

Someone Somewhere is Grateful for Your Story



I seem to reflect on my life around the time of my birthday in late October, at the time of this writing. I check-in to see where I've been and plan the journey of where I would like to go. Recently I had been feeling the pangs of wondering ~ why am I here? What am I to do at this time of my life? I always wanted to make a difference in people's lives, but at this point I was feeling disconnected, similar to how I felt 20 years ago when I moved back to my home town, disappointed over events not turning out as I planned. I didn't know which way to turn. Life had become difficult and I was worn out.

In need of a new perspective, I went to see a counselor who suggested I create a timeline of my life up until that point, indicating all the main events, accomplishments and important milestones along the way. I drew a wavy line that somewhat resembled a Candy Land game board. When I was finished, I showed it to a friend who suggested that I turn my story into a book!

I was surprised at her suggestion, unaware that anyone would be interested in reading my life's story. She went on to say that she shares my story all the time with people in the spiritual awareness classes she teaches at the Milwaukee County Jail. *"These inmates are struggling with serious problems; with drug and alcohol addictions, who have been downtrodden by society, and are behind bars for crimes they committed. Most have lost all hope for a better life, so when I share your story of your personal struggles and how none of it made you drink, they have hope again,"* she said.

I had no idea my story was being shared! I didn't know my suffering had purpose and meaning.

She went on to say, *"These guys are crying for help and are longing to hear about people who have come through the fire, who've chosen a higher path and not looked back, and who have no more need to turn to substances to deal with life's circumstances."*

She had been teaching her prison ministry for many years, telling my story of how my life had become unmanageable (as they say in AA), and how I came through the grief and shock of the sudden death of my fiancé in 1986, and even that didn't justify a drink. She also told me how these (mostly) men were impressed by how the angels intervened in my life; and, how they lifted

me up from the depths of despair and hopelessness and how they, too could come out of their funk and stay sober. I had no idea these guys found sobriety after hearing my story. I had no idea that all the pain I lived through, that my suffering held meaning and purpose and was helping others.

I had also noted on my timeline the positive incidents. In my case that meant when the angels intervened. One such incident was when I received the book, *You Can Heal Your Life* by Louise Hay sent to me by my brother. It was a new book in 1987 when I first read it. It helped me heal my roughed-up life and made me aware there were other options than curling up in a ball and crying myself to death. Louise wrote about her own healing of uterine cancer. Her story, plus drawing my life path timeline provided the beam of light I needed to get through my emotional pain. I was able to note the gifts I was given from that loss and learn deep down there is a silver lining to our struggles!

I was on the phone recently with my friend who reminded me there have been hundreds, perhaps thousands of people in her classes over the 30 years she's been teaching, who have been inspired by my story. Many found permanent sobriety and she said some of them began writing their own stories. Until recently, I was simply unaware of the ripple effect it had.

We all have a story. Make a timeline of your life with all the twists and turns, including the times the angels intervened to light the way to lead you to the sweet treasures waiting on your path. Whether you write a book or not, know that someone somewhere is touched by your story, all that you've lived through and who you've become as a result of your sacred journey.

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