

DARE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
Touching People's Lives

2018

If someone would have asked me when I began writing my stories in 2011, what is the chance that one day I would be sharing them with others, my answer would have been... *“One in a million!”* The probability of this happening was very far from my mind back then. And to corroborate this, in 2014 I wrote a story titled ‘The Meaning of Life’ in which I said: *“I laughed, and left him (the preacher) knowing very well that writing my little stories is in part what I’m supposed to do at this time in my life. I don’t know exactly why, but if it’s only to keep my sanity, well, it’ll be all worthwhile!..”*

Now fast forward to 2018...

For some reason this morning I was pondering over these words, and as it happened I decided to pay a visit to Granny. I walked to the assisted living facility and headed directly to the front porch overlooking the lake. I knew breakfast time was over and I figured she’d probably be there. I was right. Here she was sitting in her ‘Cadillac’, chatting with other ladies when she heard my footsteps on the porch. She looked up in my direction and greeted me with a wide, warm smile that took twenty years off her age! She recognizes me now that I visit her regularly. We always have such a great time sitting together here on this porch, and sharing about the good - and not so good – ol’ days or whatever is on our mind.

“Hi Granny!” I said as I gave her a gentle hug. Her body is frail and I can’t squeeze her too hard afraid it’ll break.

“Hi honey! It’s so good to see ya! Pull up a chair...come and sit by me!” she said with her little squeaky laugh.

I did as I was told and made myself comfortable. “So, how have you been doing, Granny? Hanging in there, like you always say?”

“Yup!.. There ain’t much change, honey. As long as I ain’t gettin’ worse, I cain’t complain! The Good Lord gives me the strength to keep goin’. He musta put a Duracell battery in me instead of a heart!... But what ‘bout ya, honey? How’ve ye been? Anythang new in yer neck of the woods?”

“I’m doing very well. And yes, there’s something new that I’d like to share with you... Remember I told you about the stories I write?”

“I sure do! I reckon I may be losin’ my bearings but I remember that very well, honey!.. Got another one of them stories in the oven? I’m waitin’... Ye better hurry before I hit the bucket!” she said laughing and stomping her feet on the footrest of her ‘Cadillac’.

I smiled. “Do you know that you’re one of the few I shared them with?.. But I have to admit that lately there has been a yearning in my heart to share them with others. I don’t know exactly the reason why because who would be interested in reading about what an old rambling woman like me has to say? Plus I’m no professional in the art of writing. And my mother tongue is French which complicates things a bit...”

“Well, let me tell ya somethin’, honey,” she commented quickly. “If y’are sayin’ that y’are an old woman at yer age, I reckon I must look like Mathuselah to ya!.. Ye know he lived to be 969 years

old!.. Cain ye imagine that? I reckon they musta count the years differently back then! Anyway, comin' back to yer stories, have ye thought that the good Lord may be puttin' them thoughts on yer mind for a good reason, honey?"

"As a matter of fact, I did... And after much praying and searching God's will on this, and on the advice of my dear husband and the encouragement of a very special friend of mine, I finally decided to put all my stories on a website. Can you believe it?"

"I sure cain! And I'm glad ye did! Let me tell ya a little story, honey..." she said as she pulled up her 'Cadillac' a little closer to me so no one could hear what she was about to say, I can only imagine.

"One of them ladies over here told me her story the other day," she kept on. "Let me tell ya, honey, her life ain't always been a walk in the park! She was raised in a trailer park, somewhere way in the boondocks. Her kin was poor like ye would not believe, and her Maw had to work two jobs to earn a livin'. Her Paw liked to lift his elbow a little too much, if ye know what I mean, and couldn't keep a job. Well, one day he decided he had enough and left. They never heard of him after that... Her Maw workin' most of the time, she was alone quite a bit at home. Well, one of them boys livin' in her neighborhood took advantage of the situation and one day he raped her... Oh, let me tell ya, honey, my heart started to melt like butter on a warm biscuit when I heard that..."

"Oh, I would have felt the same way too..." I commented.

"Well, her story ain't over yet... She was tellin' me that because of all that happened in her life as a young'n, she'd made up her mind back then that one day she'd help kids that was havin' the same problems. So, as she got older, she got some education and got herself a paper in child psychology... Her heart just went to them kids and she wanted to do somethin' for them, to show them that they're loved and if they're bein' encouraged enough, they cain turn their lives around and be somebody..."

"Let me tell ya, honey, the good Lord surely knew 'bout the desire of her heart cause after much studyin' and hard work on her part, she finally opened a place where them kids could come, find love and learn... She helped her community takin' care of them kids, their Paws and Maws too any way she could and she made a difference in their lives. She had two young'ns at the time, four and two years ol', and them little critters musta been a handful too!.. It's just to tell ya, honey, that everybody got a story and the end cain turn out as sweet as icing on the cake, I reckon. Ain't that the berries!.. And I got to thinkin', honey, that yer little stories cain be God's way to make a difference too in other folks' lives. Ye never know..."

"Well, Granny, I appreciate your encouragement... I have to say that I took a giant step in putting my stories out there. You see, I'm not one who likes to be in the forefront. I'm more comfortable staying in the background. That's what I did all my life, really... But now with this turn of events, I'm being very unsure of myself. I'm in uncharted waters...and I don't know how to swim?.." I said with a faint smile.

"Well, now, honey. The good Lord said not to let our hearts be troubled¹. Trust Him... If he gave ya the desire in yer heart to do it, then go whole hog! Go for it!.. He'll show ya how to swim! And the more y'll get yerself wet, y'll get better at it and y'll realize one day that y'are swimmin' like a fish, with the Good Lord always by yer side watchin' over ya!" she said smiling at me tenderly.

I returned her smile. "That's not all... After I posted my stories on the website I thought I had done

my part but was I in for a surprise!.. The thought of telling people about it started to shape up... I just wanted to let God handle that part, you know... But it seems it wasn't in his plans... Despite my reluctance, I finally accepted the challenge... I'm still quite uncomfortable with the whole situation... I feel somehow vulnerable... I'm out of my comfort zone... I have mixed feelings... I know deep down it's what I should be doing but I struggle with fear and doubts from time to time... When that happens I pray and God in his mercy brings me comfort and encouragement. But I feel unsettled about this new development in my life..."

"I know it ain't easy for ya, honey, but now that ye've done yer part, let the good Lord do his part. He knows best... Ye cain't control everythang in life," she said as she slumped against the cushion of her chair, probably ready for a much needed nap. So, I left her promising to come back another day; hopefully bringing a new story with me to share with her.

As I walked back home I thought of Granny. This frail little lady with a southern flair is certainly not afraid to speak her mind even if she may ruffle some feathers in the process! Her boldness is a side of her personality that I particularly admire, probably because it's not one of my strengths... I'm sure at her age she has learned a thing or two about life, people and especially about God. She sure *loves* the good Lord, as she calls Him. I'm reminded of a verse: *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'*² I can say that she's a great example of how our love for God should be. There's no doubt in her mind that he loved her so much that he came on this earth to die for her on the cross for her sins. She knows the One whom she believes in and will stand up for Him no matter who or what comes against Him and her beliefs. Inside her frail body, there's an invincible warrior!.. Can I say the same thing about me?..

I may have joined God's 'army' when I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior many years ago but the way I react to my present situation, I would not put myself on the front line of a battlefield warfare!.. However, I realize very well that I'm not the General of this army; God is. He knows me better than I know myself. He knows where I fit best in the grand scheme of things, and I can give Him - or myself - all the excuses in the world for not being able to do whatever he calls me to do, but at the end of the day, if I don't obey I'll be the one missing out on the victory ahead.

Some people may not believe in Satan but I do for the Bible tells me so. He is my number one enemy and he will try his best to stop me from doing God's will using my mind as his battleground. He starts there because if he can get a hold on my thoughts, he's sure to control my heart and my mouth. Oh, he's trying but the more I study God's Word and the more I pray, the more God strengthens me.

I question myself sometimes. Why do I have on my heart to write these stories? What's God's plan in all of this? I can't say that I have the answers to these questions but one thing I'm sure of is that no matter what, he'll use them to accomplish his purpose; in me and in others. To know that should be sufficient for now. When I reach heaven, then I'll find out how my stories really ended!..

As I was praying one day about my inadequacies and asking God to show me if I was on the right path and if I should keep following it, a verse popped up on my mind... *"Cast your bread upon the waters for you will find it after many days."*³ I wasn't sure what it meant or what it had to do with my present situation, so I made some research.

I found a couple of interpretations which were directed to making sound financial investments, wise business decisions which eventually would bring rewards... I was confused at first but the

commentator⁴ went on to say that these principles can be applied to the spiritual business of God's kingdom... In his quest to find out how to live a meaningful life, the writer of Ecclesiastes urges us not to be paralyzed by our lack of knowledge... But to invest our time, our talent and our treasure in God's kingdom... Not to hold back because of fear, age, time, gifts or whatever, but to step out in faith. Not faith that our own efforts will succeed necessarily, but faith that God will take what we offer and use it in some way for his glory.

As I finished reading, I understood that this was God's answer to my prayer. Granny's story about this woman who made a difference in some folks' lives is a great example to show that anyone can make a difference in this world with God's help. So, I'll keep writing and sharing until I know in my heart that it's time to stop. I guess Granny is rubbing off on me! Oh, I may be perceived by some readers as an 'over-the-top' kind of a woman in my beliefs and I may 'ruffle some feathers', but I wouldn't want to live with regrets for not having done it. I may add here that I cannot take any credit for these stories. Oh, I certainly wrote them all but God gave me the inspiration and I certainly could not have done it without his help. I am reminded of this scripture that keeps me humble whenever pride may be lurking in my heart... *"Whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*⁵ Someone also said that it's very difficult to be proud when you're standing at the foot of the cross. It's so true...

It is, therefore, with a humble heart that I pray for God to use my straightforward and heartfelt stories to bless others in whatever way he may see fit. Hopefully some of the people that are touched by them will, in turn, make a difference in other people's lives as they share their own stories and victories. That would be so amazing because it would give God all the glory he so richly deserves!

¹ John 14:1 ² Matthew 22:37 ³ Ecclesiastes 11:1 ⁴ Freddy Fritz, pastor/minister, Cast Your Bread Upon the Waters Series, sermoncentral.com
⁵ Colossians 3:17

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