We DESIRE to do it. If it is really important, we WILL do it. That is how Intentions work. Some think this is a way out, but I think it holds us even MORE accountable. From this we can get Goals. Goals are an action that you strive for.

Intentions are the same way. Even if you have a goal or intention for something on your Vision Board, you still need the steps to get there. I think that is what Vision Boarders lack the most. They put all these pictures and affirmations and sayings on their boards and in their home and wonder why nothing ever happens for them or their miracles are not happening. Start with the end in mind. See your Intention or Goal and then start writing down the steps backwards. What do you have to do to get to that goal? In my coaching, I take my clients through those steps and watch, encourage and acknowledge them in their quest by helping them create those steps they will need to get there!

What are your Intentions?

Example: I want to exercise more.

Good Example: I intend to walk 10,000 steps a day.

I am a vision board enthusiast! I love to make and glue and tear out magazines, and find words that go with my visions and write notes and put them on there, and just go all out! I make Yearly Vision Boards, Monthly Vision Boards and even make Boards whenever I feel like I need to change it up or my priorities have changed. There are plenty of places to do boards and some have guided meditations, some you can do in person and some you can do online. I even encourage others to make a Pinterest Board if that is the tool they prefer to use. That being said, I do believe that creating these with your hands not only helps the right brain creativity, but helps the left brain function more. I run regular vision board webinars and will have some each year for those who are interested, but if you want to get going right away, I would suggest these links to check out ...

<http://secretsofthelawofattraction.org/vision-board/how-to-make-a-vision-board>

<http://happyblackwoman.com/how-to-create-a-vision-board>

<https://www.pinterest.com/scrappinmichele/vision-board-samples>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Vision-Board> <http://makeavisionboard.com/what-is-a-vision-board>
<http://christinekane.com/how-to-make-a-vision-board>

What are your Intentions? What do you intend to do? What are those desires that you intend to start doing now, today, tomorrow, next month? Be precise and concise.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Vision Boards, Moon Boards & More

Now that we have pulled all your thoughts together, what is the Life you TRULY Desire? What does the "Life you Desire" look like? Put this all down on paper, then I want you to gather together magazines, pictures articles, etc. to make a Vision Board or Moon Board. Moon boards are done by the full Moon and are known to generate manifestations and intentions. You can use cardboard, canvas boards, canvases, or anything to make your boards (vision or moon). Go to Dollar Tree even and get poster board and some stickers or whatever goodies you want to use. Get some Mod Podge at Hobby Lobby or use glue sticks to plaster your images down. Create a vision for your life.

Start by mind mapping your vision here...



...(Draw a circle with your starting point. Then draw a line away from the first circle. Add another and inside write your visions, dreams, etc. Write a book. Then the mind map circles would be things like, get an editor, find a publisher, and so on. Keep adding items and circles until you have completed your mind mapping. From this make your vision board)

Be Strong

This goes into my next segment. Toxicity. There are, sadly, toxic people all around you. I call them saboteurs. Saboteurs do not desire you to succeed. They do not desire you to be happy, lose weight, quit smoking, be successful, etc., you name it. They are living in misery and they want you to not only join them, but stay there forever. They either do not desire to have the joys in life or they do not understand how to get there. They may feel left behind as you grow towards the things you desire and envision in your life. DO NOT let these people bring you down or allow you to step away from the things and life you desire. This is YOUR life not theirs. You will need to be strong. Keep telling yourself you are worth it. Keep encouraging your own mind that these are things you desire and a life you desire. You may have to leave them behind. This will not be easy for some to do. But it is a must for you to go along your journey and meet your destination.

There is also jealousy. It is ugly and it rears its head. Others will feel jealous because they are not able to do the things you are doing. They do not have the awareness and understanding that you do. They do not see the things you see. They are afraid to make the leaps and jumps you are making. They cannot fathom doing the things you are doing. It is OK. They want what you want but are jealous that you are achieving these great and amazing things. Instead of encouraging you they become a part of the saboteurs. Again, be strong and carry on. Fight through the storms of families and friends and co-workers that try to bring you down or back to the path of misery.

Remember you know better. You have now been awakened into a new enlightenment. You can see clearly the things you desire and are going to not just walk but run towards them.

You are your own critic.

You are your own cheerleader.

You may not have anyone else in your corner.

You may have to walk this road by yourself.

I believe in you.

I know you can do it.

You have come to this course because you have a desire to change, to grow, to succeed, to achieve.

Be Grateful

Many of us take for granted what is set before us. For one thing we don't see what has already been given to us and I truly believe the first part of envisioning the life you want is to accept and be grateful for what you already have. I would like each of you to make a Gratitude Journal. It can be online like Pinterest or other form or make a hard copy one, and I encourage you to write in it continually.

Recognizing the things you have and being grateful for them will open many doors for you to not only see your life more clearly, but also see those things, people and opportunities that come into your path that you otherwise might have been unaware of.

Being grateful is about more than just saying thank you for things.

It is about seeing the life around you, the ups and downs, the highs and lows and seeing the blessings in them.

Being grateful is about more than just saying thank you for things.

It is about seeing the life around you, the ups and downs, the highs and lows and seeing the blessings in them.

I started being grateful for what I had, ten fingers, ten toes, I had my hair, I had all my limbs, I could breathe on my own, I could see the sun, I could feel the sun, I could hear sound and I could listen to music, of which I love. I could feel and touch and so on.

I was grateful and saw my blessings in the bad things. I was homeless, but I had a car I could sleep in. I had shoes so I didn't have to walk around barefoot. I had a voice so I could ask for help. I was divorced, but now perhaps I could find someone who was right for me. I didn't have MY children, but I found out there were many OTHER children who needed love and care. The things and trials I had been through made me grateful for the lessons they gave me. I was grateful for the strength it gave me. I was also dearly grateful for the empathy it gave me for others. I have walked a mile in many shoes and I understand where others cannot.

I understand it is HARD to be Grateful when things are rocky, when the boat is rocking, when the trials come. But that is when you need to be **MOST** grateful.

If you don't like hand-making a Gratitude Book, find another way to Be Grateful. Make a Pinterest Board. Find an online journal. Read and add to online Social Media pages. I used to own [Gratitude a Day](#) on Facebook but I had too many things on my plate so I gave it to one of my sisters. She writes, shares and loves to hear what others are grateful for. For the next 30 days share why you are grateful on the page if you desire, if that works for you.

My pal Stephanie St. Claire over at [Blissbombed](#) talks about a Gratitude Rampage. She writes down in a manic chaos all the things she is grateful for. Sometimes she even walks around shouting them out.

Find a system.

Do that.

As long as you do it.

Then come back each week and share with us on the [Be Fabulous](#) Group page on Facebook at least one thing you are grateful for. Small or large, it doesn't matter. Let's start out this course right and Be Grateful. First for what we have, before we start on the action of who, how and what it means to Be Fabulous.

List a few things you are Grateful for here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My Pinterest, Be Grateful Board is here and I also posted it in the group...

<http://pinterest.com/trishatrixie/be-grateful/>

Be Grateful this week, today, and every day. Make a mini journal, make a BIG journal. Whatever it takes. Make a Pinterest Board or any OTHER online Board you desire.

Found another way to Be Grateful? Share it with us so we may learn new ways to Be Grateful as well and to enrich our lives.

Here are some links to other notes about Gratitude and Gratitude Journals:

<http://blog.beeminder.com/gratitude/>

<http://www.thegratefulgoddess.com/>

<http://thehappinessexperiment.co.uk/>

[Amazon Gratitude Journals](#)

[Happify](#)

[A How-to on how to Make a Mini Gratitude Journal](#)

Be Fabulous

I desire you to open your mind to what being fabulous might mean to you.

- What do you think of when someone says that word to you?

- What visions come to your mind?

- When you think of a Fabulous place, what place do you envision?

- If you were to see YOURSELF as Fabulous, what would that picture image be like?

- Are you happy? Are you in a location? Are you with someone?

- What is the first thing that comes to your mind? What are others?

What does it mean to Be Fabulous?

A good friend recently pointed out to me that perhaps people don't know what Fabulous means; what does one do, how does one act, etc. So I thought I would take today to comment on that.

[The Free Dictionary](#) defines it this way...

fab·u·lous (făb'yū-ləs)

adj.

1. astonishing: *the fabulous endurance of a marathon runner.*

2. Extremely pleasing or successful: *a fabulous vacation.*

3.

a. *Of the nature of a fable or myth; **legendary**. (Not to be confused with Barney Stinson from HIMYM)*

b. *Told of or celebrated in fables or legends.*

[Middle English, mythical, from Old French *fabuleux*, from Latin *fābulōsus*, from *fābula*, *fable*; see **fable**.]

1. Owning up to YOUR Fabulous

I feel that to Be Fabulous you need to own up to your Fabulousness. You, who you are and how you are is ALREADY Fabulous! A phrase I learned from Stephanie St. Claire was “*All things are already mine*” I thought, “*Snap, that is just like being Fabulous. There is nothing we have to do, or say or become, we already ARE Fabulous! Just as we are!*”

I don't want to teach this entire thing, on who you have to be or how you are. *You know who you are.* Owning up to who you are, what type of person you are, what your body shape is or isn't, what your life is and so on. Anyone, ANYONE can be Fabulous.

2-Attitude of Fabulous

Which means-Deciding you **ARE** Fabulous and then **own it**. Barney never had anyone tell him he was Legendary, he decided he was and then acted in that manner. I decided I was Fabulous and act in a manner that says so, so that works for me. That is important because perhaps you are shy. It is not like you are going to start shouting from the rooftops (though I would) I am **FABULOUS!** Do what feels comfortable to you to own it, but if you get a chance to step outside of the shell, I think you will find a new fabulousness waiting you never knew existed.

Most importantly, have a positive attitude, be grateful for your life, what you have, and who you are. Desire to be kind to others, and have dignity and integrity. Smile, be happy, compliment others. Take compliments well, enjoy life. Enjoy all things of life, good AND bad. Be confident. Go out once in awhile, clean up or do your makeup daily, even if you are not going out. A little mascara, blush and balm always help me feel fabulous. If you are not a makeup wearer, or perhaps a guy reading this, do whatever it takes to keep yourself clean and groomed. When I was very down because of a break up, once I crawled out from under the covers and at least brushed my hair and washed my face, I felt SO much better. Feeling good, makes you feel happy, when you are happy, others are happy, when others and you are happy you tend to start feeling fabulous.

3-Be Confident

This can get confused with arrogance, but I seem to notice that those who say I am arrogant are actually ones not confident with themselves. They have a deeper insecurity perhaps or they were raised not to be proud or boastful and think you are being outlandish. I say, GOOD! Be outlandish if you desire to be. You might have to test out that Fabulous Confidence a bit to find the right blend that works for you.

If you constantly feel out of your element in what you think acting and owning Fabulous means, maybe tone it down a notch or two. If you feel like you are not quite there, amp it up! Be you, Be Fabulous You.

4-Learning Fabulous

There are books and I will give you a few to read, with caution.

One of the first things I see a LOT of these books say is get a new wardrobe. Now, maybe you NEED a new wardrobe, but maybe you don't. Most likely you just need a good friend or someone you trust or

even a Fashion Adviser to help you leverage the items you already have and make your wardrobe better. That COULD be the case. But I don't want you thinking that you need to rush out and buy a new wardrobe.

My sister loves flannel shirts. That is her. She is a flannel shirt girl. Would that work for me? No. But let me tell you, she rocks the flannel shirt and it works for her. Does she look amazing when she dresses up? Sure, don't we all, but that doesn't mean she can't rock that flannel shirt and still be fabulous because she can. Understand rubber-band?

OK, so here are some books... if you want to study more about it...

Fabulosity: What It Is & How to Get It – Kimora Lee Simmons.

and my idol...

Style A to Zoe: The Art of Fashion, Beauty, & Everything Glamour Rachel Zoe

5-Keep it Together

OK, so another rant. I feel most fabulous when my home and desk and life are clean and organized. I love www.Flylady.com and how she helps others to get their life clean and ways to STAY Clean. But I also know a few people who throw things on the floor and all about and if you clean it they have no clue where anything is. Being clean and organized is great and I think for me it makes a vast difference.

Again, try what works for you. Go to Fly Lady and test out her methods. They are very simple and I love how easy they integrate into other things in my life. I now have these habits because of her (even if nothing else gets done)...

Always put my shoes on

Swish the toilet with a brush daily

Always keep my sink clean and shiny

6- Love Yourself

If you don't love you, who will? You are your own best friend and your own worst enemy. Don't let the self-talk be negative. Let it be positive, uplifting talk. No mean talking to yourself. Let go of your past and those who hurt you. Decide you are NOT a victim anymore. You are Fabulous.

The short version of that is I lost my father at a young age, I was molested, raped, beaten, bruised, divorce, lost custody of children, struggled, was homeless, lost businesses, sacrificed and lived a lot of my life feeling like I was a victim. If you have been through something, I probably have too or something like it. I look at those things in my life as experiences that helped me help you.

If I can smile and look life in the face of it all and Be Fabulous... YOU can too!

7-Be Friendly

If you are friendly to others, they will want to be your friend. Fabulous people attract friends because people are drawn to them. Say hi. Compliment others. Talk about similar likes and once in awhile dislikes (just don't get hung up on the negative). Smile. Be inviting to things or groups you are in. If you see others standing alone, invite them in. If you are the one alone, and someone else invites you, go try it out. Be engaging and discuss things with them. To have a friend is to be a friend.

8-Have Fun

Laugh. Smile. Watch comedy shows if need be, just enjoy life. Don't worry about what others think, just go do and be what you like to do to have fun. OK, disclaimer...if you are a psychopath and like to kill others for fun please don't do that. But if you want to swing on swings, do it (which BTW is my, like, ultimate favorite thing to do in like, always). If you want to plank on the hot ground, do it. If you want to be silly, do it. If you want to crochet all day or knit or sew, do it. YOU know what you like to do for fun and what fun means to you. Do that and be that.

If you DON'T know what fun means, try some things out until you do.

I also have a De-Suckify List I learned from Leonie Dawson. I made a list of things to do when I feel life suck or I am not "in a good mood". On my list...

Take a shower

Watch a funny movie

Go outside

Create

Collage

Meditate

Play Fun Music

Breathe (You'd be surprised)

9-Stay True to You

I am making some suggestions for things, but I want you to stay true to you as well. Don't change just to change. Change, grow evolve because you desire to. Don't EVER change for someone else or compromise your boundaries or values. You know what you feel comfortable with and you generally know when you have crossed the line. If you do cross it and you don't feel right, remember that you can ALWAYS walk away. If it doesn't fit, feel right, or it's more uncomfortable than you can be, then try something else, walk away. Above all, be you.

10-Trixie Fabulosity

On this last note, I want to share how I go about Being and Feeling Fabulous. Some of you who know me personally already know some of these things and will sit there nodding your head saying to yourself "Yep, that's Trixie!"

*I wake happy. If I am not happy, I get happy.

- *Limit my time online (I actually set a timer)
- *While online enjoy positive and uplifting things
- *Do what I want each day. Seriously. Some days I get up and want to work in my studio. Some days I want to lie around and watch movies. Now I realize that not everyone has the life I have, but even so, do what you want and enjoy it. IF you are not enjoying it, why are you doing it?
- *I listen to uplifting music during the day.
- *Take regular breaks
- *Go to events
- *Socialize with others
- *Take Chances and Leaps for things I desire and goals I am reaching for
- *Meet new people everywhere I go
- *Say Hello Fabulous to others often
- *Say Be Fabulous instead of saying goodbye
- *Be VERY happy and smile...A LOT
- *Be energetic
- *Be driven
- *Be audacious and ostentatious (basically be “over the top”)
- *Live vicariously thru myself

I quote what I said on FB:

“I’m every person’s dream and every person’s inspiration. I’m awesome in a FABULOUS package. I’m confident, strong and determined. Success is my only option, failure’s not. I live life vicariously thru myself. I enjoy the show. I protect my soul house fiercely. My boundary lines are unmovable. I’m Authentic, Real, Unique. I’m me.”

I am not perfect. Hell, none of us are. But I own up to the me I am. I own up to my successes as well as my failures. I am no longer breakable. I am no longer a victim. I am me....and I am...

FABULOUS

The final thing I am giving you is the BE FABULOUS Mantra. I have a mantra I have made FOR YOU but desire you to add to it and make it yours as well. I hope that you will print the Mantra out and post it where you can see it so you will be able to Be Fabulous every day! You can also collage it and frame it or have it online. As long as it is something you will see, read and feel in your heart regularly.

If you want to come up with your own Mantra that is even MORE Fabulous, share it with us! I would love to see what you create. If you need help creating a Mantra or a Mission Statement, then Stephanie St. Claire over at [Blissbombed](#) would be the perfect person to help you with that!

I want you to post this mantra where you can see it...

(I have purposely placed this on the next page so you can copy it or tear it out of the book to post where you can see it)

I am an amazing person.

I have a right to be whatever I desire to be.

I have a right to achieve whatever I desire to achieve.

I have a right to become whatever I desire to become.

I am a good person.

This is a blessing I accept in my life.

With these changes I will change the lives of others

As well as change the life of myself.

I appreciate myself and the choice to make this change

even if no one else does.

I will treat myself more gently now.

I will listen to my inner voice.

I will heed to its calls, warnings and beliefs

and allow myself to be the me I desire to be.

I now accept hope.

I accept affirmatively.

I now allow myself to move forward in life.

I will no longer look back,

I accept my higher power's help unfolding my life.

I believe in me.

I will be the me I desire to be.

~Falling Into Fabulous Mantra by Trisha Trixie Hunter-Merrill

How has your life changed?

Have you seen your life change in the past few weeks? Have you noticed a difference in how you feel? How you look? How you interact with others? How you perceive others and the world around you?

Maybe you haven't yet. For some people change takes longer than others. For some people they think they are ready to change and open their mind but when the time comes they either are too afraid or have grown accustomed to the way of life they have, even if they don't like it. If you currently don't feel like much has changed, don't worry about it. When the time is right, you will know it, you will feel it. When you are ready, you will be ready.

I would love to hear about it. Please join in the [**Facebook Group: The Risen**](#) and share with myself and others in the group about your journey.

We are here to support you and help you through your Fabulous transformation.

*(Search Facebook for The Risen or find the group on the book Facebook Page for Falling Into Fabulous:
A Phoenix Rising)*

Need MORE Trisha Trixie in your life? Here are some other places you can find me...

Falling Into Fabulous: www.fallingintofabulous.com

Audio boom: <https://audioboom.com/TrishaTrixie>

Blog Talk Radio: <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/trishatrixie>

Sound Cloud: <https://soundcloud.com/miss-trisha-hunter>

Be Fabulous: <https://trishatrixiedesigns.wordpress.com/be-fabulous>

Gum Road: <https://gumroad.com/trishatrixie>

Trixie's Steps to Success: <https://gumroad.com/l/ttips>

The Good of Sisterhood: A fabulous local Colorado Women's Support group where women raise each other up in support, light and love: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/thegoodofsisterhood/>

Trisha Trisha Trixie Designs: Anti-domestic aprons, Apparel and Accessories
www.trishatrixiedesigns.com

If you would like to have me come speak to your club, group, organization or school please contact me, Trisha Trixie, Life Designer, Manifest-or of Miracles and Sprinkler of Fabulousness. Please contact me here: www.trishatrixie.com

Thank You for taking the time to read my book *Falling Into Fabulous: a Phoenix Rising!*

Remember when you're falling, it's okay,
"You're Falling Into Fabulous!"



When Given the Option of Being Fabulous,
Why Would You Choose Anything Else?
~Trisha Trixie Hunter-Merrill
Circa 2017

In the book “**Be the Person you were meant to be**”

by **Dr. Jerry Greenwald**, he writes:

Living a nourishing life is an ongoing process of recognizing and responding to our changing needs and the changing reality of ourselves.

Being obsessed with the past does nothing but waste the present. Regrets are an exercise in futility which can go on forever.

As long as a person continues to postpone living his own life, or waiting for the stamp of approval from others, he continues to poison himself.

Tension and frustration are an inevitable part of being alive. To refuse to tolerate such experiences is to deny this reality. Overcoming this toxic attitude often means letting go of the fantasy that life SHOULD be easy and that frustration is unfair.

To refuse to reach out for the joys and excitements of life is frequently a refusal to face the pain of possible disappointments and rejections.

To refuse to let go of the past is to deny the natural process of change that is a function of every living organism.

Nourishing attitudes are the foundation for a nourishing relationship as well as for effective antidotes to existing toxic relationships.

Final Words of Fabulousness, Acknowledgments,

Thank You's and So Forth:

I want to take this time to thank a few people in my life who helped this book come to be and have helped me on this pathway and journey of life. Forgive me, if I forget you, yet know in my heart you are still named and mentioned.

First, I would like to thank my mother. Through all my life, my mother has been a constant guide and resource to me and many others. Avidly known as Reverend Mary Berg, her wild nature deemed her Mafia Mary a few times, as a funny joke. Though feisty in her convictions and passion, she has quietly changed the world by her good deeds towards others. She has helped the police department, the homeless, aunts and uncles, nieces and cousins. She has helped people she didn't even know, like giving change to a little Mexican girl; that made that little girl's day! She has done more good than any person I know. She makes a difference to the world, one moment at a time, one gift at a time, one simple deed at a time. She has taught me how to be, how to love, how to care for others and how to shine. Without her love, compassion and friendship, I would not be the woman I am today. My mother is my idol, my mentor and my guru. I love you mother, everyday, every moment, every chance I can. Thank you for being the best mother you could be and showing me how to love the world.

Second, my sister, Corrina, who was also my editor for this book. Hours upon hours my sister poured into reading and re-reading this book, to make sure it shared the message I wanted to share with you. To make sure my grammar was clean and concise. To make sure I made sense. To make sure I touched your hearts with the right words that would convey my true nature and feelings. Thank you Corrina, for all your hard work on this book. Thank you for always being my editor in life and helping me convey the right messages to you and to others to help heal their hearts and love them.

Third, a thank you to my other sisters Martha and Bonnie. Though they did not directly help write the book, they helped me to be the person I am today as well. They have nurtured and shaped and formed me into being the person who is able to share this message. All my sisters constantly were there for me, let me cry on their shoulders, let me move in with them when I needed a place, let me love their children as my own, and let me grow and learn to be a human being worth knowing. Thank you for letting me be me, while showing me the me I needed to be.

Fourth, to my friends and family, how I love you. How much you have helped me through my life. You have been a source of encouragement, inspiration and love in all ways. I could not have gotten here without your love, kindness, compassion, consideration, tolerance, and it's an honor to be a part of your

life. You have cheered me on, no matter what endeavor I have striven for! You have bought my products when I was into fashion. You listened when I was into mindfulness. And now, you have cheered me on through my cancer journey and writing this book. Some of my friends are Facebook friends I have never met, and some I have never spoken to. Yet, they are my dearest and closest friends, at times. Some of my friends I have known for years and continue to cherish and adore through our ups and downs. No matter what, you have been there for me. My family is vast, and cousins, nieces, aunts have cheered me on and been there through the struggles and trials of my life as well. I am honored to have your love in my life.

Fifth, To my dear friend Ed. You don't even know how much a part of my growth and the changes in my life happened because of your love, kindness and guidance. Your nature to "tell it like it is" has given me a thicker skin and a knowledge about life, that no one else dared to show me. You are my friend and my guide in life in many ways. From high school until now, and onto our future as friends, I know I will always have you on my side, no matter what. Thank you for being honest and true with me, always and forever.

Lastly, my Hunepants. You are the only man in my life who has truly shown me what unconditional love is all about. I have been married before, I have had boyfriends before. I have had heartache and heartbreak. No man has ever loved me like you do. You are my rock and my strength. I know that I can get through anything with you by my side. I know that you will always tell me like it is. I know that you will always be a great researcher for my medical issues and ailments. I know I can count on you. I love you with all my heart, might, mind and strength. I always feel so honored to have you by my side, to have you in my corner, to have you in my life. Without you, there is no summer of life. You bring a sunny day's eve to my winter moments. I love you, my Hunepants, my smart, intelligent, genius of a man that you are, my silly guy, my belly laugh mister, my love and my light. Thank you. I love you. Always and forever.

Final words go to my publisher, Kyle Savage with Feather Publishing. Thank you for understanding that life gets in the way. That cancer overrides a book being written. Thank you for not only being a great publisher, but a dear friend. I always knew the rosary was moving for me! Your kindness through this journey of mine did not go unnoticed. I am ever grateful for you and Feather Publishing for taking me on. I am grateful and immensely happy that you are with me on this journey. Thank you for your friendship, kindness and love. I look forward to many more books with you and your publishing company.

Three cheers for a fabulous publisher! Huzzah! Huzzah! Huzzah!

Remember always to choose fabulous each and every day, no matter where life may lead you!