

DONNA JOHNSON

VICTORIOUS WOMAN ESSAY CONTEST 2009

THIRD PRIZE WINNER

DANCING IN THE RAIN

Every woman has a defining moment in her life, and mine came in 1993 when I lost my mother to cancer. In one fell swoop I lost both my mother and best friend, and I was left with a terrible void in my soul. How could I ever go on without her?

As devastated as I was, I knew deep down in my heart that the best way to honor my mother's memory was by taking this negative in my life and turning it into a positive. I had always enjoyed writing poems and received great feedback from a poem that I wrote about Mom for her funeral. It was then that I decided that I was put here on this earth to help other hurting people through my gift of writing. The fire had been lit in me so I set out to start my own creative writing business called "Inspirational Sunsets". I was sure I was going to be an overnight success. After all, I had such lofty goals. How could I lose?

As I have stepped out of my comfort zone many times over the past fifteen years, I have had my share of successes, as well as "failures". As I have learned over the years, though, just having the courage to step out in faith in the first place makes me a winner. Yet, every time I suffered from rejection, the flame within my soul died down a little more and soon all that was left was a flickering ember.

Then along came the year of 2008. Once again I was ready to set the world on fire, and I had such great hopes and dreams for that year. Little did I know that yet another defining moment was waiting right around the corner, but I would have to go through many storms before I arrived at that point. Yes, 2008 was one of those years when you barely have time to recover from one problem before another one arises. The storms were raging all around me, and I felt like my life was totally out of control. Not only was I acting as a caregiver for my father who had a recurrence of cancer and later broke his hip, but also I was diagnosed with and underwent treatment for breast cancer. I tried not to question why, but I could not help but feel like life was out to get to me.

Indeed, the year of 2008 was a wake-up call for me. Because of the adversity I faced, I am now a much stronger and more compassionate person. I learned many life lessons along the way last year, and I am more thankful for all of the blessings that God has bestowed upon my life. I think the most important lessons I learned were to live my life one day at a time and "to dance in the rain." In fact, I recently found

a saying that sums up that lesson well: “Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass, it is about learning to dance in the rain!” Life is not always going to be kind to us, but it is how we handle those times of adversity that show our true character. Like it or not, those are also the times in which we grow and mature the most.

Best of all, I now have a renewed interest in reviving my dream. What was once a flicker is now growing into a bigger flame, and I am ready to help light the way for others. Despite my past “failures” and rejections, I know I must step out once again to honor my mother’s memory through my writings. There is a world full of hurting people, and perhaps by stepping out and sharing my experiences through my writings, I will be able to show others that there is a glimmer of hope in even the darkest of nights. While I may not ever make the “New York Times” best seller’s list, perhaps I can make my corner of the world just a little bit brighter.

Indeed, I can think of no better way to honor my mother’s memory than to become the victorious woman that she brought me up to be!

Congratulations, Donna

And

Best Wishes!

You remind us that a dream delayed isn’t a dream denied.

Travel into this next phase of your life with

Our best wishes for your victory and success.

We look forward to reading about *your* next chapter!